McGill

by Sunsinger

Summary

What if there was a prophecy about Harry Potter?
No, not that one, another prophecy?
What if that other prophecy would actually help Harry Potter? Protect him?
What if someone listened to it and helped him.
What if Harry Potter is no longer just Harry?

A man, a prophecy, a plan. Welcome to a whole new world.

SIDE STORIES HAVE BEEN MOVED TO THEIR OWN SERIES, THANK YOU!
Carmus McGill

June 14, 1990
1:37 p.m.
Surrey, England

Carmus McGill stopped in front of #4 Privet drive and sighed. Pulling out a small notebook, he read through the paragraph again. It was the same as always. In a minute, he would knock on the door and go through all these steps. Smiling, he placed the notebook back in his coat pocket. Checking his pockets for the recorder, he switched it on and stepped up to the door. Knocking, he waited.

*I've never been so thankful that Sean wasn't one of those lyrical Seers.*

A few moments later, a middle aged woman of impressive neck length opened the door. She stood still in the doorway, taking a long look at the quality of his clothes before stretching her mouth into a wide smile and inviting him in.

"Hello, may I help you."

"Hello, Mrs. Dursley, My name is Sean Hayes. I am conducting an interview survey for the Department of Home and Families. We are interviewing average families to get an idea of the average British family. This information will be used to set policy. May I please come in?"

"But of course! We're always pleased to help the government as all good citizens are."

"Of course." Carmus stepped in and rolled his eyes as she shut the door.

*Only for you, Sean, only for you.*

Carmus followed her, his eyes casting over the obscene amounts of photographs papering the wall. Each photo showed off the various stages of a horribly overweight dirty blonde boy. The child obviously took after his father, who also starred in many of the photos. The father was morbidly obese. Carmus felt a bubble of amusement flow up within him, Jack Sprat and his wife had somehow switched places and reproduced. She offered him tea and he accepted gracefully. A simple question about the young man in the pictures distracted her long enough for him to pull a vial of Veritaserum from his pocket, pouring 3 drops in her tea. Sitting back, he waited for it to take effect.

A half hour later, Carmus was furious; no, he was beyond furious.

"Now, I have records on the children living here, there are two, correct?"

"Well, our precious Dudders." Petunia smiled happily before her top lip twisted in disgust, "and the *Freak!*"

"Uh, The Freak, ma'am?"

"My abnormal sister's freakish child. Despite everything we did for Lily, she took up with a man who was a drunk and a drug addict. It drove my parents to their deaths! To our, my husband and I, dismay… Lily and her worthless husband had a car accident. They killed themselves and left their child orphaned. There is *obviously* something wrong with him. Likely she drank and did drugs while she was pregnant. We really weren't equipped for such a special needs child. We would have sent the child to the orphanage except someone had seen us pick him up off the doorstep. Yes, they dropped off on our doorstep where everyone could see him. With the way the neighbors gossip,
within a day everyone would know about him, so of course we had to keep him. Now, we didn't want him contaminating our precious son with what would obviously be bad behavior and trouble. I mean, Dudley will one day be as great a man as his father, a man known and respected by his neighbors. We can't have him really connected with The Freak, so we keep it in the cupboard under the stairs."

"I see, and what about chores. Most average families give their children chores to help build character and an awareness of the value of hard work. What sort of chores do the… children do here?"

"Well, Dudley keeps his room neat as a pin. You should see it." Petunia led the way upstairs and hesitated before a door. "The rest of the house is The Freak's job, not that he does it well. Now, I know it seems like a lot however, we must take a firm hand to him if we ever expect him not to be like his parents. Who knows what addictions and depravities they have passed onto him. I have to get it up at three in the morning and all it does is complain that it's tired, then when Dudley finishes his room that awful useless Freak comes and ruins it."

Carmus looked at the woman and nodded sympathetically. Waiting for her to turn around, he pulled the vial from his pocket and checked the label. There, in his beloved friend's hand, was the label 'Veritaserum'. Pouring a drop on his hand, he rubbed it for texture. It appeared alright. So obviously, it's working right. This… female believed everything she was saying.

"However, it's been outside since nine this morning, so perhaps he hasn't managed to be cruel. No matter how many times we whip him, and trust me he deserves every whipping we give him, he still tries our patience." She opened the door to show a room that was an ordinary room. Toys, computer games, and other things were all over the shelves and desk. The bed was made up and for the most part the floor was clean. "See, neat as a pin."

Carmus nodded and closed the door. "And what about… the Freak's room? Where did you place him, surely not in the same room as Dudley?"

"I should think not! If not for common decency, I'd kick the Freak out! Alas, instead I keep it confined in the storage cupboard under the stairs. If you don't feed Freaks, they stay small. If I had my way, I wouldn't feed it at all. I guess I just can't help it, I'm too soft a person for my own good."

"Yes, yes, I see. Well, that should be it. Thank you, Mrs. Dursley, ever so much."

Petunia simpered and nodded at him. He gestured for her to go first, as befit a gentleman and as soon as her back was turned, a hand slipped into his pocket to turn off the recorder. Petunia stopped suddenly, caught in a spell's grasp and relaxed."

You are a vile, disgusting piece of offal that masquerades as a human. In two minutes, you will check on Harry, deciding he is doing well enough. You will then go upstairs, take a bath, and nap for a couple hours. When you wake up, you will make dinner for your family and not notice Harry is missing. If anyone comes asking about Harry, you will ignore them and change the subject. Go Now!"

Carmus watched as Petunia Dursley, neé Evans walked up the stairs. Stepping out of her site, he allowed an illusion to hide him. Flipping open the notebook, he looked again at the Prophecies. The first one, the most important one.

Carmus, my dear one,

The 'one who stole a seat' at the table has wrapped about the place old and ancient wards. Wards of
love, blood, and intent. Intent, on his part to control his movements. Love, on his mother's part to protect him. Blood, on his aunt's part to strengthen and hold the wards. However, he misread the signs. To protect him from all who wish him ill, to hide him from those who would free him, the thief needs a different Blood, Intent, and Love. Love that binds a true family together, the willingness to shed Blood if it takes that to hold a family together, and the Intent to never lose that family. His 'family' is willing to shed his Blood for no reason save their own ire and would not shed one drop of theirs in his protection. Their Intent is to destroy him mind, body, and magic. To destroy, not protect. Their Love does not exist. The wards do not exist except in their extant state. They were laid but never raised. Please, my friend, my love, my other self; rescue him.

Sean Alistair Hayes Daton

Carmus headed towards the back of the house and looked out the kitchen window. The small boy was hunched over the ground. His back was red and his head lowered. His hand moved slowly from before him to the side, dropping weeds in a small pile. Carmus noticed that this was perhaps the twelfth such pile. Growling, he placed his hands on the sink and tried to calm himself down. He would scare the boy with his anger. Exiting the house, he crouched down. "Harry."

Harry stopped and turned slowly. He was smaller than Carmus had thought.

"Harry. You can stop weeding. Come here, please." Carmus sat still, trying not to frighten the young boy. "Harry, do you believe in magic? In things happening just because? Of things that fly?"

Harry looked at him, the green eyes staring through him. "I used to dream about a flying motorcycle, but Uncle Vernon says they can't fly."

"Oh, some do. I promise you, Harry. Some of them do, but right now, it's time for us to go. Both of us, and you'll never have to come back here. I promise you." Carmus stood up and held out his hand.

Harry slipped his hand into Carmus' and let the older man lead him through the backyard fence. Suddenly Carmus stopped and turned to look at Harry, his own dark brown hair falling in his eyes. "Harry, how do you know that I won't hurt you?"

"I don't." Harry stared down Privet Drive.

"Now you do. I'll protect you." Carmus put one hand on Harry's back as they walked down to the end. Knowing that no one would see them, he stepped forward and disappeared with Harry. If there had been someone around to see him, they would have not heard any crack of air from disapparation, nor would they have seen someone rise in the air. In fact they wouldn't be able to say what they saw, that it might have been a mirage that melted away.
Harry gasped as they slowly shimmered into the back room of a store.

Carmus smiled gently, moving them to a corner. Kneeling on the ground, he pulled a handkerchief from his pocket. "Harry, come here. Let's wipe off your face a bit, then we can go shopping. We'll get you some new clothes for now. Tomorrow, we are going to a special place, a magical place to get stuff for your room."

"My room?" Harry whispered.

"Yes, at my house, you will have your own room. Remember, I asked you if you believed in magic?" Carmus knelt down and pulled his wand from the holster in his pocket. "I am a wizard. This is my wand. It's rowan with gryphon feather and basilisk scales. And you are a wizard. Now let's take care of that bad sunburn and get you a shirt, then we can go shopping, okay?"

Harry nodded.

Carmus smiled gently, his eyes locked on Harry's while he cast a small spell to heal the sun abused flesh before wiping Harry's face with the handkerchief. Holding it up, he waved his wand at it and it changed into a shirt. Laughing at the boy's wide eyes, he cast a cleansing charm as well as a resizing one on the shirt before handing it to him. Smiling, he took Harry's hand again, smiling down at the young boy. Harry looked at his clean hands and tugged on his shirt.

"MAGIC?"

"Yes, little one, magic. Now let's get some clothes that fit so we can destroy those, okay? And why not look for some toys?"

Carmus laughed as Harry almost ran into the door. Opening it, he levitated the huge stuffed tiger up the steps in front of the boy. "Follow the floating tiger, you can have a bath in the morning, when I can be sure you won't drown yourself. Just skin down to your shorts and hop into bed. Tomorrow, after breakfast, we'll get stuff for your room. Night, Harry."

Harry grunted as he followed his stuffed animal upstairs.

Carmus laughed again and headed for the den. Sitting down in his comfortable dark blue wingback chair. The fire crackled before him. Sighing, he walked over to the table and sat down. Opening a drawer, he pulled out a bottle of fine whiskey and a glass, setting both of them on the desk. Opening the drawer above it, he pulled out a large book. He smiled as his hands caressed the thin parchment pages. Sean wasn't a total nontraditionalist. Sure enough, Sean didn't like giving cryptic prophecies in rhyme or epigrams, however, he still wrote them down on parchment.

He let his fingers run over the letters on the page. Sighing, he turned towards the inside cover and the letter placed there with a sticking charm.

Dearest Carmus,

By now, I have been dead almost five years and you are still moping. Never fear, Sean to the rescue! No, really, I do have a job for you. It's rather important. It's also why I always stepped in when your father bitched about what your granda was teaching you. I knew then and I know now, it is needed. More importantly, you enjoyed it. You were having fun learning about the underlying nature of magic.
It's why I pushed for you to go to Uni. There were many paths ahead of us. In all of them, I died. In some of them you die alone, in some of them you die fighting for a cause, but in the Prophecies that I have given you, I hope to show you a spray of middle paths. Paths that lead to you living a long happy life full of love. I hate to restrict myself but I must. I can't let you live your life through Prophecies. I want to see your way through all your problems, but I mustn't. I mustn't. So instead, the books I left you only give you some general instances. Some, I ask you to do because it's necessary. But enough of the past, now of the future. Your future.

Harry Potter.

I told you once that you would use all that education learning, even if you never sat for your teacher's cert. Now I call on it. I need you to rescue a child. He was placed in a home contrary to his parents' will. They are dead, of course. The 'one who steals and mines minds' has placed him there, you know of whom I speak. I see the reasons why the 'one who steals' claims he placed the child there. I see the 'one who steals' plans. I see the 'one who steals' authorize payment for the child's upkeep. I see the 'one who steals' as he welcomes his flames reborn. I see the 'one who steals' visiting the redhead clan and I hear him mention the child and that he will be on the train in muggle clothes. I see the 'one who steals' visiting a beautiful child with wild brown hair and a love for learning. I see the 'one who steals' giving her a book, a history book. I hear him tell her that history is still alive at Hogwarts, that history always repeats itself and that this year a rather special figure from recent history will be there.

Already he twists and turns and knits his web. None other have been told but a scion of a proud Light family and a muggle child who sees in only two shades.

If Harry stays with his relatives, he will not grow up to be older wiser and somewhat happier. He will lose his godfather, who is innocent, and he will lose his own innocence. Year after year, he will be tested in such tests that even you would quail at. The belief behind this is by tempering gradually you get the better steel. Steel shatters, Harry is not a sword, he is not a weapon, he is not a tool. However that is how he will be viewed and used. The wizarding culture will turn and turn again like the worm gyres. Tortured by guilt, he will seek to prove himself a lion over and over again, risking his own life as if it was not precious! Lions do, because lions dare, though beaten, bravery persevere. Buying into that belief, he belittles his pain to be worthy of his house. He is loyal, he is smart, he is cunning, and he is brave. Whatever house, he should ultimately end up in; he will always be these things. I see him deny his proper house though I heard not the name, he believes it evil. I see the redhead child whispering in his ear. I see strings of sickly grey in the children's head.

I see the school embroiled in the war, which should not be! He would make it a camp of an army. Those children will be his soldiers. They will fight and die for no reason except for their belief in him. I see children tortured in the hallways. I see our dark and beloved third, our other self, our brooding snake give into his hate. I see him allowing so much to happen just to save our Harry, giving up his joy, giving up part of his soul, allowing others to fall even if it wounds him. A choice will come whether to sacrifice his godson who he loves as his own or Harry. I do not want him to be trapped by his oaths to give up the child he loves. I see the 'one who steals' murmuring platitudes as he plans, ignoring those whose pain would block his plans.

So I close this letter with these words. Do with them what you will.

Harry James Potter resides at #4 Privet Drive in Surrey.

Sean Alistair Hayes Daton
Carmus sighed and lowered his head to the desk. He would not let Severus torture himself for life and sacrifice himself over one mistake. He would not let Harry turn into a sword to fit the old man's hand. There had to be path among the thousands that could save Harry and Sev as well as allow them all to be happy, for once. There must be.

Sitting back, he poured some whiskey into the tumbler and just sipped it slowly as he watched the fire. Silently, he pulled out a sheet of pale green linen paper and leaned forward to compose yet another hard letter.
Harry opened his eyes slowly. He could smell bacon and eggs frying. Sitting up, he bumped something large. Blinking slowly, he realized it was the huge stuffed white tiger from yesterday…

*yesterday. IT HAPPENED. IT REALLY DID. THERE REALLY WAS MAGIC!*

A knock on the door caused Harry to jump. Looking around for his clothes, he was surprised to find them gone. A pair of jeans and blue shirt was laid out with underwear and socks. Turning around, he noticed a robe on the wall by the door. Grabbing the robe, he shrugged it on and tied it tightly. Biting his lip, he opened the door.

Carmus stood outside. "Feel better, Harry?"

"Yes, sir."

"Call me Carmus. Now I can guess you are hungry and want to eat, so I'll make this fast. Today, you can come down to the table in your robe, but that's really not polite. So tomorrow, you need to wake up, shower, make up your bed, get dressed, and come down to eat. This room is not your room. I let you stay in mine. Yours is across the hall and two doors down. It's really not ready yet. I thought today, we could go shopping for a bed, furniture, toys, and other stuff. We'll also go school shopping."

Carmus paused. "I know this is a lot to take in and I promise to explain more over breakfast, so for now, if you'll go through the door opposite you'll be in the bathroom. Go now."

Harry nodded and turned towards the door.

"Harry, they lied, your parents were so good to you. I can't wait to tell you about them." Carmus closed the door and went down to set the table.

Harry hurried down the steps, now he knew why the socks had been left out, the floors were cold. He had peeked into the room Carmus had said would be his. It was totally empty but clean, with a large closet. Best of all was the floor. It was wood placed in a pattern. Up and down like spiky waves. The room was bigger than Dudley's room! And there was a door to the bathroom. The window in the room looked out over the back yard and garden. And Carmus mentioned buying furniture. His hair slightly damp, Harry ran downstairs, his stockinged feet padding through the hallways. When stopped in amazement as he pushed opened the two large wooden doors to reveal a huge dining room. Shaking his head, he wondered exactly who Carmus McGill was and how could he afford this place. Walking around the table which could have seated 12 or more people, he found himself at a honey colored wooden door.

Pushing the door open he stopped in his tracks.

A small … creature was standing there, big eyes and huge ears. It wore a tunic of sorts with a shield on it. Like the shields in his history books. It squeaked and Harry jumped back, his head hitting the wall behind him.

Carmus looked at Harry, concern in his eyes. "I forgot, Harry, this is Dayn. Dayn is a house elf, she takes care of the house and us. She's totally harmless. I'm afraid you will be seeing many more
strange creatures and people before we are done today. I promise, she won't hurt you."

Harry just stared at the house elf.

Carmus led Harry to the table. ". You know those old stories about farmers who would put out milk and honey for the wee folk who would come in and clean or keep the house or animals safe? That's house elves except wizards employ them. Their family is linked to my family and they will serve faithfully until I give them an article of clothing to keep. Giving clothing is dismissing a house elf and they don't do well with that sort of freedom. They have a burning need to clean and organize things. Dayn?"

The house elf walked over and bowed to Harry. "I am being Dayn, young master. I take care of the house. Master be telling me to fix you something light for breakfast."

Carmus watched as Harry ate slowly. He knew from Sean's messages and his… aunt's attitude, that Harry was not feed much, so Carmus had Dayn make porridge and scrambled eggs.

"Harry, I've known about you for all your life, even though I didn't know where you were. I had a friend who could see the future and he left me message that I've been following. I take care to follow them in the order he gave them to me. I didn't get the message about you until near the first of June but I had to leave you there. I'm sorry, but one of the reasons I waited so long to get to you was because I know that the school you will be attending has already written your acceptance letter under 'Harry Potter'. It's a magical school with magical records. However, the letters are hand written and thus not magical. So I needed the time for the letters to be written, so they don't know that you've gone. It's one of the way, I can and will protect you.

Now, because it is a magical school, you can only go if you are invited. You can't go in under the name of Harry Potter, for your safety's sake. So, if you are willing, we will undergo a magical ritual that will cause me to be considered one of your parents. I won't replace your mother or father but it will give me the right of a second father to you. It will also allow you to have a new name, first and last. Once you do accept, if you accept, the book will alert them to new student. They won't check really to see if the name 'Harry Potter' has disappeared, they'll only look for the new name."

Harry stared at him, "Why would I need protection? Why would anyone want to hurt me? I'm just Harry."

"No, you aren't 'just Harry'. This is the problem of you not being raised by a wizard. In the Wizarding world, which is different from this which we call the Muggle World, you are known as 'Harry Potter, Boy Who Lived'. It is all tied up in your parents' deaths. Just as abuse happens here, abuse can happen there. Decades ago, a young and powerful wizard named Tom Riddle was orphaned and orphanages back then were horrible. He saw his entrance to the Wizarding world as a rescue. He wanted to be someone, not surprisingly. He went to Hogwarts, the school you will be going to, and was sorted into a House. The houses are four: Ravenclaw, Slytherin, Gryffindor, and Hufflepuff. Well, he was sorted into Slytherin, and being an orphan, he did not have all the fancy clothes that so many of the wizard-born take for granted, or the manner, or the history. He was treatedly badly by the other three houses since in every school there is one section everyone blames things on. Slytherin is it. So, he grew angry and rather than blaming the fact they were children, he blamed the fact that it was his Muggle upbringing.

"In time resentment and anger twisted him into a cruel man. His final straw was when he was refused a chance to work at the school, the school he viewed as a true home. He delved into some very EVIL arts and became Lord Voldemort. He led a reign of terror for several years."

"Voldemort?" Harry snorted.
Carmus grinned and used his want to write out 'Tom Marvolo Riddle', the letters switched around to read, 'I am Lord Voldemort'.

"Your mother and father defied him. Your mother, Lily, was the Ancient Runes teacher and your father, James, was an Auror, think Wizard Scotland Yard. One day, he found where they were hiding with you, and attacked. He cast one of the three Unforgivable Curses and killed them. He cast it at you, and it bounced back. Part of the curse carved your scar, the rest destroyed his body. His body is gone, but not his soul. His soul fled in tatters. One of the most evil things he did, helped to preserve his soul against death. His soul exists and can and will inhabit a body again. He believes that he must destroy you so that you will not destroy him. He believes that it was prophesized.

"After their death, you should have been given to you godfather, but you weren't. He later did something stupid and got himself locked up. After his was another family, the Longbottoms who had a child who was only a day older than you, but they were attacked the same night, Then there was another family, the Tonks, pureblood witch mother and muggleborn father. They could have taken you but you were never delivered to them."

"Why not? My aunt hates me?" Harry dropped his fork, tears falling gently.

"Oh Harry, I don't know how they could do it… but I do know why. In fact, there is one reason, why they ignored your parents' wishes and placed you with your aunt. This person will claim that they believed that the blood you share with your aunt would power wards, magical protections. They won't. It needs other components. It takes FAMILY to power blood wards. It needs well, love. Love, Intent, and Will, as my Sean said. Love for you, even when they are ready to slap you, if they still loved you or your mom who died for you. Will, a determination to protect you and keep safe. They didn't have that and I am sorry for that. If they wanted you safe, they wouldn't have hurt you. Intent, if they did everything they did with the sole thought of 'oh well, he is family', but Harry, when I heard your aunt call you an 'it' and 'freak', they had no intent. I'm so sorry, but on the other hand. If you are willing to be adopted by me, you will have my blood. My love, I will you willingly. My intent, to save you and let you choose your own path. I will be there to make sure you don't fall into an abyss but I will not force you into a mold.

Also because the person who placed you with your aunt, knew what would happen to you. They wanted you to become malleable, predictable, and useful. They knew that you would be ground down slowly under their hatred and like Tom Riddle; you would love to be rescued. They would rescue you and of course you would do anything to make them happy. And every summer you would be forced back into that house just so you would appreciate their attention more. This person, who is often called 'the one who steals' in the prophecies I was given." Carmus leaned over and refilled Harry's milk glass.

"It was a prophecy that got my parent's killed, right?"

"Yes. Let me say though, that particular prophecy came from the mouth of someone who never spoke a real prophecy. Also, Riddle only heard part of the prophecy. If he had heard it all, he would never have attacked you or the Longbottoms, because by doing so he made it true. Tricky thing, prophecy. My prophecies were given to me by a friend who hates speaking mysteriously. His prophecies are for the most very clear spoken. Now he uses metaphors for people but they aren't exactly hard to figure out."

Harry nodded and played with his food for a moment. "What would be my new name?"

"Well, you can pick your first name, you will take McGill as your last name. So it will be whatever Harry James Potter McGill."
"James?"

Carmus closed his eyes for a moment. "Yes, Harry JAMES Potter. You were given your father's name for a middle name. You can't use it though. The ritual will change how you look a bit but not that much. It will only add my features into yours. If you called yourself James, someone might make the connection. I'm sorry."

Harry nodded again. "I like the name 'Simon'.

"Okay, Simon. Now finish up, and we'll go shopping. You have so much to learn and only two and a half months to learn it.

"Yes, sir."

Carmus looked at Harry, one eyebrow raised.

"Yes, Carmus."

Carmus ruffled his young charges' hair and headed off.

Carmus apparated them to Diagon Alley. Turning Harry to face him, he cast an illusion over the scar, "This is Diagon Alley, one of the main wizarding shopping centers. We're going to Finckle's Fine Furnishings. A bed is important in our culture, young Simon. One day, long from now, you will leave home and you take your bed with you. So pick a good one, k?"

Harry laughed and turned around. Owls were flying overhead, people were walking in robes. Diagon Alley had a sound, like the happy roar of the waves. Children ran between people. Carmus led Harry towards a book store.

"I already have your books for school but I thought you might want to pick some up for fun."

Harry nodded and headed into the stacks. Carmus sat on a bench just inside the door and waited. A dark man in dark robes stood in the door, his hair pulled back with a black tie. It fell to his back with a slight wave. He was pale with a nose that had obviously been broken before and dark eyes.

"Severus, my friend. Sit. Please. You know of Sean's prophecies. He asked me to rescue a child. Oh, Severus, what you went through was bad, but at least you had love. This child was worked like a slave. No touches of love, he received less food than a house elf. He is small, Severus, about the size of an eight year old. He's fragile. I'm positive that his bones have suffered. I need more than usual nutrient potions. Please, Severus."

Severus Snape lowered his head. He felt fingertips rest against the line of jaw. "Of course, I'll come to McGillis tonight."

"Thank you. I'll expect you for dinner and I'll make up your room. Right now, I have to find him before he decides to bring the entire store home."

Severus nodded and stood up. Carmus stood next to him. One finger resting in his friend's palm. Severus squeezed it gently, quickly before he left. Carmus shook himself and decided to go and find Harry.

Three hours, 29 books, a tour of Gringotts, and a stop in the apothecary later; they finally had managed to get to Finckle's Fine Furnishing. Harry darted from one wonder to another and still
wasn't ready to sit still. Carmus knew that Harry would crash later tonight. Finding the directory, he nudged and poked Harry upstairs. He stopped Harry in front of the bed section. He turned Harry towards a wall that had squares of wood mounted on it.

"Harry, pick a wood."

"A wood, sir?"

"What color wood would you like for your bed or would you prefer a metal bed frame?" Carmus waved at the wall.

"Oh…" Harry walked closer, one hand reaching out to touch it. He finally pointed to one piece that had been lacquered a deep honey almost red. Oak, it took the stain well.

Carmus reached up and pulled off the block of wood. "Now, we pick the type. Go over there and pick a bed type. And Simon?"

"Yes, sir?"

"Pick what you like, don't pay attention to the price. This bed is to last you for a long time."

"Yes, Carmus!" Harry walked over to look at the different frames while Carmus went looking for a mirror. When he looked back, Harry was staring at one bed. A big four poster, the finials on top were shaped like large raindrops. A curved headboard and footboard. It came with a bench that sat against the front of the footboard, extra storage. The bed itself was a captain's bed with two large drawers on one side, magically deepened. Four smaller drawers on the other side, also deepened.

Carmus stepped up and pressed the wood into a cut out in the headboard. Like water flowing, the bed rippled and changed. "Very nice bed, Harry. Now this bed is set up for curtains, so let's go select some."

Carmus led Harry to a book that stood next to the bed, flipping it open, there were sheets of cloth. "I think cotton, silk, and velvet, now the color. Just touch one of those colors and you can lighten it or deepen it. There are also patterns. Select one and we can change it."

Harry flipped through the book until he came upon one with very small metallic silver stars. Selecting it, he deepened the purple. "It's like the sky at night."

"Yes, it is. So we'll take bed curtains in this motif. Perhaps some also in green, blue, ivory, and black. Similar to this shade, just so we can change it every so often. Now sheets, silk is impractical for children, not to mention you sweat in them. Cotton, jersey, a set of silk for show. Hmmm, comforters in both plain and with the star pattern, duvet both plain and patterned. And pillowcases for three pillows. Now, Simon, as a McGill, you have a certain manner to uphold. We are purebloods who also happen to have a great deal of money, that is why the salesman knew better than to bother us. I want you to raise your left hand and sharply point to the bed. That lets him know to come over. See how the book recorded our order, hand him the book and tell him to charge it to 'Vault 37'."

Harry nodded and raised his hand. Before he had even pointed a young woman came over. He handed her the book and asked her to 'please charge vault 37'. She bowed and left. She was back a moment later with a slip of parchment. Carmus took it and signed. About five minutes later, the woman was back again with a medium sized wooden box that she handed to Harry. After thanking them for shopping, she left.

"Go ahead, open it."
Harry did and saw the bed he chose in miniature. "Ummm, it's a bit small for my bedroom."

Carmus laughed. "Well carrying a bed all over town would hurt your back, now wouldn't it? It's shrunken, we'll go put in your room when we get home. Latch back the box and keep it. When you are ready to move out, may it be a long time in coming, you can place the bed back in there. Now let's go eat."
Scabbers

June 15, 1990
McGillis House

6:50 p.m.

Severus Snape stepped through the flames, his apothecaries' bag held tightly in his hand. Carmus stood up, a sad smile on his face. "Simon will be down soon."

"Simon?"

"It is the name he chose, my Severus."

"Then you mean to do this?"

"Yes, will you stand beside me?"

Severus jerked back and stared at his friend. "Are you sure?"

"There's no one better for him than you. I trust in your honor, my friend. You will do right by him for him."

"Does he know?" Snape asked gravely.

"No, but Severus, you have to understand, when you meet him. He is not what you think. He has had a harsh abusive existence. Severus, before you meet the child. I wish you to hear some recordings, as well as read some of Sean's prophecies, so you can understand what this child went through. Please sit." Carmus stood up, turning the chair to invite Severus to sit. "I… really don't need to hear this again, please excuse me."

Severus nodded and took Carmus's place. As Carmus left, he could hear the first recorder starting.

"Well our precious Dudders and the Freak!"

7:58 pm

Severus Snape allowed the paper phoenix to fly into the flames before he stood up and walked to the dining room. Entering, he sat down in his preferred seat. Carmus nodded and poured him three fingers of aged scotch neat and placed the glass before him.

"Severus, I know you hate his father, but you did care for Lily. I know that every year Albus Dumbledore gives an interview where he tells people how happy Harry Potter is with his family. How he has toys and bikes, how he does so well in school and is always surrounded with friends. Albus Dumbledore has not set foot into Privet Drive since he dumped that child there and abandoned him with those vicious cruel monsters. You saw as I saw that he would claim that blood wards are the reason, and you and I both know that's impossible. Most old family wards, pureblood wards, are blood wards. They are based on family. If you want to key someone into your family wards, you share their blood with the ward or they share their blood with you. Even when you don't like family, even if you hate them, the bonds of family are still there! You hated your father but he was your father. He was family. They formed no familial bonds with Harry. They wanted to deny him. Those blood wards don't work."
Severus knocked back the drink and poured himself another. "I know, and I believe that Dumbledore if he's not guilty of complicity in this abuse is at the very least guilty of criminal neglect. No one questioned him, after all he is the Great Albus Dumbledore, Defeater of Grindlewald. We trust him, why would he do this?"

"Severus, eighty percent of students who have been abused are sorted into Slytherin." Carmus raised his eyebrows.

Snape sighed, "You're right, abused kids do come to my house because by the time they get there they have learned to be cunning, sneaky, manipulative, and secretive just to survive."

"Read between the lines, Severus. They are all so willing to prove themselves, to show people that they aren't to be underestimated, even their hiding is to prove themselves. Abused kids thirst for approval! If Harry was sorted into the 'noble and brave house' could he do no less then recklessly seek out every opportunity to be self sacrificing and brave, even if it risks his life? If it risks his soul?"

Snape slammed the glass on the table and stared at his friend. "Nev- but then I'd say Albus Dumbledore would never leave a child to be constantly abused for ten years."

"Severus, please don't look at him and see his father, look at him and see my son. Tonight, I adopt him under the Child Sanctuary spell. Tomorrow, he'll look a bit different. Will you help me?"

"Yes, let me scan the child and after dinner, I will tailor the potions to him. Sean mentioned some books about what Potter's life would be like if he didn't get rescued? I'd… like to see them."

"Okay. In the study. Dayn! Please, get Simon." Carmus got up and put the scotch away.

Soon hurried feet came thumping down the stairs and Harry pushed open the dining room doors. Moving to a seat on Carmus' left, he sat down.

"Harry, we don't run in the house, nor thump down the stairs. You have a lot to learn if we are going to pull this is off. This is Professor Severus Snape, an old friend of mine. He will be teaching you Potions when you go to school. I've asked him to make you some potions to help correct what the Dursleys' did to you. As well, I hope he is willing to tutor you on some things before school. And if you don't mind, I have asked him to be your new Godfather. The ritual that I spoke of will adopt you into my family, so there is a chance to establish an alternate guardian for you, so if anything happens to me you will be protected. Severus is one of the most powerful wizards I know, even if he's a half blood."

Harry nodded. "Okay, sir."

Carmus nodded, "Then it's settled. Now, let's eat."

Harry turned around, "What's a halfblood?"

Carmus chuckled. Wizarding world watch out!

9:28 p.m.

A knock on the door caused Harry to jump. Running over to the door, he opened it to see Carmus standing there. Carmus handed him a deep red orange potion before pushing him towards the bed.

"Get in, Simon. Are you sure that you wish to be my son?"
Harry nodded, pulling the stopper from the flask. Harry put it on the night table and hugged Carmus tightly. "Yes."

Carmus nodded and patted the bed. Once Harry got into his bed, Carmus pulled the covers up, tucking him in. He set the mouth of the flask against Harry's lips. "Okay then. Night, drink up, Simon."

Harry swallowed the potion, wincing at the taste. "Yuck, tastes funny, sorta coppery."

"It should, it has my blood in it!"

"BLOOD?"

"How else are you to become my son, dear Simon. Sleep now, tomorrow. We shall see. Goodnight." Carmus stood up, casting a small ball of light, he left, closing the door.

Carmus walked down the hall and entered the room there. Severus was sitting in a chair, a book on his lap and staring at the fire. Carmus knelt beside him.

Severus looked down at him. "I swear, I'll protect him. I'll keep him safe from Dumbledore. The idea, that he would set Harry against a-"

"Simon, his name is Simon Harry James Potter McGill."

Severus nodded. "A basilisk. He truly is mad. You know his name will appear on the register."

"I know, but the letters are already written. So all Albus will see is a new student and he'll add it to letters already written. He'll never think that Harry Potter isn't coming, until he doesn't. You've read the second year then?"

"Black's innocent. I may hate the bastard but ten years of Azkaban."

"Fitting punishment for almost killing one I love in my eyes, but yes, we will arrange for him to be released. First though, we have to capture Pettigrew but that is for tomorrow as is a trip to Gringotts. For now, go to bed, my Severus."

Severus nodded and stood up. He turned to the bed and smirked. "My old bed, it's still here."

"Of course it is, I told you, you are always welcome here, Severus. Good night."

June 16, 1990
4:57 am

Simon opened the door and saw Carmus lying down, sleeping in his bed. A grin appeared on his face as he ran lightly across the room and jumped onto Carmus, laughing. Carmus struggled, until he saw Simon and rolled his eyes. Grabbing Simon and tossing him to the side, he hugged Simon around his waist.

Carmus held the laughing kid down, flicking his fingers to call on the lights, and looked him over. "Okay now, let's see here. Hair grew a bit, and its auburn, like my mum's. It's no longer a rat's nest but slightly wavy. You kept your father's features but got my coloring and nose, Thankfully. Kept your mum's eyes and don't you think you should give them back, she might need 'em! And you are a bit taller and wider. All in all, a good looking mix of all three of us."

Simon wiggled and put his head on the pillow. "Does this mean I can call you Dad, now?"
"Yes, Simon it does. Now it's," Carmus looked at a clock, "five in the MORNING, go to sleep."

"But I…"

"Sleep." Carmus threw his arm around his son's waist and held him close as he fell asleep.

Simon grunted and sighed and finally decided he might as well go back to sleep and let himself drift off.

8:00 am

Carmus mumbled as Simon wiggled against him. A small finger poked against his side while a whispered, 'Dad!' finally percolated through his sleep fogged brain. Yawning, he turned over, freeing Simon form his arms. A cleared throat brought his attention to the man standing next to his bed.

"I see it worked. In fact Simon looks more like his mother than ever, though his hair is more like yours in texture and your mother's in color."

"Really, Professor Snape? What color was my mother's hair?" Simon sat up, green eyes focused on the dark man.

Snape stared at him before nodding, "Yes, Petunia was always a wretched jealous petty child and I can't see that time has changed her. Your mother was beautiful, too beautiful for the arrogant Potter. Her hair was red, rich bright red, without a drop of brown in it. When we started school, she and I were friends. Potter took exception to my being friends with Lily. She was sorted into Gryffindor, while I was in Slytherin. And the belief at the time was anyone sorted into Slytherin was that we were all on our way to becoming evil. At 11, apparently I was already evil in their eyes and they didn't way their pure and noble Gryffindor classmate to be tarnished with my inherent evilness. So they teased me cruelly and Lily would get so angry. Firestorm Lily, they called her, strong and powerful. Her magic would crackle and cause her hair to spark."

Simon smiled, "Wow, she was brave, wasn't she, Dad?"

"Yes, and so was your father. He was a horrid little rich boy brat. Much like Dudley, but something happened and it made your father realize something. There is such a thing as too far. They were so wrapped up in being pranksters that they didn't notice when it went from fun to deadly. When they finally realized that they had almost killed someone, it forced them to think and grow up. By the time you were born, he was much better, otherwise Firestorm would never have fallen for him. However, considering that it was Severus they almost killed, I don't think you'll ever hear a good thing about your birth father from him."

Severus sniffed haughtily. "I will refrain from actively insulting him in your presence, Simon, but do not expect much else."

"Yes, sir!" Simon smiled and looked down.

"Simon, likely tomorrow but within a week, we need to make Severus your godfather. I know about your other godfather, Sirius Black but I want you to have one who isn't… shall we say damaged as much. Once we get him out of Azkaban, he won't be sane, not truly sane for a while."

Simon looked from one to another. "Why not? It's just prison right, I mean I heard prison is bad but what's so bad about Azkaban."

Carmus looked at Severus before sighing. "Simon, Azkaban prison is our maximum security prison. It's guarded and patrolled by beings called Dementors. They are horrible creatures. They feed off a
person's soul. It's called a Kiss, the Dementor's Kiss. When someone has done something truly horrible, they get the full Kiss and their soul is gone. Their bodies usually die soon after. The minister at the time could not sentence Sirius Black to the Kiss without supplying the trial transcripts. Sirius Black never had a trial, so there are no transcripts. They just locked him Azkaban and since everyone believed he was guilty, no one said anything. Slowly, bit by bit, the Dementors will steal all his joy, happiness, and peace until he sinks into a massive depression, stops eating, and dies. The wizarding world doesn't like to get its hands dirty. They much rather not see nor hear of these people."

"But you are going to rescue him right?" Simon stared at Carmus.

"Yes, we are but he will be a bit confused and damaged. I am going to arrange with some of his family to contest his conviction. I will supply them with evidence beyond all doubt that he is indeed innocent. However, I will not tell him who are you. He will not be able to control his mind or his temper. And he is very close to 'the one who steals' and I can not risk it."

Severus held up one finger. "'The one who steals' I have heard that frequently in his prophecies."

"Yes, it's him.

_The one who steals a place at the table_
_Is the one who gets what he is not served._

_The one who steals a thought from his fellows mind_
_Is the one who destroys free will._

_The one who steals freedom_
_Is the one who gets what is not earned._

_The one who steals the reins_
_Is the one who destroys the world._

It's one of the extremely few lyrical prophecies he made. But let's not talk prophecies, let's go eat, I'm starved!"

Dayn soon had the table set and the three started eating. Before Harry could dig in, Snape handed him a potion. Harry took it with a minimum of disgust. Three owls flew into an open window. Dropping letters beside Carmus. He picked them up. Two of them were from Gringotts and one from his lawyer. Opening them, he saw that per the discovery of Adoptio Asylum being detected, Harry's school vault had been reconstituted into the Potter Vault and an audit was being performed. It should be done by the end of the first week of July. The second letter told him that a school vault had been drawn up for Simon HJP McGill. Nodding, he looked at the letter from his lawyer. Finally, Andromeda was in agreement to meet with him. She wanted to meet tomorrow. Taking a quill and summoning a piece of parchment, Carmus quickly wrote out an acceptance to the terms and agreed to meet tomorrow at 11 a.m. Summoning another parchment, he wrote a note to the account manager of the Potter account.

Simon looked at the letters beside Carmus and raised one eyebrow.

"Oh, they closed your school account from Potter's vault and opened one from mine. They also are performing an audit to make sure nothing was stolen. I told them that someone had authorized payments from your vault to the Dursleys to take care of you but that you were never supposed to be placed with them under the terms of your parents' wills. Not only that but you were adopted under Adoptio Asylum, which is ' Adopting a Child to Provide Sanctuary'. This ritual and potion is only used when a child has suffered serious abuse. And it won't take, at all, if the child was not in danger from their guardians. So the fact it did take, proves the abuse did happen.

"I knew they were being paid and I am pretty sure that this particular person is using your money to
buy votes, support, and influence. When his access to your funds is cut off, people will be upset. They'll be even more angry when it filters out that the money they were receiving was stolen from the Boy Who Lived. That will be a long nail in his coffin. In fact, to get my proof of Sirius' innocence I need to go to a family that utterly believes and supports Dumbledore, but they are good people. When the 'help' he was giving them stops, and I show up with proof of what he did and ask them to help me and NOT tell that person, they will."

"He steals everything!" Simon sighed and started to eat again.

June 17, 1992
Law offices of Pembroke Associates

9:20 a.m.

Carmus entered the office, nodding to the three men waiting for him. Arranged in order of height, they could not look more dissimilar if they tried. In fact the only thing they did have in common was their thick beards and even they were different. Rhadamanthus, the oldest and tallest had black hair, black eyes, and curiously a somewhat straggly white beard. The youngest, Minos, who just happened to be taller than his older brother was the auburn of old. His beard was thick and covered most of the bottom of his face. Aeacus, the middle brother and shortest was blonder, the rich golden blonde. Shaking hands, he settled into a seat. "Rhadamanthus, Aeacus, Minos. So, the Tonks family has agreed to front the fight?

The oldest brother, nodded. "Yes, Andromeda Tonks neé Black has agreed to look at the proof. As you requested, we did secure copies of the Potters' will as well as a record of those who attended to the drawing of the will. As you said, Dumbledore is both a witness and signatory of the will. He however was not the executor of the will and did not have any legal right to emplace the minor child. He also did not have the legal right to disburse any funds from the minor child's inheritance.

The shortest brother, who happened to be the middle one, pulled out several pages. "We talked to Remus Lupin and took his affidavit. Albus Dumbledore removed Harry Potter from Sirius Black's arms. Sirius Black did not give Harry Potter into the custody of Dumbledore. This includes a charge of kidnapping, as well as custodial interference. We could make a case that if Harry had been left with Mr. Black, then Mr. Black would have been too busy to go after Pettigrew. Which of course meant that Mr. Black would not now be in Azkaban."

Minos stood up, scratching at his blond beard. "I have arranged for you to meet Mr. Arthur Weasley. Apparently… he found out earlier today that his monthly stipend from his patron didn't make it into his account. Here are the records of where and when the funds were dispersed. Apparently, the goblins put a rush on the audit, considering who it concerns… and who it will topple. All I can do is arrange a meet with Mr. Weasley, you have to convince him of Dumbledore's duplicity. I will introduce you as a friend who spends quite a bit of time in the Muggle world since he's mad about muggalia. It's almost break time, so let's go. Brothers."

Ministry of Magic
Misuse of Muggle Artifacts.

"Arthur!"

Arthur Weasley turned around to find his friend Minos Pembroke standing just inside his office door with a young man. "Minos, you didn't tell me you were coming by. How are you and your friend?"

Carmus looked at Mr. Weasley. He had red hair like all the Weasleys', a broad slightly red face, honest brown eyes, and a firm handshake. "Hello, Mr. Weasley, my name is Carmus McGill. Please,
call me McGill, my first name is a tad odd. I have wanted to meet you for a while. Would you be available to come out for a bit?"

"Yes, yes, I do believe I can, just a few moments. Please, call me Arthur."

Minos and Carmus waited as Arthur tidied his office. Stepping out, he led them from the ministry. It only took a few minutes before deciding to go to the Spotless Mushroom. As they entered, they were led to a secluded booth. They sat down, Mr. Weasley in the middle, Carmus quietly threw up a silencing charm.

"Arthur, when we leave, you will tell everyone we had a nice conversation about Muggle toasters. What we have to talk to you about is something much more serious. Two things in fact. One, Sirius Black is innocent and you have the proof in your own home. Two, Dumbledore is not as you think him."

Carmus pulled out a copy of the audit report as well as copies of both Potter's wills. "First is the wills of Lily Potter and James Potter. Both wills state that the Secret Keeper for the Fidelius Charm was not Sirius Black, as all thought, but instead Peter Pettigrew, who they felt was more inconspicuous. Second, is this audit report. It shows Dumbledore authorizing, illegally, payments from the Potter's accounts. Some are to people who were supposed to take care of Harry Potter. He was recently adopted by Adoptio Asylum, and yes, it did take effect. Less said about that the better. On September 1st all payments will be returned from the Dumbledore vaults. My problem is if you check out the lists of witnesses to both wills, you will see that Dumbledore witnessed them both. I have requested and received all Ministry materials pertaining to the Sirius Black case. There was no trial, no questioning under Veritaserum, no testimonials. He was thrown into Azkaban and Dumbledore... did... nothing.

"Now, you have a major piece of evidence at your home, one that proves Black innocent incontrovertibly. I need your help to get it though. You see," Carmus smirked and leaned close to Arthur and whispered into his ear.

Arthur's mouth firmed up and his honest brown eyes sparked.

Arthur watched as the bird flew off towards the office, he had to borrow one from the post office next to Eeylop's, he stood before the fireplace back in the Spotless Mushroom. "Just call out 'The Burrow'."

Arthur stumbled out of the fireplace and whispered to his wife. Her eyes widened and she left the living room. Soon enough, seven more redheads joined the three men in the room. Carmus cast a silencing spell and stood by the fireplace. A wave once more of his wand and the fire went out. "Before we talk, I need a binding magical oath that what we speak of today, here, shall not be divulged before its due time. I hope to have it happen by the end of the first week of school. No one can know until then. Now, I'll let Arthur take the floor."

Arthur Weasley stood up, his face grim as he held the papers, recently given to him. Carmus ignored him and reenlarged the package he has picked up. He heard the gasps from the people and Percy's demand to see the papers. Standing up, he pulled a small notebook from his pocket and opened it. He read from it, projecting his voice.

A stag, a dog, a wolf betrayed by a rat.
A rat with blood on his hands condemns the dog.
Loss of a trust, secret spoken.
Hidden in the flame haired clan whose
Symbol is the hunter of rats.
"Bind him, find him, his soul destroyed.

"It's a prophecy made by Sean Daton. Sean is always right, always. Potter was an animagus, a stag. Black, a dog. Lupin is the wolf. ACCIO PETER PETTIGREW!"

Scabbers, the family rat, flew through the air and into Carmus' hand. "Didn't any of you think it was strange that a grown garden variety brown rat is over 10 years old? That it was missing half a toe on its front paw. Didn't you notice that he understood English! THIS. IS. NOT. A. RAT! It is an animagus, and if this animagus does not turn back into a man right this minute, I will break this animagus' neck and take his dead body to the ministry."

Carmus wrapped his hand around the rat's neck and placed his other hand on the head before starting to turn. The rat bit at his hand but Carmus didn't stop. Finally feeling the body swell beneath his hand. Carmus opened his hand and stunned the untransformed Peter. "Does this man look familiar to anyone?"

Mrs. Weasley gasped. "It is! It's Peter Pettigrew! Oh Arthur, what have we done!"

Arthur Weasley held his sobbing wife tightly. "We did what we always do. Carmus said we did it, but... he's right. We stopped thinking. We followed Albus without proof. We gave into the Ministry and asked no questions. That is how Sirius has existed in Azkaban for ten years without anyone asking a single question, without anyone asking if it was true. What's worse is Albus knew it wasn't true, that Sirius could not have betrayed them. He said nothing, he allowed them to put Sirius in there, not only that but Molly, when we got there... who had Harry?"

"What... Harry? Why, Albus did. You know that." Mrs. Weasley said, dabbing at her eyes. "Oh, what have we done? He said that Sirius was so angry that he had to take him from him."

Carmus stepped forward. "Madam Weasley, if you were angry, so very angry, and someone placed a child in your arms. A small child, would you hurt it, or would it focus you?"

"Oh god, Albus knew. He knew if Harry had cried once, Sirius would have never left. He knew and he took Harry away so that Sirius would do something stupid and he could do what he wanted with Harry. Oh Arthur! Where is Harry? Mr. McGill!"

"I can't tell you, Mrs. Weasley. He is fine... now. He was adopted with Adoptio Aslyum. I'm sorry and proud to say it took well. Now, Ron, since I will be taking your 'rat', here is a present. And to all of you, I hope that if necessary, you will be willing to testify and help free an innocent man. Thank you."

"Minos, let's let them recover."

Minos waved his wand at the fireplace and it relit itself with a whoosh. Tossing floo powder into the fireplace and called for the 'Spotless Mushroom', they left. Carmus nodded to Minos and apparated to the apparition point near McGillis House. Entering, he sent a message off to Severus. Heading down to one cell below the house, he left Peter in one. Soon, he heard Severus' heavy steps. Waving a door open, he beckoned Severus in. Severus stepped in and froze.

"Severus, here is he who betrayed Lily. Do as you will as long as you leave him alive and take his memory. Never let it be said that I do not love you, Severus." Carmus left and headed up the stairs.

Entering the library, Carmus sat beside Simon, "Potions, eh? Let's see if I can help you with that."

June 19, 1991
Tonks' family home
11:00 a.m.

Carmus stepped from the flames, follow Rhadamanthus Pembroke. Behind him came Severus Snape holding a small cloth covered wire cage. Andromeda Black Tonks stood waiting.

"Mr. Pembroke, welcome. And you must be Mr. McGill. I recognize Mr. Snape though I do not recall his presence being mentioned."

Carmus moved forward. "Mr. Pembroke sought this audience with you due to my request. Mr. Snape is here to assist me in proving my point. I have given into his hands custody of the proof of your cousin's innocence. And if Severus Snape is willing to surrender it, you know it must strong proof. Severus hates Sirius Black, for good reason. Yet, he is still a good man who wouldn't put anyone into the oh so gentle embrace of the Dementors if he could stop it."

Andromeda nodded. "Then be welcome. My daughter, my husband, and Remus Lupin are here."

Snape started, his eyes flattening.

Carmus sighed. "Considering that your cousin used Mr. Lupin's tragic circumstances to try to kill Severus, please seat Lupin as far away as possible."

Rhadamanthus raised one eyebrow. "Will this affect the trial?"

"Not likely, Rhada."

"Is it something I need to be aware of?"

Snape swirled, his dark robe snapping, "Black tricked me into walking into with a newly transformed werewolf, Lupin, was. I would have died if it hadn't been for the unfortunate Mr. Potter. I am not sure exactly how he knew of my situation as Black was too busy laughing at the thought of me bleeding to death or eaten by a rabid werewolf."

"And you are so over it, Severus!" Carmus snapped. "Besides, it was a combination of factors. Sean told Potter that if he wanted to learn how to be a true Gryffindor then he would have to save someone from the moon. Then he heard Black laughing about how he got you. Potter wasn't a genius but how obvious does it have to be!"

"True and now I have an unfulfilled life debt to him."

"No, you don't. I mean, yeah, he saved you of his own free will but you fulfilled the debt. You saved his son. You owe James Potter and his memory, nothing. If anything, this one task would end it. I promise you."

Severus stared at him. "Let's just do this. Dumbledore will wonder."

Carmus nodded.

Andromeda escorted them into a sitting room across the hall, as Carmus passed, she stopped him. "Sirius, did not do that?"

"He found it hilarious. He would often bait Severus about the moon. He was a cruel bastard, but he didn't betray the Potters."

Andromeda let him go and followed him inside. Ted and Nymphadora Tonks were sitting on a
couch while Remus Lupin took a chair to their left. Rhadamanthus had already taken a chair next to a table. He was handing out several copies of the audit and the Potters' wills. They were reading. Snape stood by the fireplace, the cage dangling from his fingers.

Carmus entered, allowed Andromeda to sit next to her family. "Hello, I'm McGill; you might remember me from school, Lupin. I told you that I had proof that Sirius Black is innocent, and I do. Rather, Severus does. I was led to it by Hayes, a dead friend of mine. He left some time sensitive prophecies. I've followed them as I should. I've saved so many people and now it's Black's turn. In return for my help, I ask you to help me. Help me save Harry Potter and the entire Wizarding world, okay? My proof is this. Severus?

Severus raised the cloth covered cage and pull off the cloth. A small brown rat sat on the cage floor. Lupin growled and stood up. Carmus drew and flicked his wand at him. Remus hit the chair hard.

"The rat is an animagus, his human name is Peter Pettigrew."
Petunia Dursley fluttered around the yard making sure everything was perfect. She felt a twinge that the *Freak* wasn't here. Then she could have made him do all the difficult work, while she put the finishing touches on it but wasn't just like a loathsome *Freak* to run off. The one time it would actually have been useful! Sighing, she checked to make sure that her hair was still perfect. She couldn't worry about the *Freak* today, and she had worried what to do with it this year, especially after hearing the new. She smiled at the tables placed around her perfect yard. For the first time, she was to have the neighborhood Garden Party. Of course, she chose the same day and time as the Queen, long may she reign. There would be no television of course, but a nice discreet radio with coverage of the queen's party, yes that would be perfect. A long buffet table with watercress and cucumber sandwiches, a record player with soft melodies, and in the corner there was a croquet set ready to be used. Perfect.

There was her Duddy, all dressed up like a Proper Gentleman, and Vernon would be coming soon with his boss. It was going to go so splendidly!

Dayn popped into the space under the hedge quietly. Moving invisibly over to the table, she hopped up and inspected it. Two pots of hot tea and a pitcher of cold tea. Master Snape said it didn't matter but to be careful. The pots will be getting eight drops but the pitcher will get 13 and to stir them well. Carefully Dayn measured out the potion. Theys would be paying for their cruelty. Master promises they would.

Alistair Lockingen sat impatiently in the car. He kept glancing at his watch. In the car in front of him sat two cops, from the social department. His partner drummed their fingers impatiently.

"Alis, how much longer?" Inspector Gabriel Horn asked.

"Not much, they said they'd be here. McGill promised."

A tap on the back windshield made they both jump. Carmus McGill was sitting on the boot of the car. Alistair shook his head and got out. Gabe crawled out the other side. Together they approached McGill and his companion.

"Alis, this must be Inspector Horn. How do you do? This is my Sev Snape. He's a science teacher at the school, I'm sending Harry to. Everyone ready?"

"We've been waiting on you!"

"Piss piss piss piss!" Carmus shook his head, "I'm here now. Let's go. Oy! Bobs, make sure you have the big boy cuffs, Vernon is the size of a grown and half walrus!"

Alistair laughed. "Come on, yer always in a mood when we go to rescue children."

"Rescue nothing, I've already taken him, couldn't leave him here, thought he'd be killed for sure by the time I came back. Not to mention, I knew the kid's parents. Oh, we weren't friends at school but
they were schoolmates, can't leave him. And, he was never supposed to be here anyway. His parents wanted nothing to do with them, left their son, in their will to others to care for. Under no circumstances was he to go to these people. Ah well, at least he starts at my alma mater this year. So try to get the trial before last week of August."

Horn shook his head and looked at his partner. "Alis... you work with this guy?"

Alis cocked his head to the side as he heard the music from the backyards. "They're having a garden party, oh man, you really hate them. Let's go."

Together the six men stepped over the hedge and into the backyard. Carmus held his friend back and pointed out the three Dursleys while he looked for Dayn. She nodded to her Master and disappeared into the hedge again. Handing Alistair a transcript of the recording, he led him over. Petunia was holding court with several ladies and a few gentlemen by the radio. Gabriel moved over quickly and shut it off, causing several people to make noise. Petunia turned around and rearranged her face into a supposedly welcoming smile.

"May I help you?"

Alistair looked at her and handed the transcript to Horn, who had pulled out a mini digital video recorder.

"Are you Mrs. Petunia Dursley neé Evans of #4 Privet Drive?"

"Yes, I am, officer." Petunia darted looks to the side. Perhaps the Freak had died and they came to give her the good news.

"Are you the guardian of one Harry Potter, son of Lily Evans Potter and James Potter?"

"To my great misfortune, yes!"

Eyes opened wider as people moved closer to hear what was going on.

"Good. Is it true that you placed your nephew in a storage closet under the stairs for days on end without food or water."

"Yes, it deserved it. It's so unnatural! That thing masquerading as a child. I don't know why my useless pathetic sister spawned such a beast."

One of the ladies beside Petunia, a rather obese woman with a bull dog on his lap, laughed. "Well Petunia, if there's something wrong with the bitch, something is wrong with the pup. Bad blood will out! If your sister hadn't been a drunk, perhaps the child would have been okay except that she married that druggie Potter! Best they had that car crash, eh? Then the whelp might have siblings!"

Several of the neighbors laughed.

Severus Snape swelled. "I see, perhaps that's why her son looks like the cross between a nag and a walrus, because of his parents." Turning to Horn and Alistair, he spoke clearly. "Lily Evans Potter was no drunk, she was a respected Language Studies teacher at St. Howard's School for Exceptional Children, where I too teach. She taught several languages. Her husband, though I really have no use for an arrogant prat like him, was a respected officer in the Scotland Yard Special Circumstances Counter Terrorism Task Force. Once Lily found out she was pregnant with Harry, she wouldn't even have a sip of champagne. They were murdered by a group that Potter had been tracking. They were awarded Heroes of the Realm, Posthumous."
Horn started. "I see, then this child should have been made a ward of the state first. Her Majesty is always interested in the children left behind of those who are Heroes. Alistair…"

"I know, Gabe. The Queen will take a royal interest in this case. Petunia Dursley, is it true that you once burned six year old Harry's hand on the stove."

"One must correct *Freak* s when they don't do their job right. It had burned my sweet little Dudders' bacon. It was too crispy, we had to throw it away, then the *Freak* had the nerve to try to take out of the trash and eat it. As if I would want to waste money or food on it. I fed it enough to keep it alive, that's all I need to!"

Marge Dursley laughed and snorted. "Too bad it ran away, Ripper here wanted to bite the *Freak* again. Wasn't it fun, Petunia when it chased up the tree four years ago?"

The cops looked at the two women with disgust on their faces. Vernon Dursley was pushing his way through and drew himself up with humph.

"What is all this business about the *Freak*, did it finally do something right and die? If so, just throw the thing in the garbage, we don't want it."

"Die, Mr. Dursley? Did you want your nephew to die? Is that why you beat him until he bled?"

"Death's too good for the thing. It refused to die. Oh it'd disobey or not finish it's chores and no matter how much I beat him, it'd still be rude. It would bleed on our floors, don't know why we had to support the *Freak*, don't they understand it cost money. Oh, we saved some money by giving him Dudleys' old clothes. They only gave us a thousand pounds a month for the brat, how are we supposed to live on that? It was barely enough to give Marge something to buy her kennel!"

Gabriel closed the video recorder. Jumping up on the closest table, she addressed the crowd. "ENOUGH! You have all said *quite enough*. Officers, please arrest Mr. Dursley, Mrs. Dursley, and Ms. Dursley. Charges are child abuse, child endangerment, neglect, attempted murder, and any other charges we can make stick. Separate charges per incident. And for the rest of this… so called neighborhood. You haven't said *near enough*. That we have such people in such an ordinary place like this. You aren't suffering, you aren't poor, you aren't packed into sardine can apartments. You are the so called ordinary people who represent Britain. Our Queen is so ashamed of all of you. That you would do nothing for this child. No matter if his parents *had* been the people you were told, to punish a child for their parents, is against all we are taught. Worse, you saw him beaten, cold, starving, and abused. You did nothing. If I could bring up charges against all of you, I would. You disgust me. You disgust us. You should disgust yourselves, and I know that Her Majesty will be furious with your cowardice. Go now, this party is ended."

All three of the adult Dursleys were handcuffed and waiting by the buffet table. One of the cops had the camera trained on them.

Petunia cried despite her husband trying to comfort her. Turning to him, she wailed. "That *Freak* ruined my Garden Party!"

Alistair stared at her and rolled his eyes.

8:27 pm

Severus Snape hated some Muggles. These were worse than most. Horn had left with the Dursleys and Lockingen had just sent the small whale off to the orphanage. Now, people were going the entire house. What they found in the basement was enough. It was people like this that made him think that
the Dark Lord had the right idea.

Severus waited as the authorities finished up their investigation. Alistair came over to him and handed him the keys. He murmured something and turned to leave.

"Lockingen, you may want to see this." Severus' face stretched into a terse smile. Slowly, he walked to the house next door. Number 2 was a corner lot, it had a nice large yard. Severus knocked briskly. Steps were heard approaching.

"Who is it?"

"Madam, I do not speak through doors, open this door now, or I will open it for you!"

A woman gasped. The door opened, the chain on the door. Alistair stepped up and showed his badge. "Madam, open the door, now."

The door slammed shut, they could hear her trying to take off the chain. Finally she managed and opened the door. Severus strode in as soon as the door opened. He stopped in the dining room. A man, obviously her husband sat at the head of the table. Two older couples, obviously the grandparents and three children were sitting at the dining room table. Severus glared at all of them. Alistair followed, perplexed. Severus dropped a thick folder onto the table in front of the father.

"Due to your reprehensible lack of humanity, on behalf of Harry Potter, who due to the simple fact that James Potter bought this house and the house next door out of the kindness of his heart so that the sisters did not have to be separated, I come bearing news As an agent of Mr. Potter, you owe him much. Think for a moment, if Harry Potter had been killed by those disgusting relatives, they would have inherited your home.

"Imagine what Dursley would have done to you. That folder contains a record of all correspondence the Potter estate has sent you. You were informed of Lily's death and that it was passed to her son. When you learned that Harry Potter was abused, did you ever think to help him, even if you did not care about him, did you care about your home?

"Your rent is now doubled. The estate will no longer pay for landscaping nor an alarm system. If you leave before your lease is up, we can charge you 130% of the rent until your lease is over, or the house is rented and believe me, no one will want to live on this street. Nor will anyone rent to you, once you admit to having lived on this street. I believe your lease has another eight years to go?

"Goodbye." Severus turned, a smirk playing on his lips. He glanced at Alistair and beckoned him to leave. As they approached the door, Severus began to chuckle darkly. Alistair's eyes were sparkling. As soon as he got into the car, he started laughing. Severus nodded and disapparated. Alistair looked at the little bottle that Snape had given him earlier and the instructions. He loved wizards.

Carmus closed his eyes, he knew what was about to happen. Sure enough a couple seconds later, a muffled explosion ripped through the room. Simon sat on the ground, orange dust all over his face and hair. He stared at Carmus who was trying not to laugh. Throwing a pissed off glance at his dad, he stormed out the room and ran into a dark wall. Bouncing off and almost falling again, he held onto Severus' shirt. A jingle sounded as a set of keys fell to the ground. Severus held onto Simon's upper arm. One long pale finger swept through the orange dust. Severus brought it up to his nose and rubbed it. "Tiger's eye and powdered willow bark. You did remember to take it off the flame before adding orris juice, right?"

"No, sir. Sorry."
"Go clean up, don't use anything with cucumber in it nor cinnamon." Snape counseled.

"Thank you, sir. You dropped your keys."

Snape smiled and picked them up. "Hurry before it starts to itch.

Simon laughed and ran off. Snape entered the laboratory and tossed the keys to Carmus.

Carmus laughed, "So?"

"They are in jail and no one is able or willing to bail them out, the Pearsons at #2 were horrendously embarrassed in front of their kids and parents. The whale calf is in a home. Simon saw the keys but apparently did not recognize them. Alistair's contacts have agreed to clip stories and record them."

"Good. Want to help me clean up, then?"

Snape pulled out his wand and banished all the debris. Sitting on the table next to his friend, "No."

Carmus smiled, sometimes just sitting was good too.

Buckingham Palace
4:49 PM

Elizabeth, second of that name, sat at her dressing table before dinner. Picking up the folder she had been given that day. Opening it, she read through it quickly and sighed. Such fools she had in her kingdom. Perhaps now was the time to have the new child protection laws and punishments she wanted to be pushed through. Getting up, she slid on her dress and headed out the door. Entering the dining room, she nodded to her dinner guests. Stopping next to her son, she handed him the file. "Do handle this, Charles and perhaps we can get those protections put through."

"Yes, Mum." Prince Charles replied, before slipping the folder into his jacket.

Pleased, Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth, Second of the Name, Queen of Britannia went to her seat. She was mighty peckish.

July 7, 1991
3:37 pm

Andromeda Black Tonks stood before the floo and wondered how her sister, her ex-sister would behave. No matter what she thought of Andromeda, this was a matter of Blood. A matter of Family. The fire flared and Narcissa stepped through, her arms held out to show she held no wand at the ready. She moved aside and the fire flared twice more to throw out her husband and her son. Straightening up, she headed towards Narcissa.

"Narcissa, thank you for coming." Narcissa Malfoy stiffened and opened her mouth. Andromeda held up one regal hand. "Narci, you are my sister. No matter what the old hag of witch said, you are my sister. Blood of my blood, and you will not stop being my sister because of any declaration. I greet you as my sister. I am glad to meet my brother in law and nephew. We are here to discuss a matter of Blood and Family honor. Now, come into the sitting room, I have all the information set up there."

Andromeda turned and opened the door. Lucius Malfoy's eye twitched minutely and he waved his son and wife through. As a gentleman, he let Andromeda go through before leaving the fire room. He closed the room door and stared at the woman. She walked with the sure grace of the Blacks, perhaps, just perhaps her mother was a little too quick to disown here. She did after all have a child.
who was a Metamorphagus which is a definite Black family trait.

Andromeda opened the sitting room door to show her husband and her daughter. As her sister and son moved past, she stepped in front of Lucius Malfoy. "Mr. Malfoy, no matter what, he is my husband and she is my daughter. I will not let you insult nor goad her. I may have been disowned but I am in my heart still a Black and I remember our true motto, Always True. Remember that, Mr. Malfoy."

Malfoy inclined his head and moved to sit next to his wife. He waited until Andromeda was seated and nodded. "You daughter is a klutz, some might say it's the Muggle blood warring with her witch nature."

Andromeda laughed. "Oh, I know it isn't that. It's simply that Nymphadora can't be still. If I had been a little harsher with her, I would have insisted she work more on her meditation. It's simply because she is confused. She's an Auror because she doesn't know what else to do. Her body grows at odd rates. One leg before the other, but then she is a metamorph, so that makes it harder. As she settles down, her clumsiness will fade. She's just young and it take time. Anything else?"

Lucius Malfoy nodded, "I see, now about your cousin, Sirius?"

Andromeda nodded, a twisted smile on her face, before heading into the room. Sitting down at the head of the table, she opened a folder and slid it over to Narcissa. Narcissa looked at the files. The wills, the financial records, the ministry files. Narcissa paled as she handed each page to her husband.

"I will never forgive Dumbledore for this cruelty." Narcissa seethed.

"I don't blame you, Mrs. Malfoy. I once asked Andy about the trial, she said that in the wizarding world the government can hold secret trials without notifying anyone. This is why the Muggle authorities are not allowed to do so. Oh, what they can do is tell us a trial is closed to the public but we know who is on trial and we know the charges. The files and transcripts are usually unsealed 10 years later. Not to mention, you have no right of petition. Fudge should have been impeached or at least have Questions." Ted Tonks explained.

"Questions, sir?" Draco asked.

Ted turned to the young Malfoy, "Call me Ted or Uncle Ted if you want. Yes, the Official Questions. It's a list of questions that is presented to the Queen in open session. She has to answer the questions. If only to say that she can't answer due to the Official Secrets Act, she has to give an answer."

Lucius nodded, "Yes, that would be a good idea."

Andromeda smiled and raised her eyebrow. "Some Muggles are good, just as some wizards are evil, Brother. My daughter is stronger than some of your associates. It's bad form to constantly inbreed. If I had married who my mother had selected for me, my children would barely be qualified for Hogwarts. Nymphadora received one of the highest scores in Defense as well as Arithromancy. Despite my mother disowning me, my daughter has inherited the Black Legacy. She is a metamorphagus, she can disassemble spells, and craft spells as well."

Narcissa drew in a breath. "Not all such marriages work well."

Nymphadora Tonks drew in a deep breath and let it out, "It's called hybrid vigor. The first generation of new blood causes a surge of strength. Mixing two people with hybrid vigor results in even stronger children. Purebloods have it wrong, Uncle. Very wrong. I'm stronger than most of my
generation, not only that but one of the strongest wizards I know is a half blood.

"Severus Snape, did you think that Snape was a wizarding surname? What about Lily Potter, she was Muggle born and stronger than most. James Potter was strong too, can you imagine how strong Harry Potter is. He STOPPED the killing curse. Even if she helped to block to curse with her own power, have you ever hear of anyone mitigating or stopping the killing curse?

"Did you read the summary of Tom Riddle in that packet, he's a half-blood. Voldemort, the Dark Lord, is a half blood and he was incredibly powerful. I remember talking to Carmus McGill one day when he came by to work on helping Sirius, he said that he was sick of people doing the right thing the wrong way and I didn't know what he meant but now I do.

"Voldemort is right on some things. He was right that abandoned or abused wizarding children should be brought into the wizarding world and adopted. He's right that Muggles can be dangerous to us, they are so... smart, they are so many, and they have advanced incredibly. Yet, the wizarding world hasn't truly advanced in the past fifty years. Muggles can communicate across the world in seconds, we use owls. Muggles use guns and bombs to kill thousands. We are afraid of the killing curse. We are afraid of one curse that kills one person at a time while they have guns that can kill fifty people a second.

"We haven't advanced in good ways or bad. I remember Sirius had mirrors that were two way, but they were limited. A Muggle can use a cell phone to call anyone with a number. I believe that we should take what we can from Muggles, adapt it to our needs, learn to honor our past, and use them both to go into the future."

Ted looked at his daughter with a proud glow in his eyes. Andromeda smiled because she knew her daughter may not know how to walk across a room but she knew how to lay out an argument.

Andromeda turned to her sister, "Enough, blood politics. Now, Fudge has a press conference every year in the middle of Diagon Alley on July 31st. Dumbledore is always there to give us a report on the safety and wellbeing of the Boy Who Lived. We will confront them both at the press conference. Now, this next revelation, I will need your family oath not to reveal it until its due time. It will be a massive blow to Dumbledore which I know you want. Swear this to me, swear what I am to reveal, you shall not speak of save to those who know of this, nor to reveal any details until given leave to do so."

Lucius looked at his family. "By the honor of the Malfoy family, I, Lucius Malfoy give you my word that what we learn of next we shall not speak of save to those who know of this, nor to reveal any details until given leave to do so."

Andromeda nodded, "Thank you, Lucius. As you know, my cousin Sirius is Harry Potter's godfather. Albus Dumbledore placed Harry Potter with Lily's sister and her husband. They hate and fear Magic. They have abused, beaten, starved, and worked him to the bone for the past ten years. And Albus Dumbledore knew it."

Draco stared at them, "He lied, he said that Potter was fine. He said:-"

Lucius slammed one hand on the table, "Where is the child now, Andromeda!"

"Adopted, Adoptio Asylum. He now has a new family and a new name. We can not confront Dumbledore with this knowledge now, instead let him wonder what has happened when Potter is not on the train. The worry will be good for him."
"And how were these disgusting Muggle punished or were they protected from that by Dumbledore's patronage?"

Nymphadora snorted, "If you paid attention to the Muggle news, you would have seen that Mr. and Mrs. Dursley, guardians of a young boy named Harry, and Mr. Dursley's unmarried sister, Marge, were charged with numerous charges of child abuse, endangerment, torture, depraved indifference, and cruelty. Mr. Dursley has lost his well paying job as a district manager for Grunnings Tool and Die. Their house, which they were living in practically rent free, was a wedding gift from James Potter to Lily Evans. He bought two houses side by side so the sisters could live next to each other. They have been kicked out of the house. Their son, Dudley, was removed from their custody and now resides in a state home for children, an orphanage."

Lucius threw his head back and laughed.

July 9, 1991
Diagon Alley
Skints Apothecary

Simon sighed as Carmus took his time looking through potion ingredients. He was tired of potions. Ancient Runes seemed interesting, complex but interesting. Simon sighed. Carmus reached back and cuffed him softly.

"Simon, do tell me, exactly who was it who destroyed the ingredients Mn to Q?"

"You aren't ever going to let me forget that, are you, Dad?" Simon whined.

Carmus winced, "McGills don't whine and no, not today. Just a little while and we'll get most of your school shopping done today. I hate coming on August 1st."

Simon furrowed his brow. "Why August 1st?"

"Traditionally school shopping is done on the first of August. We'll get your wand on the first but I think we'll get your clothes today. Also some formal clothes, you'll need them for the balls and gatherings most people have during the summer."

"You mean I'll be able to get out the house? Really? Truly?" Simon eyes opened wide with amazement.

Carmus put the jar of dust back on the table and turned to face his son. "Such a wise ass you are. Should have beat you more as a child, I should have. Oh well, hindsight is 20/20."

Harry snorted. "Ha ha ha."

"McGills don't snort." Carmus spun Simon around and pushed him towards the register so they could pay for the potion ingredients. Wrapping an arm around his son's shoulder, Carmus led him towards Madame Malkin's Fine Robes for All Occasions.

Carmus opened the door and shoved Simon in, frowning. Grabbing Simon's ear, he leaned down to whisper in it. "You are a young lord. Don't look at me like that, even before, you were a young lord. He was the last of the Ancient and Most Noble House of Potter, and now you are my heir and young lord, so you will be getting clothes proper to your station. Stop arguing."

"Yes, Father." Simon refused to rub his ear as Carmus pointed him to a wooden box. It stood in from of three mirrors, they were angled to show him off at different perspectives. On the box next to him was a young man, about his age but several inches taller.
"Hullo, are you and your father out shopping for the season too? I hate doing it, but father says that it's tradition." The boy reached out a hand to shake, "I'm Draco Malfoy."

"Simon McGill, nice to meet you, Draco. Yeah, my dad says I need whole new wardrobe. So he's picking it out. I pointed out to him that at school I'll have a uniform, and when I'm not wearing it, why can't I wear jeans and a shirt. You should have seen his face. 'McGills don't look like slobs.' " Simon laughed.

"Well, that's true but if you are wearing jeans, someone might think you're a mudblood or something."

Simon's eyes hardened, "People can't choose how they are born, Malfoy. If they could, would you have chosen to be a prick?"

Draco gasped and glared at Simon, "Well at least I chose to be born with manners, you pillock."

"I rather have a brain to think things through than some jumped up snob's idea of nobility!"

Carmus turned around as he heard Simon's voice. Sighing, he stepped forward. One hand on each boy's shoulder, he shook them hard.

"Enough, what is going on here?"

"Indeed, Draco, what is going on?" A smooth voice asked from behind Carmus.

Carmus turned around and smiled at Lucius Malfoy. "Lucius, how are you? Have you seen Snape recently?"

"Carmus, delightful to see you again, we must talk. However, I have not see our friend lately."

"Okay. Now, look you two, whatever you are fighting over, get over it. I was hoping you would be friends. Considering that you two are godbrothers. So what happened?"

"Godbrothers? With this mudblood lover? Never!" Draco turned his head and raised his nose.

Carmus reached up and cuffed him. "Considering that your all powerful godfather is a halfblood, I would think he taught you something other than how to be a spoiled little brat."

"Godbrothers? You mean Snape is his godfather too? And here I thought Severus had taste." Simon sniped.

Carmus thumped the both of them and sighed. "Simon, tell me why you are upset at Draco. Be quiet, Draco."

"I mentioned that I like wearing a shirt and jeans sometimes, he called me a mudblood."

"I said someone might think you're a mudblood, you stupid berk." Draco waved his hand in Simon's face.

Lucius Malfoy looked at his son and raised his cane. Draco winced as the snake head on his father's cane hit him.

"Draco, if not for Carmus McGill, your cousin would not have been proved innocent. If that was not enough, you are speaking of things you know nothing of. Now apologize to your Godbrother." Lucius spoke in a low dangerous voice.
Carmus raised one eyebrow and pointed to Draco. Simon sighed, "I apologize for calling you a prick and a snob."

Draco took a deep breath. "I apologize as well. And I thank you for helping my cousin Sirius, Mr. McGill."

"It's okay, Draco. Just call me McGill. And yes, you are godbrothers. Lucius, can I ask you something? My father never told me because he never expected me to have children, but is it tradition or as ministry rule that children get their wands on August 1st?"

"Hmmm, tradition. So you will be back then?"

"Yes, now you two, try on those clothes, okay? Simon, Lucius has cultivated in Draco, a flair for clothing. Draco, he needs clothing for summer gatherings, Yule visits, formal gatherings, and school. Simon, we will buy you jeans in Ashton Mall. Buy things with room to grow. I need to speak to Lucius for a moment."

Simon and Draco nodded before turning to the clothes that their fathers had placed near them. Carmus leaned against the wall and looked at his old housemate, "Lucius, you aren't going to like this but we need to disintegrate Dumbledore's support base. Those are the Light families, like the Weasleys'. Pettigrew, as you know was hiding at their home. He was hiding as their family rat. The second thing Arthur asked when I let him know this was how we were going to trap him. The first thing was to tell me that however we trap him, he won't risk his family. He is just as loyal to his family as you are to yours. I want you to invite him to your August Garden Party. I know but think of it as paying him back for helping with proving Sirius' innocence."

Lucius' left eye started to twitch, "He is a Weasley."

"Yes, and by inviting him, it makes it seem that he is willing to ally or at like be associated with you. It will cause Dumbledore no end of fits. First, his payments to the Weasleys' get cut off. The Weasleys' don't complain, they say nothing. Dumbledore will see their silence as forgiveness, so he'll show up with money from his vaults and maybe a little more for the inconvenience. They'll use that of course, thank him coolly. Then during the Minister's annual 'Boy Who Lived' fest, we'll embarrass both of them by springing Pettigrew and the proof. It condemns Dumbledore but he's going to find out they've known since middle of June. Then to top it off, when Harry Potter doesn't show up, it will all be crumbling around his ears. After the first week, well the papers are going to get a small delivery all about Harry's guardians. Then… then we get nasty.

"If the Weasley's side with you, others of the Light will follow. You must realize that most of them don't know what the True Dark Wizards stand for, they only know what Dumbledore told them. That you all follow Voldemort and are all bigots. We know that we are not. We must show them what we truly are so that we bring them back to being true Wizards. We let them know they don't need to leave the Light just to be proud of their family and their ability to do magic. At the same time, you and the others can't sneer at them constantly. I know Nymphadora put a bug in your ear about what Muggleborns can teach us. Learn from it and we can unify a great majority of the wizarding world. Muggleborns are a gift to us, we drive them out, we should bring them in. Bring them in, let their minds work to improving our world, rather than the world they came from. We can't stop muggleborns from being born and killing them just decreases the amount of wizards in the world. Instead imagine it, Lucius, we show them the magical world, we wow them, we make them fall in love with it. We guide them, mentor them, we get their loyalty to us. Control, born not of fear but loyalty is always greater. After all, Lucius, how are you raising your son to be loyal to the family? Love or fear?

"It was what Dumbledore was going to do to Potter. Tell me Lucius, is Harry Potter a pureblood?"
"No, he's a halfblood." Lucius answered quickly.

"Why? His mother was a witch, his father was a wizard. She was muggleborn, but she was a witch. He's a pureblood wizard who was raised by Muggles. Horrid Muggles, Dumbledore's plan was simple. Abused child get rescued by a friendly happy groundskeeper, told he is special. Told that Slytherins are evil. Slytherins killed his family. Slytherins hate him. Slytherins tried to kill him. Whirlwind shopping trip, happy happy, kindly old grandfatherly wizard makes himself special to poor child. Smile and candy but make Harry do all the work. In the mean time, he's distracted by the fact that he's always looking over his shoulder to see if the Slytherins are trying to kill him. Sure that any evil plans come from the Slytherins instead of right in front of him. He must be a Gryffindor, his brave, noble, self-sacrificing parents were Gryffindor. Meanwhile a Light family scion will be there whispering how evil Slytherins are. He'll see him self as a muggleborn, so when the Slytherins spout off about pureblood pride and mudbloods, he'll see it as evil aimed at him.

"Dumbledore will spout house unity with one hand, and encourage hatred with the other. Do not, I repeat, do not screw yourselves beyond all reason, got me?"

Lucius nodded. "Perhaps, this bears thought."

"Yeah and we know how hard it is to get a new thought through all that empty space between your ears." Carmus laughed.

Lucius poked him hard in the chest. "You always were an insufferable brat. Fine, I will talk to my 'old crow'. I will not promise anything but… perhaps we can make peace with the Weasleys."

"Lucius tell me, what is this feud with the Weasleys?"

"Two hundred years ago, the Malfoys and the Weasleys owned a business together. Import and Export of Rare Items. To bind the families together, we decided to trade brides. The marriages happened, years pass. Children were born, then the Weasley in question made a bad deal. Weasley decided to sell some items off the books. They wanted the partnership and the Malfoy in question loved his Weasley bride, so to allow peace in the family, he let it go unremarked. Weasley got greedy. He paid the price They were killed by the buyer. The authorities arrested the criminals who murdered the Weasley. A record was found that incriminated the Malfoy with the murder. He claimed it was not his fault. The Weasleys said it was. The Malfoys claimed that Weasley had been stealing for years but the Malfoys were willing to let it go as long as it was penny ante items. .

"In their arrogance, the Weasleys called down powerful magic. Old magic, blood magic, wild magic. They asked for justice. They got it. The magic stripped them of magic for two generations, their vaults were emptied except for one heritage vault that we refused. They lost their manor, they lost their business, and they lost their honor. They have never forgiven the Malfoy clan since."

Carmus nodded, "There would be records, yes?"

"What are you up to?" Lucius prodded.

"Putting rumors to bed, let's me check it out though, thank you. My ultimate plan is to destroy Dumbledore, so this is a start. Now go get your clotheshorse of a son away from mine before I go broke!" Carmus laughed and walked over to check on the boys.
Carmus held the letter in his hand and frowned. He knew what they needed but could Simon handle it. And where was Severus? Knocking on the door, he waited for Simon to ask him in. As soon as he got inside, he noticed Simon at his desk, reviewing pureblood heritage books. Sitting on the bed, he patted the cover next to him. "Simon, will you come here?"

"Sure, Dad."

"Harry," Carmus sighed and handed his son the letter. It was from the Social Services Department. They were requesting a thorough medical examination of Harry James Potter for the prosecution of Vernon and Petunia Evans Dursley. They needed it done at least one week before the start of the trial, August 5th. Simon dropped the pages and turned to look at Carmus.

"Dad, what did you do?"

"They hurt you. They really hurt you and I can't stand it. I can't forgive them that, and don't look at me with those eyes!"

Simon stared at his father, green eyes betrayed. He stood up and turned to face his father. "But… I was free of them. I just wanted to forget! I wanted to forget and stop being Harry Potter! I wanted to forget and just move on!"

"Well you can't! Simon, Harry, you are Harry Potter, I just wrapped Simon McGill around Harry and waited for Harry to grow into his skin! I didn't just do it for you. I did it for your mother! Do you know that the Potter estate has paid the Dursleys one thousand pounds a month! For your care and upkeep. They live in that house rent free. Don't you think it's mighty suspicious that they don't pay rent? That's because of your mother. She… James loved her and saw how much it hurt her that she and Petunia were fighting. When the person who owned both number 2 and number 4 had to sell, James bought them both. In all those years, they have never paid rent, yet they received a thousand pounds PER MONTH to take care of you and they didn't!"

"So… that's… I hate them, I do but I just… I don't ever want to see them. They can't hurt me anymore!"

"No but what about Dudley's kids?" Carmus fell back on the bed, placing a hand under his head, he turned to look at Simon. "I know they lied about how your parents died, but it was a plausible lie. A believable one, right?"

"Yeah, but Dudley doesn't have kids." Simon sat back on the bed, his lips compressed into a tight line.

"No, not yet. Where did your mom come from? How did she get to be a witch?"

Harry grabbed a pillow and used it to muffle a scream. "I don't know! I guess she was a throw back, somewhere a thousand years ago there was a wizard in our tree and no one knew it. What does it matter?"

"Petunia is Lily's sister. Can she carry the trait? Can it be passed onto Dudley? Can he have a wizard
child? What if Dudley, and whoever was unfortunate enough to marry him, did die in a car crash?
Who would inherit the children? What if Petunia got her hands on another innocent wizarding child?
You were innocent. You did nothing wrong. They did. Why should they get away with their crime?"

Simon fell back, rolled over into his father's chest, and started to cry. Carmus held him close. "How
will Dudley ever learn what they did was wrong unless he sees them punished for it. It's part of the
reason I did this through the Queen's Bench rather than Ministry of Magic. If Dudley sees that
'normal' people, Muggles, see what they did is wrong or better yet, Muggles who know about magic
see their actions as wrong. Your whole neighborhood screwed up. And they know it now. Everyone
will soon enough, everyone who ever talked about how wonderful Privet Drive is and gloated about
it, people will be looking at them and wondering what sort of monsters they are. Other parents and
guardians of wizarding children will learn of this, they'll learn about Harry Potter here and Harry
Potter there and realize it is still wrong. Because it was wrong. It was so very wrong. If I could I'd
make them suffer as they made you suffer, forever."

Simon kept crying, his arm around his dad's waist. Carmus stroked his head and held him. "No one
hurts my son, no one.

Carmus brushed a kiss over Simon's scar and sat up carefully. Taking off Simon's pants, he tucked
his son into bed and turned off the light. Casting the light ball charm again, he gently closed the door.
Carmus tried to control his breathing. Stopping at the top of the steps, he noticed that Severus had
come back. In fact, his Severus was three quarters of the way up the stairs. Carmus rushed the five
steps and hugged Severus tight.

"Severus, I hate them. I hate them so very much. I hate them for hurting him so very damn much. I
want them to suffer, I want them to suffer for the rest of their long long lives, and I want them to live
immortally in pain! Severus, they've damaged him. They never even held him. I…"

Severus just held onto his friend and rubbed his back as they headed towards the study. "Let's go to
the study. Tell me, what happened?"

"I had to talk to him about getting a medical exam for the prosecution. He freaked, said he wanted to
just forget it happened. He doesn't want to be Harry Potter anymore. I told him that Simon McGill is
wrapped around Harry, but I love 'em both. He doesn't want them punished mainly because it means
that he would have to face them again. It wasn't until I pointed out that if they ever got their hands on
another wizarding child… what those evil vile cretins would do to that future unfortunate child."

Severus shook his head and pushed Carmus down onto the sofa near the fire. He poured Carmus two
fingers of his favorite aged scotch and sat beside him. "Carmus, tell me. How often is it that a witch
is born and their siblings aren't witches or wizards?"

"Huh? Ummm they aren't. I mean if the oldest is magical, all younger siblings will be magical.
Something about gestating a magical child. It influences the parent. If the mother is a Muggle then all
her children will be magical. Not all really strong but magical. Why?"

"Is Petunia older or younger?" Severus leaned forward, thin stained fingers rubbing against pressed
lips.

Carmus sipped his drink and blinked. "Older."

"So you can't have a younger sibling who is a witch unless the older sib is also a witch or wizard,
correct?"

"Yes, why belabor the point, Severus. Lily is a witch, Petunia isn't."
"But the first magical child from a Muggle mother is always the weakest right? Or if not the weakest, they aren't the strongest. It's the lowest power level that couple can produce. Every other child has at least that much magic but usually more than the oldest, right?"

"Yes, yes, exactly right. Lily was a powerful witch, and her sister… wasn't. But she couldn't be. If Lily was a witch, Petunia has to be unless Lily was adopted. But she wasn't. We did those genealogy trees in sixth year, she was definitely muggleborn. It only went back four generations but she was definitely muggleborn. So… so…"

"Petunia isn't a witch, she's a squib."

"Not exactly, squibs are wizardborn who have no magic. Petunia has to have magic, it's just so weak that she might as well not have it. Petunia is a weak witch."

Carmus stared at his friend and burst out laughing. "Please let me tell her! You got Peter."

Severus took the drink out of his friend's hand and sipped it. "Only if I get to watch."

7:30 pm
East Fork Women's Prison

Petunia moved closer to the wall, groaning. Marge was arguing with the guards again. Something about demanding more food. Marge was standing in front of him, screaming and pointing at him. Petunia crouched lower, eating quickly. Suddenly the pressed paper plate was taken from her and thrown. It hit Marge in the back of her head, splattering the obese woman with gravy, mushy peas, and potatoes.

"Extra food for you, bitch!"

The guard looked around apathetically, trying not to laugh at the woman dripping with food. Suddenly, he stepped back and smirked. Food rained down on the shocked woman. Laughter roared. Suddenly a red apple came and hit her in the temple. The guard stepped up.

"Enough, enough. Come on, Dursley, food time's over."

"But I didn't eat! I demand more food than this slop, I wouldn't feed a dog on this garbage!" She screeched.

A prisoner next to Petunia reached over and grabbed her hair, pulling it harshly, "Bet that's more food than you gave the kid."

Two guards were dragging Marge away… again, she'll probably be locked up in solitary… again. Petunia got up slowly, sore from the beating she had gotten last night and moved with the others as they left. She was half way up the stairs, when she felt someone pushing her. She fell against the railing and down to the steps. The other prisoners laughed as she fell and lay against the cold metal. A guard poked her with the nightstick. Shaking her head, she got up and walked up the steps. At least Marge was looking more fit from skipping all those meals.

July 21, 1991
Number 12 Grimmauld Place
London

Narcissa stepped from the fireplace with all the grace of the Blacks followed by her sister, niece, brother-in-law, and Sirius' best friend. She stared at Remus Lupin. She knew he was a werewolf, even before they had told him of Sirius' innocence. When he was told, his eyes glowed red like the
blood moon just past. And there was another blood moon coming up in five days. Five days after
that they would confront Minister Fudge and Albus Dumbledore. Perhaps it would be smart to keep
Lupin away that day, perhaps maintaining the house.

"Sirius never did like the house all dark like this." Andromeda murmured. "I think the family took
Black to a whole new level."

Narcissa rolled her eyes at his sister's obvious pun. "Truly. Not to mention, dust has piled up and up.
Kreacher!"

A small pop sounded and a truly filthy and destitute house elf bowed low before her. "Oh beautiful
and dark and proper Mistress, Kreacher is here."

"Why is this place so filthy, Kreacher, I remember it looking a lot better."

The house elf whirled on Andromeda, face contorted in a hateful mask. "Kreacher doesn't obey
mothers of mudbloods. No, Kreacher doesn't listen to thems who shame the family. Vile disowned
persons shouldn't even speak. Should be in Azkaban like stupid useless false Master."

A growl sounded and suddenly a dusty cobwebbed sword whistled through the air, slicing the head
off Kreacher. Narcissa jumped back and turned towards Remus Lupin and decided that yes, Lupin
wouldn't be in the party in Diagon Alley on the 31st.

Taking a deep breath, Narcissa let it out and clapped her hands. "Dobby. Mally, Alf, Canny,
Stully."

Five soft pops sounded. Five Malfoy house elves bowed to Narcissa. "Stully, dispose of that carcass
then return and help the others make this place fit for habitation. Alf, Mally, I want this place clean.
Every bit of wood polished until it shines, every bit of brass or gold cleaned. I want this place to be
light and airy. Canny, remove all cursed items to one of the rooms downstairs. Dobby, clean every
vent, pipe, everything. I want this done in three days. You may request as many house elves from the
Malfoy Estates, as long as their jobs get done as well.

"Andromeda, perhaps you and Nymphadora would like to help me figure out some decorating for
the rest of the rooms. I believe we shall paint some of the rooms. Brighten them up. We have four
floors to handle. Ted and Remus, choose a suite of rooms for Sirius, not his old rooms or Regulus',
they contain too many memories. We'll get some trunks to pack up everything in their rooms. His
clothes won't fit anymore. Also set up a room for Harry. Lucius believes that McGill may let the boy
visit for supervised visits. We are all aware of the effects of Dementors."

Andromeda nodded and turned to Remus. "You do know you don't need to go overboard on the red
and gold!"

Remus chuckled waving Ted Tonks over to him. "I won't. Ted, Sirius's room is up on the third
floor."

"MUDBLOODS, TRAITORS, VILE CRETINS, HOW DARE YOU SULLY THE NAME OF
BLACK. BEGONE FROM THIS HOUSE! AND TAKE THAT BETRAYER WOLF WITH
YOU. OH THE SHAME OF -."

Remus Lupin stood in the hallway from where the screaming had been coming. They had forgotten
about the portrait of Walburga Black Black. No one had been able to remove the painting from the
wall. Remus had solved that problem by ramming his clasped hands into the wall behind the former
Mrs. Black. Ripping that section of the wall out. Walburga B. Black lay in her painting, staring up
into the blood red eyes of a very angry werewolf. Her canvas was shredded, pigment running like blood from the tears.

Andromeda turned to her sister, arching one perfect eyebrow. "Well, we never did try that!"

July 21, 1991
McGillis House
Kingston on Thames

Dear Draco,

_Dad said I should write to you, get to know you since we are god brothers. So I thought I'd go first._

_My name is Simon H. McGill, I'm 10 years old now, but I'll be 11 at the end of this month. I spend quite a lot of time in the Muggle world which is why I got so offended by what you said. Muggles really are and aren't that different, but let's not getting a fight. I like potions and history. Professor Snape often comes over to give me summer work._

_My favorite colors are green and navy blue. Rather drab eh? I don't know what I want to be when I grow up._

_Well that's all I can think of right now to say._

_Your godbrother,_

_Simon._

Harry rolled up the letter and pulled out as silvery grey ribbon. Wrapping it around, he picked up a small round of grey wax and pressed his thumb against it. Opening a drawer, he pulled out the ring his father told him, he would have to wear at Hogwarts. Pressing it into the wax, he put on his shoes and headed out his room and through the backyard. Whistling a strange two tone whistle, he waited for an owl to descend. A large tan and cream owl swooped down batting Simon with its' wings. It reached one leg up for the scroll. Leaning forward, Simon told the bird where to go and stepped back. A powerful beat of large wings and the owl took off.

Simon shrugged, hopefully Draco would write back and Dad could stop complaining about him and Draco fighting. Heading back into the house, he headed to the study and flopped onto the couch. His father was pouring over a large book, next to it, was the notebook he carried every place. Carmus sighed but didn't look up until Simon sighed loudly.

"So, I take it, you're bored. Did you finish the history book? The questions too? What about the book on Mind Magic, I'll be testing you later?"

"Yes, Dad."

"Ok, then get up, third bookcase from the left of the fireplace. Middle shelf, first grey book. Grab it. And Simon?"

"Yes?"

"If you remove any book on that shelf without my permission or knowledge, you will regret it, deeply. Understand." Carmus asked, not even looking up from the book he was looking at.

"It's a book on the Nature of Magic. Hogwarts doesn't teach Nature of Magic anymore, which I think is a great mistake. You can know that Wingardium Leviosa will levitate something. In Theory of Magic you might analyze how the spell affect the area surrounding it to achieve it's affect. In Nature of Magic, you don't care about that. Wizards in China levitate things, but they don't use Wingardium Levios. Why? Because the words mean nothing. They are pointless. What matters are two things. One, what do think of when you say Wingardium Leviosa, and two, how you view Magic in it's own right.

"Wingardium Leviosa is considered a 'Light' spell. People think Light is good, Dark is bad. That's not quite true. Severus Snape is a Dark Wizard, and he could be a GREAT Dark Wizard. Yet he is not evil. Hard, demanding, a perfectionist; yes. Still, people fear Dark Magic, probably because it uses the inner core of a person rather than the oh-so-acceptable social mask. You will hear people say Dark Magic is magic used to hurt or kill, but tell me Simon, if I use Wingardium Leviosa, levitate you sixty feet up, and drop you; will you die?"

Simon nodded, trying to see where his Dad was going with this.

"Yes, you will. Wingardium Leviosa is a 'Light' spell, it can't hurt you, can it? Yes, it can. Dark Magic is hidden magic. It's magic from deep within you. Most blood spells are considered Dark because blood links one person to other persons. If I wanted to find out everyone related to you, I use a blood spell. Of course that reveals secrets, say if you were illegitimate or if you were related to someone that we didn't want you to know.

"Light is surface, illusion. Animagus transformation is Light because you only change the outer form of the person. A true transformation is Dark because I change your underlying structure. That book will analyze Light and Dark magic. You won't get the truth in school anymore. In fact, most Dark families are the only ones who study Nature of Magic anymore, that's another reason why so many Light Families are no longer as strong as they were. Think of it like sunlight. If Magic was sunlight and Nature of Magic is a prism. Without knowing the nature of light, would you know that all the colors in the rainbow exist in white light, in sunlight? But you study the nature of light and you learn that within sunlight a rainbow is present. Light families, 'believe magic to be a tool, useful, but why study it, we just have it. It makes us no better nor worse than anyone else'.

"Dark families see it a boon granted to them and like all presents, you want to examine it, find out how it works, study it. It lets us do things no MuggleMuggle could ever do, but it makes better at somethings and worse at others. Now that you have the prism, you can see all the colors in the light."

"Whoa. That's amazing, but why don't they want to study it."

"Because they forgot what Light is. Light magic isn't good because magic isn't good or evil. I can cast Wingardium Leviosa and never say the words, because the words aren't important, focusing my magic is. There are Light users of Magic and Dark users of Magic. Light Users say the inner core of Magic is too wild and chaotic. They say humans can't stand it. The reason each of us walks around with a public face is because humans can't stand that much truth. Dark Users of Magic say only by accessing the inner core of Magic can we be free, that wildness is humanity."

Simon's eyes were wide, "And you?"

"I'm neither, I'm Grey, and I like it that way. Now take your book up to your room. Dinner is in about 40 minutes."

Simon nodded and left.

Carmus sighed and went back to the prophecies. He really hated the thankfully few lyrical
prophecies Sean had made. Well that's the Express...

The howling beast on the way to school
The weasel who is a fool
The busy hedgehog who trust in sires
The white ferret who tries to bind in wires
The young blossom running from strangling tool.

Four friends
Four enemies
Two heirs
Bind them
Release them
Never Betray them.

July 21, 1991
Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry
Potions Room

Severus Snape consulted his list and wrote down how much Flaxweed he had. Moving to the next bottle, he didn't hear the door open until it closed. Refusing to turn, he went on cataloguing his inventory. School started in less than six weeks and he needed to turn in his request now so the suppliers could finish the orders before classes begin. He knew who had entered his domain without his permission. Placing the sheet down, he duplicated it and put the duplicate into his file.

"What do you want, Headmaster? Snape rapped out as he picked up another section of inventory list.

"Now, Severus, you weren't answering your floo. I see you are getting ready for the new school year."

"What do you want, Headmaster."

Albus Dumbldore sighed. "This new year will be quite special, Severus. This year, Harry Potter comes to Hogwarts. Potions are required for all students until their fifth year. I know you did not like James Potter, and I understand why. However, I must ask you not to take your temper out on Mr. Potter."

"Headmaster, I will treat the brat like I treat all the other brats. As the idiots they are, now if there is no other reason, may I finish this inventory so they can use our supplies to cause even more havoc."

"Severus, my boy, I had thought you would be over this anger at a simple prank so many years ago?"

"Prank, you mean their attempt at murder. Yes, yes, I know. A Slytherin's life is worth less than a werewolf's secret. Now if we have rehashed the prime reason to hate and despise any spawn that has ever or will ever issue from those families. May I now finish this unrewarding job?" Snape replied bitterly.

"Severus, I must warn you again, that you are not to take any anger out on Harry, the poor boy has been through enough with the loss of his parents and godfather."

"Yes, and if you had acted when it was merely a Slytherin's life at stake, maybe he wouldn't have betrayed your precious Golden Couple."

"Severus!" Dumbledore sighed and calmed himself, slipping a lemon drop between compressed lips.
"Severus, you must give up this anger. What is done is done. Severus, I did what I had to do for the greater good. We who serve the Light may not like it but understand its need."

"If that is all, Headmaster."

"Yes, yes, that is all I wished to speak of at the moment. Will the list be ready soon?"

"Within the hour. Good day, Headmaster."

"Good day, Severus."

Albus Dumbledore walked back to the fireplace and threw in floo powder, calling 'Headmaster's Office' as he stepped into the flames

Frowning, he headed for his chair behind his desk and sat down. Severus did not once look him in the eyes, of course it could have something to do with Harry Potter. It was interesting how angry Severus still was. Part of it, to be sure, is that Black was inherently a Dark Wizard like Severus and Severus saw it almost as a betrayal of Magic itself for Sirius to do as he did.

Albus sighed and consulted the stack of letters. So many wonderful young children. Of course some must fall inevitably into the darkness that is the bane of Slytherin and the Dark. Parkinson, Goyle, Malfoy, Crabbe; all of them no doubt already lost raised by Slytherins they had no chance to enjoy the Light. So many lost, though there were a few like his Severus who yearned for the light, strove for the light. Weasley, of course would the epitome of a Gryffindor. Potter, now there was the shining light, once out of the reach of those horrid Muggles, he would turn to Light guided by his beloved old Headmaster. Yes, that would make a fitting cap to a life devoted to spreading the Light.

One more letter caught his eye.

Simon H. McGill
McGillis House
Kingston-upon-Thames

McGill… so familiar. Severus! Yes, he and his two friends. Carmus McGill and Sean Daton. The Daton boy once made a prophecy that came true, actually more than one, he was always carrying around shrunken book to write in. And yet Severus inherited almost nothing from Daton on his death, everything seems to have gone to McGill. Albus combed his beard with his hand. Strange that Daton was a prophet while McGill… the McGills were Shadow Wizards. A Prophet, a Shadow wizard, and a Potions Master. A trio that could and did put the Marauders to shame. If only they had used their remarkable talents for the Light. It might not be too late for the newest McGill.

Pulling out a sheet of parchment, Albus started writing a letter to Mr. McGill, it might be a prudent idea to visit the McGills

July 30, 1991
Kingston on Thames
London

Carmus held the letter from the Headmaster and shook his head. He had already sent off his reply that they could meet tomorrow after the Minister's speech. Of course they'd never make that meeting but Albus didn't know that! Turning to think of more pleasant things, he thought of the letter, he had sent to Shacklebolt. This birthday would be Simon's best. Taking a letter from a black eagle owl, he noticed it came from Draco.

"Simon, you have a letter from Draco."
A tan hand reached across his neck and snatched it. Simon hugged his father and slid into the seat next to him. "Thanks, dad. Hmmm Draco wants to know if we can come to a Party at the Manor, August 17th. May we go?"

"Of course. In fact, I was thinking of letting you go visit Severus the first weekend in August, Draco will be there." Carmus smiled. "Now, tomorrow is your birthday and if I know him, Severus will be here tomorrow but I was thinking… about letting you see your first 'Boy-Who-Lived' Festival. Every year on your birthday, the ministry throws a huge party to celebrate your triumphing over the evil Dark Lord Voldemort. The Minister of Magic, Cornelius Fudge, gives a speech about how many Dark artifacts have been found, how children have been rescued from 'Dark influences', how many Dark beasts have been… dispatched. A basic S'tate of the Wizarding Britain' speech. After the applause dies down, Albus Dumbledore comes on stage and tells the people about the past year in their Savior's life. How he's living in a large house in the English countryside with two foster brothers and a sister. How he's growing up healthy and hale. How he loves his foster parents and sports, that he's getting B's in school and that he couldn't wait to rejoin the Wizarding world."

Carmus could feel pulses of magic coming off Simon, his green eyes bright with pain and betrayal.

"How dare he? HOW DARE HE? I spent years being beaten, starved, slapped, picked on, punched, put down, told I'm worthless and he tells them that I live a perfect life!"

"Simon! Calm down. Did I not promise to take care of you, my son? SIMON!"

Simon shook with rage as his father held him close, whispering words into his soft red mahogany hair. Finally Simon started to calm down, his trembling slowing gently.

"We will topple him, destroy his influence, his power, everything he holds dear. I will destroy him for you, my son. Just as I have destroyed the Dursleys', I will destroy him. I will paint your hands with his blood if that is what you want. I swear."

July 31, 1991
Grimmauld Place
11:17 a.m.

Andromeda looked over the fire room. It had been redone. All the original wood and fittings had been left, but the walls had been painted, starting with a deep green that lightened almost to a pale leaf green at top. The furniture had been cleaned and some of them reupholstered. All in all, it was wonderful change.

Nymphadora came up behind her mother, carrying the folders for the reporters. They had made thirty copies of the evidence. Narcissa came through and admired the room, followed by her son and husband. Remus sighed and opened the radio cabinet.

"I wish I could go with you, but I doubt I could control myself and keep from killing both of them. They had no right to destroy my pack, therefore I await your word."

Narcissa Malfoy walked over to him and laid a hand on his arm. "Remus Lupin, Sirius is my favorite cousin and I have seen your regard for him. Trust me, we will get your mate back. Merely wait here and receive him. After that we will wait a month so that you may help repair him. I have spoken to a Mind Healer from St. Mungo's, they'll contact you near the end of August. But I swear by my Magic as a Dark Witch that he will pay for keeping your mate from you."

Remus watched as they entered the fire and turned on the radio.
"This is Derek Discord from the WNN, and in about 10 minutes, the Minister of Magic will be speaking on this day of Festival. Remember."

10:45 am
McGillis House

Simon held onto his broom despite his father trying to pry it from his fingers.

"Simon, leave your broom. I know, it's a grand gift but you need to leave it. You can't fly it in Diagon Alley."

"But dad…"

"No. Sev, help me with this." Carmus looked at his friend.

Severus sighed and pressed his fingers against the boy's lower arm, right below the bend of the elbow. Simon's hand sprung open. Simon looked at his godfather.

Severus merely shrugged. "We need to go if we want to see the fireworks."

"It's a quarter to eleven… in the morning! What fireworks?" Simon cried out.

"Why the fireworks when Minister Fudge blows up after Narcissa and Andromeda get through with him. In fact, I wish that they had brought the werewolf.

Simon smiled, "They're going to get Sirius free?"

"Yes, which is why I need you to go through now, I have something important to give them. If they don't have this, it won't work, so please go through!"

Simon threw the floo powder into the fire and called out, 'Alley Hangout'.

He felt arms around him as the floo spat him out. Draco caught him.

"Hello, Dragon."

"Hey, Simon. One of these days…"

"Yeah, Dad said he had something for you. Snape glided from the floo followed by Carmus holding a piece of string that was tied around an ankle. As he moved out of the floo, Peter Pettigrew floated behind him.

"Kingsley Shacklebolt is an Auror, one of the best, not to mention a member of Dumbledore's esteemed 'Order of the Phoenix'. As a senior Auror, he will have sealed Ministry grade Veritaserum. Amelia Bones will be on the stage, she's incorruptible, she's also head of the Department of Magical Law Enforcement. She will likely move fast on this, she hates Fudge, because he lets politics get in the way of justice. She doesn't much like Dumbledore. She thinks Dumbledore is a manipulative old man, don't know why?" Carmus chuckled. "Lucius, just Finite each charm to get Pettigrew down, unsilenced, and unpetrified. We'll be watching from up here. Also, I got someone who knows Pettigrew to ID him. Have fun!"

The group left, unintentionally to be sure, banging Peter into walls.

Carmus set up three seats and a table on the balcony of the apartment they were in. It had a terrific view of the stage and the Minister of Magic was just beginning his speech.
Carmus tapped Simon on the shoulder and pointed to a old man on the right. He was wearing a cloth of gold robe with silver and brass planets. The stars were made of small diamond chips. His pointed cap ended with a shimmering gold scarf and his shoes were the same pattern with silver taps and high heels.

Carmus frowned, "I wonder how much of your money funded that."

Simon just glared at the old man.

"-and in conclusion, I believe that we are safer than ever before! Together-" Cornelius Fudge was building up to thundering conclusion when green sparks flared from several wands and exploded in the air.

Narcissa Malfoy walked forward on the arm of her husband and people moved out of their way. She mounted the steps, staring down the Minister, who had thought to bluster over to them. Nymphadora Tonks followed Narcissa, walking beside her cousin, Draco, who was in turn followed by Andromeda and Ted Tonks.

Nymphadora stood in front of the microphone. "Wizard and Witches of Britain. I am Nymphadora Tonks. I am an Auror, and recently, I discovered that our Minister and Headmaster Dumbledore have allowed someone to be imprisoned in Azkaban without a trial even though they had no proof to his guilt. Because we trusted them, when they said that Sirius Black was guilty, we believed it. But there was no trial. He never got to testify. There was no Veritaserum for my cousin. Yet he is innocent and I have the proof. Before we stepped up here, Draco and I, handed each of you a folder. You may now open them. The first thing is a will, James Potter's will, in which he stated that they had changed Secret Keepers from Sirius Black to Peter Pettigrew.

"We all know Magical Wills can not be lied on, the will's magic won't accept a lie. Look at the first witness on both James and Lily Potter's will; Albus Dumbledore. He performed the Fidelius, the one person that completely understood Fidelius, just as he knew that Sirius Black could NOT have betrayed the Potters. Now, I ask Kingsley Shacklebolt to come up here, I know he is on duty. All on duty Aurors have access to certain Ministry aproved items." Nymphadora waited while behind her, Fudge went pale. Dumbledore stood up, eyes twinkling; in a minute, four wands were pointed at him. None of them looked him in the eye. Sitting down, Dumbledore waited.

A few minutes passed as Kingsley came up to the stage. He paused and looked at Tonks. "I do hope you know what you are doing."

"I do, Kingsley." Tonks nodded to Lucius and suddenly the disillusionment charm fell.

Albus gasped and stood once more only to find the wands still on him. Lucius floated Peter over the crowd. From one section, he could hear a woman screech.

"Dear Merlin. It is Peter Pettigrew!" Mad Eye Moody exclaimed.

A large woman forced her way up close to the platform. "Augusta Longbottom. Now Mr. Malfoy, bring him closer, for I knew Peter well and I'll see if it truly him or if you made this up."

"Very well, Madam Longbottom."

Lucius floated him lower. Augusta reached up and pulled his open his shirt to look on his back.

"Aye, it is him. Many times, I baby sat him and his birthmark is there. This is Peter Pettigrew of that no doubt! I'll stake my honor on it!"
A brown haired woman in a functional black robe with a DMLE patch on the breast came forward. She carried a wooden box. Opening it, she took out a clear vial and waved Peter towards her.

"Mr. Malfoy, you may unsilence him."

"As you wish, Minister Bone." Lucius canceled the silencing spell.

She placed three drops on Peter’s tongue.

"Are you Peter Pettigrew?"

"Yes." He replied.

"Who betrayed the Potters?"

"I did."

The crowd started muttering and growling.

"Who killed the Muggles in the bombing on November 1st 1981?"

"I did."

"Did Albus Dumbledore know that Lily and James changed Secret Keepers?"

"Of course he did, he gave me the secret to keep."
August 1, 1991

Daily Prophet, front page

ALBUS DUMBLEDOR,
Lord of Light
Or
Lord of Lies?

Ever since his quick and all too easy defeat of the Dark Lord Grindlewald, Albus Dumbledore has been known as a symbol of the Light. He is a well known advisor to many people from our own Minister to Presidents of far off countries such as Russia. He is the example we point out to our precious children. How many of us have looked at ourselves in a crisis and asked, "What would Dumbledore do?" He so amazed us that we entrusted to him our very children for generation after generation.

This is why, perhaps, his betrayal is all the more cutting and cruel. This paladin of Light has lied to us for half a century. Hard to believe but this man who moved among us as an Avatar of Light is the origin of more harm to our world than any could have believed.

The first charge, and by that we mean merely the most recent to be discovered, is that he did knowingly allow a man to be thrown into Azkaban despite knowing of his innocence. Yes, Azkaban. He willingly left an innocent man to be feasted on by Dementors for almost ten years. Sirius Black, known for betraying the Potter as well as killing Peter Pettigrew and twelve Muggles during a vicious explosion that occurred only a day after the Potter's death, on a Muggle street. This well known fact is nevertheless... wrong. Sirius Black did not betray the Potters. He couldn't have. The Potters', it is now known, were under the Fidelius Charm. Headmaster Dumbledore was the caster. Sirius Black was supposed to be the Secret Keeper, however due to his flashy lifestyle it was decided to choose someone else, someone who was less likely to attract You-Know-Who's eye. Peter Pettigrew.

Peter Pettigrew is the one who betrayed the Potters. The next day, Sirius Black hunted Pettigrew down, was he going to kill him? We don't know. What we do know is that Pettigrew planned the confrontation. He allowed Black to find him in that particular area. Then he screamed out his accusation against Black and detonated a set of Muggle explosives that he had secreted in the street. Pettigrew had cut his finger off sometime during the night and threw it in the street before detonating the explosives.

The Minister of Magic at the time Barty Crouch Sr. put Sirius Black into Azkaban without a trial on November 1, 1991. Where was Albus Dumbledore? Why did he not insist on a trial for Black? As Supreme Mugwump of the International Confederation of Wizards, he could have called on Minister Bagnold to produce the trial transcripts, if she wouldn't, when Fudge was elected, he could have tried again! He could have gone to the public, but he chose not to. Some have told this reporter that Albus Dumbledore did not do so because after so much fighting and death, he did not want to put the British Wizarding World through another scandal. In other words, he did not stand up for Sirius Black sanity and life, for the greater good. However, the greater good is made up of everyone's good. If we sacrifice one wizard's life or sanity, then next time will it be difficult to sacrifice one family's? Or maybe one house, such as Slytherin? Or perhaps one village, one city, or one town? How is that for the greater good? In ignoring one person, it made it easier to harm everyone else.
After all, if he could, as he did, sacrifice Sirius Black for some idealized image of the 'greater good' then what else would he not sacrifice? It is a slippery slope Albus Dumbledore ran down.

Lord of Lies, definitely.

Lord of Light, supposedly.

For Amelia Bones' reaction, see page 2
For a transcript of Pettigrew's initial interview, see page 3
For a brief history of You-Know-Who's life and how Dumbledore impacted it, see page 4
For Cornelius Fudge's response, see page 5
For the Hogwarts Board of Governors' response, see page 6

August 1, 1991
6:00 am
Number 4 Privet Drive

Dayn popped into Number 4. Walking into the Kitchen, she noticed a letter lying on the table. It was Harry Potter's Hogwarts Letter. Picking it up, she popped home.

August 1, 1991
7:50 am
Alley Hangout
Diagon Alley

Carmus stretched and yawned. Perhaps he had been overcautious with Simon this summer. Now that he was but footsteps from Diagon Alley, the boy wanted to see it all. Simon was practically bouncing off the wall. Carmus growled, "SIT!"

Simon stopped in his tracks and sat down at the table.

"Eat, and then we shall go out. Keep your ears open. They have thrown the fox into the hen house. Look at the Prophet's front page. By the way, here is your Hogwarts Letters, both of them. Touch them so they will be 'received'." Carmus handed Simon the paper and started to fix another plate.

No sooner than he set it down than Severus appeared, dressed in his customary high collar black on black robes. The undervest was impressed with snakes biting each other's tails. His hair pulled back with a black velvet tie but left loose. Cutting his food precisely, he waved the knife at the paper.

"Front page?"

"Yes and no. Sirius' release is below the fold, above the fold is Albus Dumbledore's betrayal of all of the Wizarding Britain. Apparently Amelia Bones is going after Dumbledore and Crouch and Fudge, if they can get Fudge. At the least, she's calling for Dumbledore to be impeached as Supreme Mugwump and banned from serving in public office. She's also demanding that a portion of the reparations payment come from the Dumbledore vaults. So it will not surprise Dumbledore that there is no activity on his vaults, he can't access them while they are under dispute. He can have perhaps a thousand Galleons or the equivalent thereof but that's all. It will be hard times for Dumbledore. Which reminds me, did you know Barty Jr.?

Severus frown, laying the flat of his knife against his bottom lip. "Vaguely. He was a rather cretinous follower. Why?"

"Because Crouch Sr. killed his wife rather than let his son accept his punishment. Apparently Mrs. Crouch was so grieved over her son's actions that she was bed stricken and wanted to die. Whether it
was her idea or his, they fed her polyjuice. Gave her a flask of it. She traded places with her son and died in Azkaban. Crouch Sr. snuck his son out, polyjuiced as her, and keeps him imprisoned in his house while under watch by a very loyal house elf. "Carmus reached over the stack of pancakes for the juice.

Severus's knife clattered onto the plate. "And how exactly do you know? No, the book, fake Moody. I see, and you wish to somehow give this over to Bones. You need to find a way to do so, discretely. Since he is already under suspicion for throwing people into Azkaban without a trial… I'll talk to Lucius."

"At least, they'll get a trial; so many trials, so little time." Carmus snickered.

Simon rolled his eyes.

An owl flew in, several Muggle letters tied together. Carmus untied them and started sorting them. Opening one from Crown Prosecution Services, he paled and sighed. "Damn, I forgot to get you checked out, Simon. They need the medical files, I'm sorry."

Severus smiled. "I already sent them.

"Excuse me?"

"You probably didn't even notice that I left and came back during that first night I was here. I needed someone to give him a deep diagnostic check before I could refine the potions or give him the Asylum potion. I had her make a Muggle style copy and kept it aside, just incase you decided to deal with the Muggles through the Queen's Bench. I've already sent the prosecutor a copy. The mediwitch I used has Muggle credentials as well."

Carmus turned a small smile on Severus and held out his hand. "Thank you."

"His prophecies may be for you, but care of you has been left to me." Severus remarked before standing up and heading back to his room.

"Hedgehog." Simon complained.

"Yes, but if you tickle their stomach they laugh. It's worth a few stickings to get them to laugh. Eat up and then we'll go hit Diagon Alley, we still need to get your wand and go to Gringotts. I've never taken you there before, you'll like it. Goblins are fascinating. Eat up!"

Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry
Main Hall
8:10 am

The school mail owls screeched as they came in, as well as several other owls. Some of the owls holding more than one or two envelopes. As Albus Dumbledore looked at them, he realized there were only a few that were not red. Several owls peeled off from the pack and dropped a copy of the Daily Prophet in front of each teacher. Minerva McGonagall picked up the paper and read over the article.

"Oh Albus, is this true? Did you know that Peter Pettigrew was the one who betrayed James and Lily? No, of course you did. How could you let Sirius Black suffer for so long when you had the power to change it?" Minerva cried.

Seated next to her Aurora Sinistra snorted. "Simple, because no matter how Gryffindorish Sirius Black was, he was still a Black. A member of a Dark Family. Really Minerva, Dark doesn't mean
Evil, but to our esteemed Headmaster, he couldn't see past the Dark Family."

Minerva turned towards her shocked. "Sin, but…"

Sinistra stood up, picking up her coffee and paper."I am Dark. Of a Dark Family and I challenge any of you to say that I'm Evil. Yet of all of us here, right now, who has tracking charms on their wands? Not you, Minerva."

Minerva McGonagall turned towards the Headmaster, who twinkling eyes had dimmed.

"Ah, Sinistra, my dear, perhaps we…"

"Oh look, your owls are getting impatient, Headmaster." Sinistra turned on her heel and left, "Minerva, it's a mistake to think that Dark children only go to Slytherin. I was a Ravenclaw."

The Deputy Headmistress stared at her friend and colleague as she walked away. Behind Dumbledore, several red envelopes dropped hurriedly from owl's talons as they exploded.

"TO THINK I BELIEVED IN YOU, YOU TWO FA-"

"-NOW WE KNOW WHAT PUT THAT TWINKLE IN YOUR EYE, YOU -"

"-T YOU KNOW I HAVE WRITTEN TO THE GOV-"

"NOW WE KNOW WHAT YOUR FRIENDSHIP IS WOR -"

"- DECIEVER, FALSE PRETENDER, LIA-"

Number 12
Grimmauld Place
Fire room
9:11 am

Sirius Black stared at the fireplace. His eyes barely focusing, beside him on the sofa sat Remus. His friend presence really reaffirmed that he was no longer in that hell called Azkaban. Seated on chairs and sofa around him were his family. He recognized Andi and Narci, so that meant the blonds were Lucius and… Damien? So the dark haired man was Ted and the young woman was Nymphadora. Sighing, he leaned back against the sofa, Remus' arm pulling him close. He knew that the wolf in his friend almost demanded that pack be close.

"So… it's been almost ten years. Remmy, why did it take Albus so long to work it out? I mean I don't remember much of the 'official apology' but it wasn't Crouch." Sirius' voice cracked.

Everyone looked at each other. Lucius had a disdainful look on his face and barely repressed a sniff. Damien shook his head.

Remus sighed tiredly, "It wasn't Albus who got you out. Albus did nothing for you, he left you there! Dumbledore… the ones who got you out are in this room, except for three others. Do you remember Sean Daton and Carmus McGill?"

Sirius turned to face Remus, "But… but their Slytherins and they hate me!"

"Slytherin doesn't mean evil and they don't hate you. Andromeda and Narcissa still think of you as family. When McGill came to them with the information that you were innocent and people knew that you were, they decided to get you out. Although we do appreciate that he did stop Nymphadora
from breaking you out."

Several of the group laughed.

"It appears that Daton is a haruspex. He knew. He knew and he apparently wrote it down in a book for McGill. McGill told us, he's following Daton's instructions and that you couldn't be freed until Harry was freed. The other person you should thank is Severus. Despite your cruel jokes as a child, even he was appalled by your being locked in without a trial. Though he has told me than while ten years was too long you deserved at least three. And I have to agree with him." Remus continued, stroking Sirius' hair. "Though I'm glad you're home."

"Remmy!"

"You led him purposefully to a room where a wild werewolf was. I know that all I could tell was 'fresh meat, so delicious', so don't tell me that I wouldn't have killed him. I was hungry, I would have killed him. He wasn't pack. And you knew it. You knew it and you led him almost to his death and still, he worked to get you out. So I'll not hear of it, Sirius Orion Black. Right now, you have to spend time recovering." Remus snapped his finger and asked the responding house elf to put breakfast on the table. Nodding to the others, he invited them to breakfast, taking care to stick close to Sirius. This was the fifth time this morning they had had this exact conversation, it was time to break the pattern.

"Remus, where's Harry?"

Diagon Alley
10:25 am
Leaky Cauldron

Carmus waved Simon and Severus to their seat and sat down. "Simon, can I see your wand for a moment?"

"Sure Dad. He said it was twelve inch honey oak with basilisk scales and unicorn hair. Severus, aren't they natural enemies, how can I have a core with both?"

Severus nodded. "They are enemies but not perfect opposites. It should be good for DADA, hexes, charms, and more complex spells. A good wand for you. I talked to Lucius and Narcissa last night. They will be flooing Draco here in a few moments to spend the rest of the day with us."

Simon nodded, "What about Sirius?"

"Madame Bones ordered him immediately freed, so he was. They picked him up late last night. Remus is taking care of him at his house."

"Ok, um does Draco have his wand?"

"They got it yesterday before they confronted the Minister and the Headmaster. His wand is well suited for him as well. Ah," Severus raised one hand and waved.

Simon turned around to see Draco and he smiled. The pale boy was quick of wit and had a dry sense of humor. It could be mean but Simon could also just hit him when he gets nasty. Draco sat down with a quick smile at Simon and brought out his wand.

"Hello Mr. McGill, Godfather, Simon. Did you get your wand already Simon?"

"Yeah, Dad has it. The guy who runs the place… is odd."
Draco smirked. "Hawthorn and unicorn hair, 10 inches. Yes, Ollivander. I'm not sure he's entirely human."

Carmus raised one eyebrow while Severus frowned. Simon shrugged. "I don't want to date him. Who cares, but it might be why he's so good at his job. So what are we going to do today?"

McGill stood. "I'm going to London for a while. You two are going to spend some time with your godfather, he says he owes both of you a birthday present."

Both boys turned to look at Severus who was frowning at his friend. "Coward."

"Definitely, have fun boys!" Carmus wiped his mouth and stood up to go pay at the bar.

Severus sighed and stood up too, "If you are ready Simon, Draco."

The two boys were halfway to the door before Severus finished speaking. When he next caught Carmus…

11:10 am
Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry
Headmaster's Office

Carmus stepped through the floo and walked over to the Headmaster's desk. "Headmaster Dumbledore, I do apologize for not keeping my appointment yesterday with you, however considering… the circumstances, I believed you would be busy with the Minister of the DMLE."

Dumbledore nodded, eyes looking weary but still with a twinkle in them. "Yes, dreadful business. It has been hard but school starts in a month and I must make sure that everything is ready. On the upside, giving up the Mugwumpship means I can devote more time to the administration of the school. One should always look to the lighter side of things. So, Carmus, if I may call you so, I was surprised to see your son on our list. I wasn't aware you had a son."

"Well, Headmaster, my son is quite special and dear to me. I didn't tell may people about his birth, save Severus, especially since his ummm… mother is dead. However, he's a good kid. He's a little reluctant to go to school. I really can't blame him, he's a home boy. He was raised out in the Muggle world but he's always been a wizard. However he has a friend in his year so it should all be good."

"I see, well I was hoping to meet, young Simon. He seems to be a very happy young man."

"I'm sorry, Headmaster but he's spending the day with his godfather. His godfather wanted to make up for not spending as much time as he wanted to with Simon on his birthday."

"I see… well I'm quite afraid I haven't heard much about you after school. Tell me, what have done since school?"

"Oh, I took classes at Uni, got my qualification for teacher though I never sat my certifications. Sean… wanted me to. He said that it would stand me in good stead and his prophecies always came true. We lived together for a while, he and I. Sean Daton, same year, same house as I. Yes, we lived together but Sean was sick, he died about five years ago. I miss him. Sorry, I was getting lost in my memory."

Dumbledore looked at him, sadly and offered a cup of tea. "It is sad when we lose those we love. Truly."

Carmus shook his head as if to clear it of cobwebs and stood up. "Yes, it is. I was so happy that you
allowed Severus time off to attend the funeral and reading of the will, Headmaster. I'm sorry but it is approaching noon and I have an appointment in London. So, I do apologize but I must go, may I use the floo?"

Headmaster Dumbledore waved at him and Carmus headed out.

Crown Prosecution Services  
Room 1227  
London  
12:15 pm  

Alistair Lockingen and Gabriel Horn sat in the room with Petunia Dursley. Fifteen minutes earlier, she had a cup of tea, well laced with Veritaserum. A knock on the door surprised them. Gabriel got up and let in Carmus McGill. The Queen knew of him, that was the only reason she was allowing this interview. Magic, Wizards, all this was incredible. No excuse for abusing a child but incredible itself.

Carmus sat down and nodded to Petunia. Turning on the recorder, he placed a small rock on the outer edge of the table. Gabriel was surprised to see it glow a nice yellow.

"My name is Carmus McGill, I am conducting the interview of Petunia Evans Dursley on behalf of the Crown and the Ministry of Magic in the presence of Inspectors Gabriel Horn and Alex Lockingen, both of which are privy to the knowledge of Magic as is the defendant.

"The accused is charged with numerous charges of child abuse, child endangerment, slavery, torture, violations of child labor laws, abusing a magical child, defrauding said child, illegal seizure of property, and funds that were not theirs to handle. The child in question is also suing for the sum of £116,000 pounds. Sum arrived as the £1000 per month paid to the Dursleys for the care of one Harry Potter that he did not receive. Harry Potter was delivered on the first of November 1981 and removed at the end of June 1991. The last two months of 1981, the 108 months of January 1982 to December of 1990, and the six months from January 1991 to June 1991. Two plus 108 is 110 plus 6 is 116. As well as the rent of a comparable house, the sum arrived at by taking the yearly average of rent for all houses on Privet Drive per year, which is found to be £890,24, so far that is 205,024 He is also suing for physical, mental, emotional, and psychological damage on the order of £290,000. For a grand total of £495,024. For simplicity's sake, let's make it a even half million pounds. I know you can't afford it; so all your possessions will be sold at auction, and all stocks will be cashed in, and any bank accounts will be turned over to Mr. Potter to pay off your debt.

"Now Petunia, face me. I want to let you know something. Your sister was an extremely powerful witch. That doesn't make sense, since you have evinced no magical abilities. But if a Muggle woman gives birth to a magical child, all her children are magical. The first born magical child of a Muggle woman is the weakest of all of her magical children. You were first born. You, Petunia are a witch. A weak witch but a witch none the less. A witch who has betrayed the Wizarding world. I can lock you up in Azkaban. I think Harry would like it. I know I would. A Dementor who would come every few hours and suck out any joy you could dredge up.

"Now, your husband mentions that you beat Harry to make sure the freak didn't use his magic on you. You really don't know what hell I saved you from. When a wizard's, When a wizard has been so abused as a child that they lose their unconscious control over their magic And their magic explodes from them, it's called accidental magic. Now some outbursts of magic are normal." Carmus slammed his hand down, startling Petunia, who looked at him with fear. "Pay attention, you rotten maggot sucking child abusing morally impaired bitch. Normal outbursts are normal but think of a basket, fill it with sand, it will leak a bit but that's normal, it helps keep it from bursting. Compress the
basket, pack in the sand. BAM! It explodes. If Harry had exploded, a Dementor attack would feel like Christmas. You risked your life with every… single… beating."

Petunia brought her clasped hands to her mouth, eyes wide with fright before she started crying.

"Petunia, just so you know. If he had killed you by uncontrolled magic, he wouldn't stand trial. They would have examined him and his environment; they would have viewed his memories. You, your pathetic walrus husband, and that useless baby whale of yours would be tossed in some hole in the ground, with no marker. That's how the wizarding world deals with those who we credit as worthless. Now, you will start talking and tell us everything you did to that boy, not ‘it’, not ‘freak’, your nephew. Your blood nephew, Harry James Potter. Lord Potter, of the Ancient and Noble House of Protectors. Yes, that Harry. Just think Petunia, if you were good to him, he would have been good to you. Imagine a house elf who loves to clean. You wouldn't have to lift a finger. A magical potion that would allow Dudders to lose weight. A home the size of Number 4 but with forty rooms. Start speaking."

She cried and lowered her hand. "It w-w-was Nov-vember fi-i-irst, Vernon h-had go-"

Number 12
Grimmauld Place
12:17 pm

Sirius looked at all of them, eyes tired and half closed. "So everything he did was a lie. He's evil?"

Narcissa frowned. "No, I am sure that he did what he thought was right and Light. Light isn't always right, Sirius. A good three quarters of all healing spells are actually Dark Magic. If you develop a cancer, that's your body going wrong at a cellular level. However, your cells have it programmed into them to be able to develop into cancer. If I do a ritual and change how your cells are programmed, that's Dark. It does, however save your life. Light isn't good, Dark isn't evil. Oh yes, Aunt Walburga was Dark and Evil. Your friend Remus is Dark, he is Dark because his very nature changes, but is he evil?"

"No! It's… hard to think… Narcissa, you and Lucius for a while have been well my icons of evil. Everything is mixed up. I mean, you said that Snape helped out but he hates me. Everything I was ever taught at Hogwarts said that Dark is evil."

Lucius leaned forward. "And who controls what was taught at Hogwarts?"

"Dumbledore- oh, of course."

"Things will change, you can not avoid that but first you must rid yourself of 'Dark means Evil, Light means Good' mentality. You also tend to categorize people in terms of their house at Hogwarts. It is time for you to grow up. One of my better business managers is a Hufflepuff. I did not hire him because he was a Hufflepuff. I hired him because he is good. I tend not to hire Gryffindors because they tend to be a rather prejudiced lot. They still think Hufflepuffs as sweet but stupid, Ravenclaws as smart but distant, Slytherins as sneaky and evil, and themselves as the best and brightest. I guess it's easy in your house, where you are always lauded for being rash and quick to judge. It is not so in the other houses. In Slytherin, it can get you in trouble. Ravenclaws tend not to rush to judge, if you do, the others will work to convince you otherwise, and in Hufflepuff… it's just not polite. Now Narcissa and I have to pick up our son, he's spending time with his godfather and godbrother."

Narcissa stood up and walked over to Sirius. "Many policies of Dark families have been called evil or exclusionist because we, more than the Light families, worry about the changes in us. Do you
think we restrict friends and mates to other Purebloods for fun? We do it because at least we know what those Purebloods have in their blood. Imagine the conflict of Malfoy Veela genes with that of Werewolf, can you imagine what would happen to that child? Muggleborns do not keep a clear record of their history, can you imagine what they might carry or how it’ll interact? If you ask them to use a blood parchment to see what could possibly be in their tree, they take offense and the Light Wizard encourage them to, even to the point of attempting to pass laws forbidding it. What about Muggle diseases, genetic diseases that we never had? Instead of merely rebelling against your family, you should have sought other sources to answer your questions. Now, rest and think up your questions, we'll try to answer them later."

Narcissa took her husband's arm and walked to the fireplace. "Spinner's End."

Crown Prosecution Services
London
2:42 pm

Gabriel breathed a sigh of relief, he never understood why people did what they did, even less when it's a kid. So what if the kid has magic, doesn't make him any less a kid. Leaning against the brick on the roof, he sighed. The door to the rood opened suddenly and a dark blonde head poked through.

"Rough, eh? People like that should not be allowed in polite society." Carmus McGill moved to stand beside him. "If you want, I'll apparate you to someplace where you can destroy as many things as you want."

"Nah, these people are scum, real scum."

"Yeah, but that old axiom holds true. Those who do evil, rarely believe they are evil. They don't understand why we like those freaks. Instead of admitting they were wrong, they rather believe that those godless freaks have somehow changed everyone else but not them. They hate and despise us because we have power they don't. I must admit Petunia is extreme but I once rescued a girl about four years ago. Her family was fanatically Christian. That in and of itself isn't bad, but when she was invited to Hogwarts, they flipped. They spirited her to a small island where they held an exorcism. If she did not repent of the magic, then they told her it would damn her soul. I popped in and was shocked. I moved over and ate the Host. I kissed their cross. I picked up the girl and shook my head. Then I cast an illusion of us flying away on white wings. was hurt by them It took me months to get her to agree to go to school. Then I sent her to a psychologist. She. Her family… were convinced that an angel had stopped them from hurting their child. The next year, her brother got his letter, they let him go."

"So sometimes you do win?"

"Yeah, if you call it winning. You didn't know about wizards before this, did you?"

"No, Alis did but… how is you exist all this time and we didn't know about it?"

"We, the Wizarding population, decided to take an act of secrecy. It's a Muggle protection thing. I mean you see how Petunia acted. A lot of people, not knowing anything about us would say, 'Oh, you have power, I can't believe it. You'll kill me in my sleep.' And why should we? Just because we have power you do not. You're a cop, are you going to abuse someone? One of my favorite books, a good character in it said it best in my eyes.

"It's a great series, by a guy called Spider. Anyways, in the book, Mike, a bartender says, 'I must have missed something: if a guy has truly absolute power, then what could you possibly corrupt him with? Acton got it backward: what engenders corruption is paranoia, the perception of inadequate
power. Absolute power renders you completely immune to corruption.' Petunia and most other Muggles want to have power over something, anything. When they get it they want more power, and worse they know they'll never receive it and it pisses them off.

"But you're not afraid of us, are you, Gabriel?"


"What?"

"I best I still play the best Kazoo in this building."

Carmus laughed, "Good, next time I need a kazoo player, I'm kidnapping ya! Oh and one more piece of advice from Spider. You see Petunia is a coward which is why I'm being so hard on her. She wanted Harry to fear her, when she was arrested, both she and Vernon puffed themselves up to make us fear them. They are cowards, and as such, I'll follow the advice of Spider. He said, 'Do not waste your fear on the mighty. Cowards make the deadliest opponents - and pacifists never fight fair: they can't- and the worst thing about terrorists is how weak they are: so weak that they have to monstrous to accomplish anything.'

"If you asked her, she would say she's a pacifist. That she never struck him except to defend herself. What he said about terrorists, that also applies to bullies because what is a bully except a terrorist who specializes in terrorizing a small specific group in their immediate area."

"Yeah. I get it, but don't you wish we didn't have to?"

Carmus shrugged, "Yeah but that would mean having to cure people of their perception of inadequate power, and to tell you the truth, I can't stand to listen to people whine that much."

Gabriel chuckled warmly and headed for the door. It always felt good to squash terrorists, even if they were small fry, it's one less. What a wonderful day.

Surrey's Boy Home
Surrey
3:11 pm.

Dudley Dursley pushed the food around his plate. It was chipped beef in gravy or so they said. A girl sat next to him, smiling. She had dark brown hair and blue eyes. Finally someone to talk to! A boy passing by leaned down and whispered to her.

"You don't want to sit next to him. He's Dursley." The boy sneered.

The girl's eyes widened.

The boy nodded. With a glare of disgust, she got up and walked away with her tray.

Daniel stood inside the lounge door and waited for Russ and Nicole. As soon as they came in, he closed it.

"Dursley. The kids are isolating him."

Nicole shrugged. "I don't blame them, he's a bully and they know what he's done. No matter how much we try to keep them from watching the news, we can't totally cut them off. They heard most of the reports. He probably participated in it."
Daniel stared at her, "That's no reason for them to take it out on him. And, he's only 11, I don't think he could do much."

Russ sighed, "Unlike most of those kids or you, I did read the report. He was a fully participating member of the abuse. He isolated the kid at school, parroted his parents, punched him repeatedly. Slapped and pinched, tripped, encouraged others to beat him, had a game called Harry Hunting in which they chase him down and beat him. That child is just as guilty as his parents. He may have been merely parroting his parents when he was younger but he's old enough now to know that if he doesn't get treated that way, his cousin shouldn't be treated that way either. He just didn't care. Said the 'freak' deserved it for being so abnormal. While we should not let the others harass him, we can't stop them from isolating him either. They are free to dislike him all they want."

Nicole rolled her eyes. "What kind of sick freaks are these people?"

Dudley closed the door and ran down the hall. Trying doors, he found one that was open. Running in, he sat with his back against the door.

*I am not a freak. I am not a freak. They are freaks! The kids in this place are FREAKS. I'm normal. I'm always Normal. I've always been NORMAL. I'M NORMAL. NORMAL. I AM NOT A FREAK!"
Another Garden Party

Chapter Notes

Thing refuses to let me put in a link to the image of the owl. So just type this into your browser, k?


August 1, 1991
Spinner's End
6:49 pm

Carmus stepped through the Floo, hearing the slight clinking of silverware on plates and talking from the other room. He nodded to the house elf as he hung up his cloak. Opening the connecting door to the dining room, he took his seat at the foot of the table.

"Lucius, Narcissa. Draco, have you had a good day with your godfather and god brother?"

"Yes, Carmus, I did. Did you know what he was getting us for our birthdays?" Draco grinned.

"I had a suspicion. So you two like them?"

Simon nodded. "Draco, named mine and I named his. They're gorgeous. Severus and Draco picked out a Snowy for me. She's gorgeous. White with black spots and bands. Draco's is a Rufous. It's dark brown but its chest is brown and cream waves. It has a strange look but for Draco, strange is in!"

Draco stared at his godbrother before crossing his eyes. He snorted and turned to Carmus. "Hengist, he named my owl, Hengist! I should have gone second, get him back for that."

Carmus chuckled. "And what did you name his?"

"Hedwig."

"Well they are both good names."

"Yeah, why's he getting so ticky about Hengist?"

Draco stared at Simon before rolling his eyes and hugging his bangs out his eyes before returning to his food. "Hengist!"

Carmus chuckled. "It's just that Hengist means 'Stallion'. You named his owl 'horse'. Sort of like naming a dog 'Cat'. That's all."

Simon groaned. "Oh… well if you want to change it, change it."

"He can't, he let you name it, so he has to keep it. But it is a fine name, Simon. It can also mean strong, forthright, able to surmount obstacles. Everything you would want in your personal owl. To know he or she will never let you down. A fitting name for your owl, Draco."

"Hmmm, okay, I'll keep it then. Carmus, will you and Simon be able to come to a garden party on
the 17th?"

Carmus looked at Simon and grinned. "I'm sure we can. Who will be there?"

Lucius laid down his knife and fork, "Our usual crew plus a few others that have recently come to our attention. The Weasleys, the Blacks, the Tonks."

"I see. Very well. My son, Severus, and I would be pleased to attend."

Lucius nodded, "Wonderful, it will of cou- your son, Severus, and you? I wasn't aware that my son's godfather needed your permission to come to our annual gathering."

"Yes, well, you did extend the invitation to my family, did you not?"

"I did." Lucius smiled icily.

"Severus is part of my family, despite not having McGill added to his name.

Severus refused to look at either of the two men who were arguing over him. Pink suffused the skin over his cheeks.

"As much as he is a part of mine." Lucius smiled at his friend.

"No." Carmus patted his mouth with his napkin before placing it to the side. He steepled his fingers and smiled a tight smile. "I do apologize, Mr. Malfoy, if anything I have done or said has given you the impression that we are friends. We are not. Allies, yes from time to time as is needful but never have we been friends. You never did grasp the concept. Severus Snape is mine and has been since before he met you. When Sean was alive, Severus was ours. True, from time to time, we would let him go off to do as he must or felt he must because we love him and if you love them, you don't enslave them.

"Something you never learned. Now that Sean is dead, Severus Snape is mine. And I can not, will not, and shall not forgive the person who seduced my beloved from me, only to hand him over to be branded and enslaved. You violated my superior claim. You abused My Severus until he ran from one psychopathic monster to another. One handed out 'Cruico's and the other handed out manipulation. You are ultimately, in my mind, to blame. If not for you, he would not be at the beck and call of Albus Dumbledore.

"I see Narcissa's marriage to you as a mistake of bad taste in an otherwise good woman. I did not object to Severus being Draco's godfather because I believed that he could counteract that miserable role you try to play at that you call fathering. It seems to be working because Draco, while a trifle spoiled and a bit of a brat, still is a good boy." Carmus continued to eat despite the stunned silence.

Severus finished his meal, face still flushed. Simon and Draco stared at each other, their eyes flickered between their godfather and their fathers before returning. Lucius sat pale and angry. Narcissa placed her hand on his arm and squeezed gently. Her eyebrow raised, she flickered her eyes between Severus and Carmus several times. Her husband followed her eyes and realized what she was trying to tell him.

A house elf popped in to consult with Carmus about the pudding. She nodded as Lucius took it in and sat back, understanding what was happening. Then again, it was no less than what she would do for the one she loved.

Carmus noticed and smiled. It was not a pleasant smile.
August 3, 1991
The Burrow

A large eagle owl flew to the window, claws clenching the outer sill; he tapped the window three times. Molly Weasley jumped as noise registered. Turning towards the window, she was surprised to see the large dark bird with a silver harness on. Opening the window, it flew in to drop a letter then perched on a chair back. Picking up the letter she opened it and took out the cream colored invitation.

To the Weasley Family,

You are invited to Malfoy Manor for an end of summer Garden Party. It is to be held on Saturday, August 17. It shall begin at 1:00 pm. Lunch is provided. Please send your reply back before August 9.

Sincerely,

The Malfoy Family.

"Arthur!" Molly cried out.

Arthur Weasley raised his head from the paper he was reading and headed into the kitchen. Molly held out the invitation with a stunned look on her face. Taking it from her hand, he read and nodded.

"Well, I guess we can all go. Bill and Charlie will still be home." Moving back into the den, he picked up a quill and parchment. He carefully wrote out his acceptance and mentioned that they would all attend. Signing it, he ribboned and sealed it before returning it to the eagle.

The eagle took it carefully in his beak and slid it into a box on his harness before taking off.

Molly turned to her husband. "Arthur, they're going to need new clothes."

"Yes, but I think we can afford it this time. Who knows, I might even get a raise."

August 7, 1991
9:34 am
McGillis House
London

Carmus entered the library to see his son, reviewing his Nature of Magic homework. Grinning, he moved over and looked over Simon's shoulder.

"That's wrong, love. Magic can't travel like that which is why that spell almost never works. When it does work, it's because they've managed to parasite magic from a place that we really don't like to think about."

Simon stared up at him, "Oh, thanks."

Carmus nodded as Simon crossed out the answer.

"Simon, I need you to be Harry for a little while today."

Simon's quill stopped. His voice lowered a bit as he replied. "Why?"

"Because the CPS mandates that you have counseling to deal with your abuse at the hands of your relatives." Carmus paused for a moment. "And I agree. You are a bright, caring child. It's one of the reasons, I find being your dad so easy but what they did to you, leaves marks. One day, you want to
"Well, what happens if one day your kid does something and you get angry? So she or he talks back and mistakenly brings up something they did to you. You have a flashback and hit them. That is not good. Those who are abused often grow up to abuse others, unless they get help. You are old enough to know you need help, that they did things that will stay with you for a long time. Therapy is a way to uncover them slowly and instead of just letting them fester until they erupt; clean out the wounds, treat them properly, and let them heal naturally.

"Now, she's a squib, so you can speak with her about magic. However, I still don't want anyone to know your new name. So you're going as Harry Potter. I'll lay an illusion so that it's closer to your known face then we can slowly change it over time. That way by the time you come out as Harry Potter, everyone will be used to your new face. So, go get dressed, Simon. We have an appointment at eleven."

Simon groaned, before putting up his new text. "Yes, Father."

11:00 am
Abbey, Bern, and Associates
London

Simon sat in the leather wingback chair and stared at the young woman. She was 27, with light brown hair and blue eyes. She smiled at him suddenly and picked up a recorder.

"So, you are Harry Potter, I am Aurora Bern. Now, I know your guardian told you that I was a squib, so we can talk about magic. I have the police and prosecution reports as well as the initial report by an agent of Child Services. I must say that I have never seen a pair of more loathsome scum as your former…guardians. What you say in here will be not be spoken of anywhere. If I am called to the stand, I can paraphrase you, but not repeat your words. For example: you tell me that you hate them and wished they were dead. I get called to the stand and asked, have you ever expressed your feelings towards the Dursleys. I can not say that you hated them and wish they were dead. I can say, that you have extremely negative feelings regarding them that stem from the abuse and wish absolutely no contact from them. Do you understand?" Aurora waited.

"Yes, ma'am."

"You may call me Aurora. Now, Harry tell me, in general about your home life now?"

"I love it. I have to clean up my own room although we have an elf to take care of the house. My dad let me pick everything about my room, except the room itself. I got to make the walls whatever color I liked. We went shopping for a bed, clothes, toys, and just about everything. He… well, he said he won't spoil me like Vernon and Petunia did Dudley, no matter how bad my life was before. Other than the first couple days, he doesn't let me shop wildly. Once we got everything I needed… I don't mind it that much. Hmm… he makes me study, a lot. I guess because I didn't grow up in that world."

"Well it's good that he won't spoil you but he still takes good care of you. I notice you call him 'dad'."

"Yeah, well… he said he adopted me and I like it… I really like it. He gave me a new name and everything!"

"I see… if you don't want to share your new name, that's fine. I think it's wonderful that you fit in so
"Well with your new dad. That support is wonderful. Tell me about your studies."

"Well, Mondays, Wednesday, and Fridays, I study four subjects. Wizarding Culture, Runes, Charms, Nature of Magic. Tuesdays and Thursdays, I study five. History, Penmanship, Language, Magical Creatures, and Potions. Saturday, he spends time with me and we go over my homework. He explains things. After one o'clock, we usually go out. Visit my new godfather or godbrother. We sometimes go out to movies or museum. In a way, my life now is better than Dudley's ever was! I love it."

"I see. Wow, he sounds great. Tell me more about your life with him, Harry."

"Well…

August 11, 1991
Gould's Prison
London

"DURSLEY! New roommate." The cell door clanged as it opened. A tall guy, with wide shoulder, came into the cell. He was covered with tattoos and baldheaded. His jumpsuit strained across his arms and legs. He looked at the man already in there and turned to the guard.

"No. I want someone else. Someone normal. I'm not getting in here with a freak. I got a rep to maintain."

Vernon Dursley stared at the man.

The guard sighed. "We're overcrowded as it is. You only got to be in here with this scum for as long as it takes someone else to free up. Promise. Someone leaves, you get moved, and the new guy gets stuck with Dursley."

"Man! Fine but as long as I get moved as soon as possible."

"Done!" The guard closed the door and walked down the catwalk.

The man sighed and put his stuff in the empty locker. Climbing up to the top bunk, he lay down.

Vernon Dursley cleared his throat and stood up from the bottom bunk. "Excuse me, but will you tell me what you are in here for?"

"Cause that fucking CO put me here, ya damnable jackass. I'm in here for armed robbery, but at least I'm not someone who needs to hit a kid. I know who you are. I just got busted, but I've been following your story. Everyone I know is following it. They said the Queen is taking 'special consideration' of your case. She doesn't take too kindly to child abuse but to abuse a child of people who have both earned the title 'Hero of the Realm'. You are one stupid fuck. Now get the hell out of my face!"

Vernon Dursley, Prisoner D91070700532M, sat on his bed, stunned.

August 12, 1991
12 Grimmauld Place
London

A large black eagle owl landed in front of Sirius Black, one claw holding out a letter,

Frowning, Sirius stared at it for a while. Remus Lupin shook his head and took the letter. Turning to
the eagle, he asked, "Is a reply needed?"

It screeched and nodded.

Remus nodded and opened the letter.

To Sirius Black and Remus Lupin,

I am writing this to invite you to our August 17th Garden Party. It starts at 1:00 pm. However, as you are family, you can arrive anytime after 11 am. I am also extending this invitation to the Tonks family. I understand that Sirius has been overwhelmed with his new lease on life and hope that a little family interaction would be welcome. He need not go out to the Party if he does not wish to.

Sincerely,

Lucius and Narcissa Malfoy.

Remus nodded and wrote out a note accepting the invitation. Handing it to the eagle, he sat beside his friend. Sirius was still staring where the bird had been. Remus only hoped that by the 17th, Sirius would be better.

August 12, 1991
London
396 Riverstone Lane
9:00 am

Dr. Alan Granger sighed as he read the paper. Ruffling it, he turned to his wife. "Some people just shouldn't have kids. I can't believe this woman, Dursley, I think it is. Her sister owns the house and when the sister gets killed, the sister's child gets left with them. Rather than treat him as a second son, they abuse the poor tyke, lie to the neighborhood so he won't have friends. It's horrid what some people are like."

Hermione looked at her father, "Really, Daddy. Poor kid. When's the trial?"

"Starts today. Harry, that's the child's name, will be testifying early because he leaves for school at the end of this month. Just like you."

Hermione looks at her father. "What's Harry last name?"

Her father looked at her, "Hon, it's a child abuse case, they never give out the child's last name. Safety reasons. It does say that he lived in Surrey and his father's name is James. Why?"

"No reason, Daddy. Just, well, Harry Potter is going to be in my class at school. His father's name is James."

"Yeah, but your Harry is some kind of Hero to the Wizards right? They wouldn't leave him in an abusive home."

"Yeah, you're right. Write to me at school and let me know what's going on with the case?"

"Sure, honey, now go put your plate up.

August 12, 1991
Central Criminal Court
9:02 am
"All rise for His Honor, the Recorder of London, Judge Michael Hyam!"

Simon rose with the others, rubbing at his scar. He knew that everyone looking at him would see the same old plain Harry Potter. Carmus stood next to him, holding his hand. He had seen the Malfoys come in as well as Mr. Weasley and Severus Snape. Leaning against Carmus, he turned to watch them bring in the Dursley's. Dudley was on the other side. Petunia and Vernon turned towards him with hatred in their eyes. Carmus moved forward, his hand moving lower. Their eyes followed his hand and saw the wand. Simon almost laughed at their looks. Marge stared at him as well, her lips moving. The guard frowned and rolled his eyes. The judge banged his gavel.

"I am Judge Michael Hyam. You will address me as 'My Lord'. We are here to hear the case against Marge Anne Dursley, Petunia Beth Evans Dursley, and Vernon Malcom Dursley. They are here to stand trial for numerous accounts of Felony Child Abuse, Child Endangerment, Torture, Attempted Murder of a Minor, Aggravated Assault of a Minor, and in Ms. Dursley's case, Animal Abuse.

"I must say, just seeing the briefs, I can see why the number of charges is so high. I have to admit that we have several members of the council in attendance and the Lord Mayor. Welcome. I understand that against your solicitors' advice you are pleading 'Not Guilty'.

"The Crown shall present their case first. Sir Jonas Blakesworth, for the crown."

The Crown Prosecutor stood up. "On November first, just past midnight, Lily and James Potter were killed by Tom Riddle. The reason, though not pertinent to this case, was because James with the help of his wife Lily Potter, had several times derailed Riddle's plans. James defied Riddle by in his role as a member of Special Forces. While Lily did so at their old alma mater, which was Riddle's alma mater as well. She several times blocked his attempt to gain access to the students of the school. Both of them were named 'Hero of the Realm' by the Queen and Parliament. Two noble souls who died, trying to save their son.

"Their old headmaster took the child from his rightful guardian and placed him with Lily Evans Potter's sister, Petunia Evans Dursley. This is where the abuse began. Mrs. Dursley by her own words claimed that they would have given the child up if a neighbor hadn't already seen them notice the child. Harry Potter was one year and three months old when he came to that house. He was ten years eleven months when he was rescued. In those nine years and eight months, these… people treated this child in ways indescribable, though I will certainly try.

"Harry was five years old before he knew his name was Harry, before then he thought it was 'Freak', mostly…

Central Criminal Court
Commissary
11:33 am

"So, you want Harry to go on the stand after lunch?"

"Yes, Mr. McGill. It's crucial that they hear it in his own words. I have permission from His Honor to play both recordings. They honestly thought it was okay for them to do this." Blakesworth sighed.

"I see. He fears them, I've made great strides with him but he fears them still. Can you blame him?"

"No. I don't. We still have one problem, and one that someone might ask you to address. Dudley Dursley."

McGill shrugged, "That boy can rot in the orphanage for all I care. He is a useless, worthless piece of
"Isn't that what they said about Riddle?"

Blakesworth turned to smile at Harry and waved him to sit. "So Harry, are you ready to face them?"

"Yeah." Harry frowned. "Sir, do you know what's with Dudley? Where do they have him, he looks different. He's lost quite a bit of weight."

"He's being kept in a home not too far from here. The Dursley family is quite small now, Vernon and his sister. Unfortunately the Evans family is just as small, there is a great uncle but we haven't been able to find him. So for now, he's just staying in a home."

"Carmus, can we—"


"Carmus, please! I hate him but we can't leave him there. Who knows what will happen to him there." Harry pleaded.

"But I am pretty sure what will happen to him there, Harry. He'll be bullied, he'll be treated as a pariah, he'll be isolated, and he'll be humbled. I have no problem with any of that. He's a fat, ugly, bad tempered child who will be treated like such. Not only that, since he has no gang anymore and the others do, he'll be treated just as well as he treated you. Rather fair in my estimation." Carmus sipped his currant juice thoughtfully.

Harry stared at him. "Why? You keep telling me everyone deserved a chance, why not Dudley? You gave Sev a chance, you even gave one to the Malfoys. Please, Carmus, please… Dudley is his father's child. He was spoiled rotten but can't we give him a chance?"

"It's a mistake, Harry. A bad one. A security risk."

"Dad, You once said that Dudley would never know what he did was wrong if he didn't see his parents punished for what they did. How is Dudley ever going to learn not to fear magic or us, if he doesn't see our daily lives. Please."

"Fine, fine, but he's not going to Smeltings. If Smeltings made Vernon who he is, then we don't want Dudley there. I'll find a Squib day school for him or even a Muggle one."

"Thanks, Dad." Harry turned to the prosecutor. "Can you help with that?"

Blakesworth nodded. "When we go in, I'll ask the judge to release Dudley into his custody. Harry, I know your cousin isn't a good guy, but I'm glad you made your Dad see sense. Now I'll go phone in so they'll write me up a petition and I'll see you both after you eat."

Carmus sighed, "A mistake."

Harry fidgeted in the seat and kept turning to look at Carmus. The prosecutor stood up and walked to Harry, stopping in front of the defendant's table, placing himself between him and the Dursleys.

"Harry, tell me the first memory you have about the Dursleys?"

"Ummm… I don't remember how old I was but ummm they were pounding on the cupboard door. The door opened and Petunia was there. She grabbed my arm and pulled me out the cupboard. She shoved me through kitchen doorway. I tripped cause she didn't let me walk, she just pushed me. I
didn't get up fast enough, so she kicked me and pointed to the stove. She said I needed to learn how I was going to earn my keep since her useless sister had the bad taste to die so soon. I learned how to make bacon, eggs, and toast. She wouldn't let me get the juice, she didn't want me to spill it over her clean floor."

"Harry, how many of Dudley's birthdays did you cook breakfast."

Harry grinned. "I never thought of it like that. Ummm it was several months before his birthday and I've cooked seven birthdays for him. So that made me between three and four."

Blakesworth nodded. "So let's say three and a half. Your cousin's birthday is at the end of June, yours at the end of July. What did you do on your fourth birthday?"

"I don't know. I know I had chores but which chores I don't know. Later on, after I started going to school, I knew it was my birthday because I had more chores that day."

"Okay. I have here a list of chores that you were required to do on a typical summer day. Make breakfast, wash dishes, mop the kitchen floor, clean the living room, make lunch, wash the car, weed the yard and garden, make dinner, clean the downstairs bathroom, clean the two upstairs bathrooms, clean the dining room, wash all clothing, iron and fold clothes. When were you awakened and how?"

"Usually A- Petunia knocking on the cupboard door. She usually woke me up around 7 am. Lunch was at 1 pm. Dinner at 6 pm. I usually got back to my cupboard around midnight or one. If I woke them up with the cleaning, they got angry at me." Harry sighed.

"HMPH. You should be glad we taught you life skills! A brainless little brat like you sure won't be able to hold down a job otherwise!" Vernon Dursley stood up, his still meaty finger waving at Harry. "This is ridiculous! The boy is a scapegrace, unappreciative of everything we've sacrificed for him."

Harry stared at him. "Sacrificed… for me? YOU DID NOTHING FOR ME! Except call me Freak and tell me my parents were drunkards. You spoiled your son, gave him everything. You stole money from me. You lived in my house. MY HOUSE, from my mother and you say you gave for me? You did nothing but take, take, take. I hate you, Dursley. And now we're going to take from you."

Harry ran from the room. Carmus stared after him. "Your honor, despite my charge's words, I hope you give our petition due consideration. Handle it, John. I need to get Harry!"

Sir John Blakesworth sighed and withdrew his petition and stepped up the bar. "I have a petition to secure custody of Dudley Dursley with the guardian of Mr. Harry Potter. Said guardian refuses to reveal his name in open court due to Mr. Potter's status. He wishes that once Mr. Potter starts school under a new name, that no one shall hound him even if they get this information. The Crown Prosecution Service believes that this is best."

Judge Hyam looked at the petition and stared at the Dursleys who were yelling at him. "Granted. The minor child, Dudley Vernon Dursley, is remanded to the custody of Mr. Potter's guardian."

The crestfallen looks on the Dursleys' faces were priceless even to the counterpoint of that whale's wailing.

August 12, 1991
McGillis House
5:50 pm
Carmus closed the house door behind them. Wincing as he realized that Muggle was finally his for good or ill. Turning to Dudley, he placed the suitcase down. "Dudley, before I take you to your room, we will be going over the rules. You are responsible for your room. No one, and I mean no one, will clean it except for you. You will be fed on the same schedule as anyone else, no more sneaking food. No hiding food in your room. If Dayn detects food in your room, it will be removed. Now all boys tend to sneak candy in and well, that's fine. An amount of candy is okay, an excessive poundage of sweets is not. Every morning, we will start our day off with meditation. You will shower and dress before coming down to meditation, and then we will have breakfast. One more thing. Dayn!"

A pop sounded in the hallway and Dayn bowed. "Yes, Master."

"Dayn, this is Dudley Dursley, he will be staying with us. Dudley, this is Dayn. Dayn is a house elf. You remember that excessive list of chores that your family often inflicted on Harry. Dayn does them and yes, with magic. Everything cooked in this house is done by magic, so unless you intend to starve, you'll have to deal with it. Dinner, today is at seven, though usually we eat at six. I have plenty of books to read, from pleasure to classics to magical theory. The genre of book is noted on each shelf. Your room is opposite Harry's. There's nothing in there at the moment. We will go shopping for you tomorrow."

Dayn grabbed the suitcases and popped out, soon she was back and nodded.

Carmus sighed and ran his hand over his face. "I don't like you, Dudley. I in actuality despise you. However, I did agree to foster you, and unlike your parents, I undertake my responsibilities with respect. That means you are entitled to food, shelter, schooling, care, furniture, and everything that I would give to Harry, I will equally give to you. Some things will have to equivalent because they are magical however. Right now, Dayn has put a cot in Harry's room. Tomorrow, we'll get your bed. Dinner is in an hour, so let Harry show you around. And do understand your situation, Dudley. Harry is your cousin and he was a guest in your house. Harry is now my son, and you are a guest in our house. That means if you do one horrid bullyish thing to Harry, I can punish you. Also, several people will call Harry by the name Simon. That's his new name. You can not speak of it."

Carmus laid his hand on Harry's head and the illusion pulled off. Dudley stared at them and shook his head. Carmus growled and took off to his den.

This is a mistake.

August 13, 1991
Diagon Alley
Finckle's Fine Furnishings
10:15 am

Dudley stared at the wall with the square wood blocks with fear.

"Just pick a wood. Any wood, any color, just pick one!" Carmus leaned back against the opposite wall.

Harry laughed. "Dudley. Pick one, it'll be cool."

Dudley reached out for one but pulled his hand back. Harry reached past him and picked up the wood block. It was a pale grey wood. Harry walked over to the beds.

"Pick one, any one, pick the one you want and watch. Trust me, you'll like this magic."
Dudley walked around before he stopped at one. Harry ran over and pushed the wood block in. Dudley smiled as the bed changed to match the wood. "M-m-magic?"

"Yep, wait 'til you see the rest!"

McGillis House
Fire Room
9:57 pm

Severus Snape stepped out of the fire and entered the den. He saw Simon sitting in front of the fire doing his Nature of Magic homework. Next to him was a sulky Dudley. Carmus looked up as he heard Severus' entrance. Severus cocked one eye brow and flickered his eyes toward the Dursley. Carmus raised both eyebrows, glared at Simon before closing his eyes and rolling them.

"Bedtime you two. Hup."

Dudley looked at his watch. "It's only 10:00, I don't want to go to bed."

"Too bad, it's 10 so to bed. Shower, brush, then into bed." Carmus stood up.

"I don't want to! I refuse! You aren't my dad! You can't make me do anything!"

Carmus walked over to Dudley and leaned down. "This is my house. I can do anything. I suggest you do as I say or I guarantee you, I'll bind you, carry you, and trap you into bed until I get good and ready to let you go tomorrow. MOVE!"

Simon placed his homework on the desk. He turned to look at Severus before sighing. Moving closer to Severus, he looked up at him. "Good night, Professor Snape. Night, Dad."

"Good night, Simon." Snape's cultured tone warmed the room.


The fat boy bolted out of the chair as soon as Carmus moved. They could hear him thundering up the stairs. Simon had already reached the second floor since they heard the bathroom door close.

"It was a mistake."

"I know, I know, but he looked at me with those big green eyes!"

"Understood."

August 17, 1991
Malfoy Manor
10:10 am

Carmus wondered, for what he knew would not be the last time, if he could hide the body and say the brat ran away. Now he was throwing a fit because he found out that he wasn't invited to the Malfoy party. Draco had flooed through in his summer formal robes. The summer blue robes shifted his eyes into slate. His hair was just brushing the top of his shoulders, held back with a ribbon that matched his robes. Right now, Draco was watching Dudley's fit.

"McGill?"

"Yes, Draco?"
"What is Potter abhorrent obese vile disgusting vermin of a cousin doing in your home? Ungagged, I mean."

Dudley stopped screaming and sneered at the young wizard. "At least I'm not pussy nancy boy."

"McGill, I know you are not friends with my father but surely you don't hate him this much. I refuse, categorically refuse, to have this… reprehensible specimen of Muggle in my home. It is Muggles like this that makes me think the Dark Lord was right about exterminating the lot of them!"

"I know, I know, that is why Dudley will be staying here. Dudley, Dayn will allow you in the backyard but that's it. You are not allowed in my den, Simon's room, or any other room that contains something that you can use to get in trouble. If you want, you can go outside but you can't leave the premises."

Simon shook his head and slipped out of his seat after whispering to Draco. Carmus nodded at Severus and followed his son upstairs. Severus looked at Dudley. "Dursley, I was once one of those followers of Voldemort. I have participating in much Muggle-hunting. Do not for a minute assume that I would hesitate to use magic on you."

Draco sneered at the other boy and grinned at his godfather. "But Severus, why is he here? Why isn't he living with Potter? I know McGill said that Potter was adopted, surely they…"

"You are not stupid, Draco."

Draco's eyes widened. Emotions flickered through them. "I see and Father will be called in for questioning. He can't know."

"Exactly." Severus' wand flickered and the bowl of oatmeal that Dudley had thrown at Draco turned around to hit him instead.

"Barbarian."

Dudley shrieked. "You- you-you freaks!"

Draco's eyes narrowed. "How dare you speak such in the present of Lord Seacrest? You are lucky my father is not here, he would teach you how to obey your betters as Lord Malfoy. You are a pathetic land whale that has not yet had the courtesy to suffocate to death."

Severus finished his meal and folded his napkin. "Come, I hear them coming down now. Let us go."

Draco squared his shoulders and moved off; leaving Dudley sitting there with oatmeal dripping off him.

Carmus came in the room, sighed, and with a whispered spell cleaned Dudley off. "Severus, is a school teacher, you know. He knew you were going to throw food before you did. I don't suggest you try it again, he has worse spells in his arsenal. We will be back around 10 pm. Have a nice day."

Carmus watched as Draco pulled Simon over to meet his friends. Here and there were knots of two and three people. Every so often red hair would flash. This network was taking form which meant soon Dumbledore would be stripped of his network. Power was shifting, here, at this small garden party. He glanced at his family. Severus was resplendent in his traditional black clothing though the different textures allowed interesting contrasts to catch the eye. Around his neck was a gold medallion embossed with the tower and seagull emblem of Seacrest. Severus had followed the Pureblood traditions for today. Simon was dressed in tunic and robe like a proper little lordling, the robe had whirling triskelions on them intermixed with the wands of lordship.
Looking around, he took note of the neutral and a few light minded families. Perhaps Lucius did understand the plan after all. An elf popped in, ears up, to let he and Severus know the others were in the library. Sev nodded and it popped away.

Following Severus to the library, he nodded to the group gathered there. The Malfoys, Tonks, Sirius, and Lupin were to be expected. The Parkinsons, Bulstrodes, Greengrass', and Zabini's were not but were acceptable. Mr. and Mrs. Weasley were a good addition as well as Madam Bones, Amos Diggory, and surprisingly Mr. Lovegood.

Carmus nodded to each of them in turn.

"Hello, for those who don't know me, I'm Carmus McGill, I have one son who is going to Hogwarts this year. I don't know how much Mr. Malfoy has told you but just by looking at this group, I'm sure that we can all be very helpful to each other."

Lucius smiled at Carmus and stepped closer. "I have told them that Harry Potter was rescued from an abusive situation. I have shown them the brief you presented to about Tom Riddle. What more you wish, is up to you."

"Thank you, Lucius. The first thing we need to do is get Dumbledore away."

"Where's Harry?" Sirius croaked.

"Excuse me, Black?"

"Where's Harry? Where's my godson? Malfoy said you have him someplace safe but he's my godson. He should be with me."

"He is safe and no, he shouldn't. You just got out of Azkaban. You are barely yourself, you can not take care of a child, so I have placed Harry somewhere safe. Not to mention, I refuse to remove him at this critical time. He's still adapting to his new familial situation."

"He can adapt to me. I want my godson."

Severus snorted. "Convenient for you to remember him now."

"Listen Snivellus! Just because…"

An orange flash of light and Sirius jumped, eyes wide. Another flash, this time blue and Sirius was sitting again, arms bound to his side with a gag in his mouth."

Carmus looked at his, eyes cold and hard, "This is why you can't have him. We jumped at the bang, you panicked. Do you think a child who just now has been informed he's a wizard will be able to control his magic? He won't. Another reason? You were convicted of a murder you never committed but your whiny bitterness and childishness led you to attempt to murder someone and you got away with it. Even after ten years in prison, the first thing you say to your victim is a taunt. Meaning you learned nothing and I should have just told them how you managed to survive Azkaban so they could make you suffer, you ungrateful little shit. Severus Snape was Lily's friend. For that reason alone, you should never have tried to feed him to a werewolf. Severus helped me rescue Harry, healed Harry, and provided medical reports for the Crown Prosecution Service so that the Dursleys would pay! Instead of growing up and thanking him for that you are being a child. Not to mention, he's right."

"Now you demand your godson. You handed him over so quickly after Lily and James' death. Don't even say you were angry. THAT IS NOT AN EXCUSE. When they died you became Harry's
parent. Your first thought should have been, 'what does Harry need right now?' I'll tell you right now, it was not to be handed off and have his new father run off on him. You lost Harry by your own actions. Accept the fucking consequences for once in your damn life. He's had to."

Sirius struggled against the bonds. Remus sighed and placed his hand on Sirius' shoulder. "He's right. What you did to Severus was attempted murder. And if we were thinking better that night, Harry would not have suffered as he did. And he's right about you not being ready. Sirius, Harry needs a stable home not someone who sometimes thinks it's twelve years ago."

Sirius stared at Remus, his eyes wide and begging. Remus just stared at him. "I'm sorry, but he's right. Carmus, is Harry safe?"

"Very safe. One thing I did that I'm pretty sure you won't agree with but did need to be done is that I had him undergo Adoptio Asylum. Without that blood link, I do believe that Dumbledore would convince others that it was vital that Harry return to the Dursleys, which is another reason why I started prosecution against them. I am both relieved and saddened to say Adoptio Asylum took."

Madam Bones breathed in sharply. "That says much about Dumbledore right there."

Sirius looked around with a confused look on his face. Parkinson muttered an expletive. "One would think you were not of a pureblood family, Black. Were you too busy being a brat that you never learned the traditions? Adoptio Asylum is an old pureblood spell. It has a spell part and a potion part. It's hard to do both of them at the same time, which is why it is such a statement. One of the hard things is that, it involves abuse of a child. A child must be abused by their guardian, by a blood member of the family; the abuse has be at least a mixture of physical, mental, emotional. The guardian can't have affection for the child; usually it takes deprivation of the basic necessities such of food, safety, room, or education. So Potter must have been starved at least and in danger of his life at the very least. We read what happened to Potter. Malfoy gave us that information, no matter how much we despised James Potter; we would not let his child be abused in that manner. The child may not be pure but he is a wizard. We may be Dark but we love and respect Family."

"Thank you, Mr. Parkinson. Yes, the fact that Dumbledore placed Harry there in defiance of the Potter's will is one thing, illegal as it is. Dumbledore either, placed Harry there and ignored him for the rest of his life, which is criminal neglect at the least or he placed Harry there and knew what was happening. That too, is criminal. We all knew that Petunia hated Lily and Magic, to think that she would be so happy to take in her magical nephew is stupid. Petunia once said that it would have been better if Lily had never been born." Severus frowned, angry at what had happened.

"True Severus, and that's why we are here today. Now before we go any further, we need a magical oath that what we are about to tell you, will go no further until it's right time. It is not illegal, just withholding information until the proper time. Which you will know without anyone needing to tell you."

Carmus leaned back and smiled. He waited until the oaths were done. Sitting in his chair, he smiled. Leaning forward again, he waited until he had everyone's attention. "Harry Potter will not be attending Hogwarts, this year."

Simon relaxed on the bench as he watched Draco hold court on the lawn. Draco looked back at him and grinned. Waving his hand, he headed over to the bench, people following him.

"Everyone, this is my godbrother Simon. Simon, these are some of our classmates. The cute black kid on my left is Blaise Zabini. The red heads are Ronald Weasley who is in our class, his older twin brothers Fred and George who I think are a year ahead of us, Percy who is a few ahead of us. Pansy Parkinson is the blushing blonde on my right, next to her is Millicent Bulstrode. Behind Bulstrode,
trying to hide is Zachariah Smith. The tall guy is Cedric Digory, he's three years ahead of us, I believe."

"He's cuter than you, Draco. Watch out."

The group laughed. Simon blushed. "Nah, we're a complementary pair. Now we only need to get Severus a black haired godchild and he'll the whole set."

The group chuckled and split up. Draco closed his eyes and let his head fall back. "Are you happy with Severus as your godfather?"

"Yeah, he's hard but he's a good guy." Simon said, distracted by something happening across the lawn.

"It's Quidditch, Harry. Two teams; one seeker who catches a winged golden ball called a Snitch, two Beaters who carry clubs to knock the red Bludgers, three chasers who toss a black Quaffle through any one of three rings, and a Keeper who blocks the rings. The Bludgers are magicked to go after players, which are why the Beaters have bats, they protect their teammates and try to send the ball back towards the opposite team. The three rings each goal scores 10 points. If the seeker catches the Snitch, your team scores 150 points and ends the game. At Hogwart's there is the Quidditch Cup. You win it by having the most accumulated points, not the most wins. Example: Slytherin and Gryffindor play four games. Gryffindor Slytherin has 100, 250, 300, 330 points. That's a total of 980 points. Gryffindor has 190, 270, 310, 110. That's 940 points. So even though Gryffindor may have won the first three games, Slytherins took the long term view and won the total number of points. Fun, huh, Harry?"

"Oh." Simon paused for a moment, "Draco, my name's Simon."

"Now it is, but I bet that 'H' in your name stands for Harry. I figured it out; it's the only thing that explains why the hell that piece of crap was at your place. Either that or Carmus wanted to beat him. Don't worry, I won't tell. I haven't even told my father. I just wanted you to know, in case you need… anything."

"Thanks, Draco." Simon quirked a smile.

August 23. 1991
McGillis House
7:55 am

"Simon, hurry up! Severus is waiting for you!" Carmus called up the stairs.

Simon came thumping down the stairs, a knapsack on his back. He entered the dining room where Carmus had set out a plate of sandwiches and crisps. Grinning, he grabbed a ham and cheese sandwich and sat down. Dudley was next to him with three sandwiches on a plate. Carmus shook his head and took one off Dudley's plate.

"I said you'd never starve. I didn't say I was going to help you kill yourself with obesity. Now, Dudley, we didn't get off on the right foot. So, I've decided to send Harry to his godfather for a few days. He and his godbrother, Draco, are going for some pre-school studying and fun. There might possibly be a Muggle dance while you're there. It's a back to school thing for the Muggle people in one of Severus' villages."

Dudley looked at Simon then at Carmus. "One of his villages?"

"Yes, oh, I guess you wouldn't know. Severus is Lord Seacrest, I mentioned it before, I thought. He
is actually nobility. As I am and most of us. Hogwarts is a special school, I never really explained it to either of you.

"A long time ago, over a thousand years ago, four very strong witches and wizards came together. They were Helga Hufflepuff, Salazar Slytherin, Rowena Ravenclaw, and Godric Gryffindor. They were of an age where it would be smart for them to take on a student or two to apprentice. Since they were so strong, it seemed a shame for their knowledge to die out. However, they ran into a problem. Some of their selected students wanted to study more than one discipline. Perhaps Charms and Potions. Well then that student should study under Helga and Godric but that wasn't normal. To split a student so was unheard of, usually when someone had the talent for two things they either found a teacher who knew both or they were forced to choose. Well, they saw that many children who had magnificent powerful magic weren't getting taught. So they put their heads together and realized that they needed to teach them, this led them to start a school. They named it, Hogwarts.

"Now, the kids who go to Hogwarts are by their admission to Hogwarts, nobility. See, a strong witch or wizard can protect the weaker ones, correct? So naturally among magic folk, the weaker ones got trades, supported the stronger ones in return for protection, help, and healing. So strong wizards became the nobility. Our nobility therefore is based on strength of magic, if you are poor that doesn't matter. You get admitted to Hogwarts, your powers are large enough for you protect others. Therefore when you get out, you have more choices. You can be a small lord or lady, or a large lord or lady. Small Lords start businesses, they protect their employees, they might have a large house and a bit of land. Large Lords are like Severus, have generations upon generations of his family building up, buying land, saving money. They now have a large amount of land and properties. Over time they have bought up almost whole counties. At some point, he was granted a title to go with his duties.

"Same with my family, we kept what we could hold and we held a lot of land. My full title is Carmus McGill, Lord Five Trees, Lord of the counties of High Hill, Low Valley, Running Ridge, Member of the Wizagamot, and a member of the Founding Families."

Simon stared at him. "Whoa."

"You have several titles as well, Simon. Not to mention, if I have no other children, you will inherit all that I have mentioned. When someone has several titles and several children, they often split it up. Oh, one more thing about Hogwarts. People will often say things against Slytherin. Supposedly, Gryffindor and Slytherin fought over the right of Muggleborns to be admitted to Hogwarts. That's not exactly true. Salazar Slytherin didn't want Muggleborns admitted willy nilly to Hogwarts because their families couldn't keep their mouths closed. Someone would confess to a priest who told his superior and next thing they knew people were being slaughtered and burned alive. The real breach came years later from their children. Godric and Salazar had children... separately with their wives and a few together. One of those who were both Gryffindor and Slytherin fought with one who was only a Gryffindor.

"Back then they found a child who had strong potential, he refused to leave his sisters. That was fine. They agreed to take them into the school, they had some power but not like him. After their parents died, they went to collect the children. Their grandfather came, he said he suspected that the child was unnatural and he would beat it out of the boy. Slytherin's child managed to sneak in and take all three, the grandfather hunted them. It would have been fine, if Gryffindor's child hadn't revealed where they were. He sent the grandfather a weregild, money for the children. He mentioned in his letter Hogsmeade, the town outside the school. That evil man burned every town within five miles of Hogsmeade. He burnt those people alive. In the battle of Hogsmeade, the boy died. The girls grew up and one of them married one of Gryffidor's son. She blamed Slytherin's child for her brother's death, stating if he had never taken them or if he had used his magic to protect them then her brother
would be alive. One day, Gryffindor's child kicked Slytherin's out. That woman poisoned the mind
of every Gryffindor since. She taught the Gryffindors of that time that Slytherin was deposed cause
he hated 'mudbloods'. That prejudice exists today. So you'll hear of it. Don't let it get you down."

"I won't, Dad. The Slytherins I know are pretty cool!"

"Yes, they are. Also sneaky, sly, cunning, and manipulative."

"Then was Dumbledore a Slytherin?" Simon asked before he ran out the room, his backpack
flapping.

"We also don't get caught!" Carmus yelled after him. "Now, Dudley, let's spend some time
together."

Spinner's End
8:15 am

Simon stumbled out of the floo only to be caught by Draco. The blonde shook his head, "What is it
with you and the floo?"

"What is it with you and catching me?" Simon asked watching Draco blush.

"Ummm… come on, Severus is waiting for us. He said something about maybe going to the
continent while we are here." Draco spun around, the blush giving his cheeks a bit of color.

Simon chuckled and followed his friend. It was time to forget Dudley and have some fun.

August 28. 1991
McGillis House
7:55 am

Dudley stood to the side as Carmus hugged Harr- Simon. He flinched as the spell that freak had put
on him acted. He wasn't allowed to tell anyone that Harry was Simon or where he lived. In fact, he
wasn't even allowed to mention who his parents were unless someone already knew. And that
twisted creature in the kitchen wouldn't let him eat what he wanted or when he wanted. All to
protect that worthless puking bastard. He wasn't so special and no matter what that other asshole
freak said Potter wasn't strong enough to hurt anyone. One of these days, he'll make them regret
lying against good honest normal folk.

Carmus stared at Dudley, shaking his head at the child's thoughts. What those… vermin had done to
him. That was the real reason he had chosen a day school and he was proud of it.

"Now, Simon, that scar of your is a bit recognizable. To cover it up, I'm going to use some blood
based charms. Charms that are usually used to cover up a bad birthmark or such things. Now,"
Carmus opened a small wooden box about the size of Simon's palm. Inside were rectangles of what
looked like flesh colored bandages. "These are used in movies and such. A Muggle invention, you
use the little brush that under the bandages to apply a clear gel to the edges around your scar. Place
the bandage on top. Press and smooth it to seal it. Use the brush to blend the edges, they are pretty
much your skin color. Since we used magic, we've given them a chameleon charm, it'll average out
your skin color all over the patch. There's an impervious charm to keep out water. The blood based
charms make them impossible for anyone not of your blood to remove. If you need more and you
should reapply them at least once a month but something may happen, go see Severus, okay?"

Simon seemed subdued. "Yes, Dad… thank you! Thank you for this."
"My son, it is the least I can do for you. Now go pack, tomorrow you go to school and I will miss you."

"I'll miss you too. Maybe I'll even miss Dudley." Simon smiled and put the box in his pocket before heading upstairs.

August 31, 1991
McGillis House
3:34 pm

Carmus waved Dudley into his den and sat him down in a chair. Moving to his desk, he pulled out a folder. Walking over to Dudley, he handed it to him.

"Triton's. It's a Muggle school, of course. You come home on the weekend. They know about magic, so there are some squibs who decided to go Muggle. I am hoping that when they find out about Harry's abuse, they won't... try to harm you. I know that most of the Muggles who know about the Dursleys therefore they know about you. Dursley is not a common name, and as Muggles they know this. Therefore they may connect you with them even if you weren't. Another thing, is that this mixed school, Harry's cachet will be perhaps your saving."

"Oh."

"It starts tomorrow but we need drop Harry off at the Hogwarts Express. It's in London though. I have received your book list. We already have most of it. We'll get the rest now, go get Harry."

"Ok. Ummmm, when are you going to tell people about Har-Simon?"

"About Harry, they'll find out by next week. I suggest you use all your... charm to make sure you are friends with someone powerful. Remember you are nothing to anyone. Do you think I don't see your threatening Dayn or throwing things at the owls. I'm not stupid, Dudley. Nor unobservant. You are the same brat that you always were. You learned to be sneakier. Trust me, you are not that good. As for when they'll find out about Simon, that won't be for a while and you can't even speak of it. Not won't, can't. I made sure of that. Go."

September 1, 1991
Platform 9 ¾
Hogwarts Express
10:51 am

Simon sighed as Carmus stroked his hair down. "Daaaaaaaad!"

"Draco's over there, go get on the train. I'll put your trunk over there." Carmus laughed as Simon ran off. He was looking like a happy young boy. Dark blue slacks, emerald green shirt, his auburn hair had been pulled back and braided to keep it from flying around. He snuck up behind Draco and pinched him. Draco flinched and reached behind himself to smack Simon.

Carmus glanced at the disguised Dudley before he moved to put the trunk on the train. Simon was going to be fine. Absolutely fine.

11:35 am

Simon waved to Ron Weasley as he looked out the compartment door.

Draco hissed, "Why are you inviting that weasel?"
Simon frowned at Draco, "Be nice. I won't sit with you if you're going to be mini-voldie."

Blaise snorted.

Draco growled and turned his face away, "Fine, if you want that weasel, then at least keep him on your side of the compartment. Who knows poorness might be contagious."

Ron stopped at the door as he heard Draco. Simon turned around, "I rather be friends with someone who is poor than friends with acts like a complete and total asshole."

Draco turned, mouth open to say something then sighed. "Fine, do whatever you want."

"Draco." Simon knelt on the bench. "Draco. He can be a friend, you are my brother. Stop being such a damn jealous prat. Now, are you going to behave or should I just leave?"

Draco growled and stared at him. "Whatever."

Simon turned around and grinned at Ron. "That means come on in."

Ron sniggered. "Hmmm yeah, I guess so. So Simon, I never did thank your dad for his gift. Both of them in fact."

"Huh, what gifts, Ron?"

"When he came over earlier, you know when, he replaced my pet. He gave me a nice brown owl and something really special. All my life, I heard my father muttering about Lucius Malfoy. I never heard anything good about them and I pretty much figured it's their fault, your fault, that my dad's never gonna get promoted. It's not by the way." Ron pulled out a folder and handed it to him. "Read it, it's fascinating."

Simon looked at it, then pushed Draco around so he could read over his shoulder. Eyes wide as they finished it, he turned back to Ron.

"Most of my family, they don't know about it. They've always talked about our honor, no matter what, we have our honor. But if I keep treating you like my family treats your father, do I really have any honor? Especially since I know this now. I may be poor, Draco, but I am a pureblood who was raised properly and I know what honor is. I won't bother you at school, provided that you do the same."

Draco sighed and handed back the folder. "Very well, Weasley. Truce?"

"Truce." Ron smiled and pulled out his set of cards. "Exploding Snap?"

Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry
Severus Snape's Quarters
7:42 pm

Carmus stepped through the floo and headed for the door, his son was going to be sorted. The prophecy splits here, depending on where he goes. Any house would suit, though Carmus really wouldn't mind him being in Slytherin with his godfamily.

Remembering what Severus told him, he headed up two flights, over a few corridors and sure enough, right there is a window that is behind one of the Slytherin banners. Perching in the window, he pulled the side back to watch the sorting.
The four boys stared at the Great Hall, overwhelmed by it all. Clustered together, they turned to face the stool in the center of the room. Simon backed up slightly, stopping only when Draco's hand on his back, stopped him. Draco shook his head. When they heard Draco's name called, he smiled at Simon and stepped forward. The hat brushed his head and shouted, Slytherin.

"McGill, Simon." The Deputy Headmistress called out and waited for him. Soon she placed the tattered old hat on his head.

So, so, so. Mr. Potter... I know, you go by McGill but underneath that SimonMcGillSimonMcGill is . You need to address that, for while you are a powerful wizard, that doesn't make you a freak. Ah well, the Malfoy child will address that. Where shall we send you? To Slytherin, where you will be great and you get to spend much time with your Malfoy? Or to Ravenclaw, to pull them out of their ivory tower? To Hufflepuff, to wake them up from their somnolence? Perhaps to Gryffindor, to heal the unnecessary and regrettable rift between houses? Where shall we send you? You have the mind of a Ravenclaw. Smart, quick, bright. You have the loyalty of a Hufflepuff. Trusting, loyal, determined. You have the quickness of a Slytherin. Cunning, sly, sneaky. You have the bravery of a Gryffindor. Stubborn, decisive, courageous. Where shall we place you, young McGill?

Gryffindor, please. I... like healing.

Very well, if that's what you wish and you are sure, you are now a Gryffindor!

Simon walked over to the Gryffindor table, backwards. He smiled at Draco and shrugged. Draco did not look happy. Simon pointed to the stool and took his seat. Several people stared at him.

"Why are you talking to that slimy Slytherin?" One boy asked him.

Simon turned cold green eyes on him. "He isn't slimy at all, he has rather nice skin."

"He's a... Slytherin. And a Malfoy to boot. Not a single Dark wizard has ever not been sorted into Slytherin. A den of evil and cruelty."

Simon stood up, picked up a pitcher of pumpkin juice, and poured it over the boy. He spoke loudly, his voice raising with every word "I rather spend time with Draco than with a idiotic pathetic bigot like you. Dark doesn't mean evil, Slytherin doesn't mean evil, and if you claim that this... house never spawned an evil wizard, you haven't the read the papers recently. Peter. Pettigrew. Was. A. GRYFFINDOR!"

Simon strode down the table length until he found a space and squeezed in. He turned to look at Draco who gave him one raised eyebrow, his grey eyes laughing. The other school tables laughed. Albus Dumbledore stood up, calling for attention.

"Attention. Attention! While I do approve of Mr. McGill's refusal to be inducted into the unfortunate rift between house, I must say that we rather not waste pumpkin juice. For Mr. McLaggen's regrettable descent into name calling, 30 points from Gryffindor. For Mr. McGill's more than adequate support of another house, 15 points. Now let us continue the sorting."

"Yes, thank you Headmaster." McGonagall replied.

"Patil, Padma."
"Patil, Parvati."

"Potter, Harry."

The sounds from the tables grew louder as people tried to see him. McGonagall looked around, then walked over to the group still waiting to be sorted. "Mr. Potter, please step forward."

The kids shook their head and stepped apart. Frowning Minerva McGonagall counted the names on her list and then the children before her. Sighing, she turned to look at Dumbledore. "Very well. Thomas, Dean."

The whispering started soon after. Around and around and around the whispers went. Harry Potter... Harry Potter... Harry Potter is not here... did not show... he isn't here. Dumbledore smiled, his eyes twinkling. He needed to check the enrollment book.

The crowd settled and the sorting continued. Simon clapped for everyone regardless of where they were sorted. As they left to find their common room, Simon felt his godfather's eyes on him. Turning, he gave him a quick grin and caught up.

Teacher's Lounge
10:00 pm

Albus Dumbledore hurried down the hallway. The thick enrollment book clutched under his arm. He had checked the letter list himself. A letter was sent out to Harry Potter and it was received. Entering the teacher's lounge, he sat in his accustomed place. Several teachers stood up, all asking questions. Albus held up his hand.

"I do have grave news. Harry Potter, no longer appears on the rolls. I have examined several detection devices and they indicate that everything is quiet at Mr. Potter's house. I'm afraid something may have indeed gone wrong. Filius, will you and Minerva come with me to Mr. Potter's house to check it out."

Filius Flitwick, head of Head of Ravenclaw and Charms Instructor nodded, "But of course."

Minerva also nodded. "Of course, Albus. Shall we leave now?"

Privet Drive
Surrey
10:10 pm

Albus Dumbledore led his two teachers towards Number 4. The house stood still and quiet with a strange air about it, an aura as if it was empty. Walking up to the door, he opened it with a muttered spell. Slowly the three adults entered. The hallway was dark with a green patterned carpet. Filius turned towards the front room and headed into it. Minerva walked with Albus upstairs. At the head of the stairs, he went right towards the smaller two bedrooms while she went towards the left with the master and spare bedroom.

Minerva opened the door, and stopped still. The room was empty, abandoned. There were no decorations, no bed, and no clothes. Turning, she hurried down the hall. Eyes wide, she encountered Albus who was just as shocked as she was. She followed after him as they went down the stairs. They met Filius at the foot of the stairs.
"Most remarkable, Albus!"

"What, my dear friend?" Albus asked quietly.

"Well, the house appears to be abandoned, I checked all over. However, I did find one rather peculiar thing. Over there at the storage cupboard. A bed, really a cot. A shame of a blanket, and pictures on papers on the floor. They are all very similar. They are all signed. Most are signed 'Freak' although some are also signed 'Harry'. One is signed Harry Potter. Is there something you have not told us Albus?"

"No, Filius. That, I must admit, is worrisome however. I do not know why the Dursley's disappeared but we will get to the bottom of it. That I can promise you."

The three walked out to the street outside and disapparated.

September 2, 1991

DAILY PROPHET SPECIAL EDITION

YET ANOTHER DUMBLEDORE MISTAKE?

My Dear Readers,

Harry Potter, the Boy-Who-Lived, was supposed to start school yesterday at Hogwart's School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, under the supposedly secure supervision of Headmaster Albus Dumbledore.

Yes, the same Dumbledore that allowed the killer of the Harry Potter's parents to go free these past ten years. The same Dumbledore who is under investigation for misappropriating funds from the Potter estates and possibly from the Black estate. Is that the real reason he let Pettigrew go? Back to the point, dear reader, Harry Potter is MISSING. He was not on the train and he did not appear in the great hall. Later it was reported that Harry Potter no longer showed up in the school's attendance book.

For years, Albus Dumbledore has told us of the great life our savior enjoys. And who among us would deny him that? Who among us are not grateful for what he did to save us? Is that life but one more lie? Did Dumbledore lie yet again? No doubt if he did then he would say that the lie was necessary for the greater good. The 'greater good' is the excuse that this wizard will once again trot out. Let me ask all you parents out there, would you sacrifice your child to the greater good?

Do any of you believe that Albus Dumbledore wouldn't? And yet he still remains as Headmaster of our leading school of magic.

Once again, we must turn to Albus Dumbledore and ask the question.

Where is our Savior?
The Trouble with Harry

6-5-19 YIKES!!! I made an oopsie. I gave Carmus info to give to Amelia that he shouldn’t have known yet. I’ve deleted it!

September 2, 1991
Daily Prophet

HARRY POTTER ABUSED
MUGGLE GUARDIANS UNDER ARREST
by D.U.N. Kirke

As if the disappearance of Harry Potter wasn’t already a tragedy, we find that Albus Dumbledore has allowed our Savior to be gleefully and joyously abused by his so called ‘family’. Following an anonymous lead, we have found out that Petunia and Vernon Dursley of Little Whinging in Surrey and Ms. Marge Dursley of Oxfordshire have been charged with the repeated abuse of the Dursley’s nephew. Now, because of current child protection laws, no one would confirm that it was indeed Harry Potter. At least not by direct action. However, the proof is in the Muggle records department. Namely that of Births, Deaths, and Marriages.

Rowan and Ivy Evans had two daughters, Petunia and Lily. Horace and Hepzibah Dursley had two children, Marge and Vernon Dursley. Petunia, who then married Vernon Dursley. They have one son, Dudley Dursley. Lily Evans married James Potter; they have one son, Harry. Marge Dursley never married.

As you can see, the only nephew they could have taken care of is one Harry Potter. In fact, we went to Privet Drive where the Dursley have been living for the past twelve years. The people there do remember young Harry.

"A strange child, always quiet that Potter child. I have just moved here about a year ago and I have heard nothing good about that child. I don’t know why. As far as I have seen, he was a good kid. Always wearing cast off which bothered me, seeing as their son always wore good clothing. They said that the Potter kid was a thug but to tell the truth, I’ve never seen the kid do a single thing wrong. Now that Dursley kid, talk about a bully. He and that gang he runs around with, I’m glad the Dursley got busted for child abuse, I only wish that I was braver and turned them in myself. That cop is right, we’re poor excuses for citizens of the great Empire of Great Britain."

- Brian M. Smithwycke
#8 Privet Drive

So by their own words, it is our Savior, Harry Potter. I shudder to think that Albus Dumbledore, whom we all trusted, placed this wonderfully magical child with the Squib sister of Lily Evans. A squib who once told her own sister that ‘the world would be a better place if she had never been born’.

We of course, went to talk to Harry Potter’s godfather, another person who suffered through Dumbledore’s neglect, Sirius Black. When he was told of this, he lowered his head and cried. He
told us that he was informed earlier that Harry Potter had indeed been rescued before he was released from Azkaban. When we asked who had informed him, he shook his head and revealed that he could not tell us due to the need of his godson's protection. He did tell us that Harry was taken someplace safe, what is worse is what he next revealed. That our Savior is no longer Harry Potter.

To protect our precious Boy, they decided to undergo a very rare Blood Ritual. It is called Adoptio Asylum. To get a clear definition of Adoptio Asylum we went to the Ministry of Magic's own Spell Creator, Ignatius S. Croft.

DK: Mr. Croft, what exactly is Adoptio Asylum?

IC: It's a Blood Ritual. All Blood Rituals are normally thought of as Dark but they aren't Evil. It's a common misconception that Dark is Evil. It's not. Dark means it changes the underlying core of something. Such as this spell changed the underlying core of the child who is being adopted. The amount of change depends on the form of the AA ritual used. Since the abuse did not occur at the hands of the actual parents, the AA ritual will not replace the parents' heritage but rather supplement them. The child will now have another set of parents in addition to their own parents. So they lose no gifts or inheritances by this, rather they gain.

DK: I see but why do this ritual, rather than another?

IC: Well, because this ritual requires several criteria to be met, if they aren't met, the potion and spell don't take effect.

DK: What kind of criteria?

IC: If the guardian does not care for the child; if the child has been deprived, seriously deprived, of food, shelter, clothing, schooling; if the child's blood has been spilt in anger or disregard for their life; if the child is neglected or in any way that endangers their life or sanity. In other words, the child has to be severely abused before the ritual will do the job.

DK: Harry Potter has a new family now. He underwent the Adoptio Asylum, and it took.

IC: (pausing) I see. Well then, I believe you have your answer. If the ritual worked and it seems it did, and if the ritual will only work on severely abused children, then Mr. Potter was a severely abused child. Mr. Kirke, tell me are you aware of the Ministry laws regarding Adoptio Asylum?

DK: No.

IC: Well you should check them out, because the fact that it did indeed take, is enough evidence to bring the abusers and anyone involved with the abuse to trial without an indictment by the Wizagamot. The very nature of the spell proves the abuse happened.

DK: Really? I guess my next stop is Amelia Bones (Head of the Department of Magical Law Enforcement). The Muggles including Mrs. Dursley are already on trial, who would they go after?

IC: Whoever placed Mr. Potter there? If they never checked up on him or monitored his wellbeing through direct contact then they are in violation of the law. If you do a private placement, I believe you must let Wizarding Family Services know, then you must allow them or a certified examiner visit the home at least four times a year. You can not both place and examine the household. I learned that when I chose to place my grandnephew with another family member. Check with Minister Bones.

DK: I surely will. Thank you for this informative interview.
IC: You are very welcome and may I wish Mr. Potter or whatever his name now is, a wonderful new life. A new life with a family that loves him and will keep him safe. One more thing about AA. It uses the blood of the adopter, as such, if the adopter does not have affection or is not doing this ritual out of a sense of welcome, of caring, or willingness to be a proper and loving parent, it won't take either. So severe abuse and willing to give the child a proper home are needed to have the spell work. It is also why those who are adopted with Adoptio Asylum are considered to be true children of the family.

DK: Thank you again. I am glad after years of horrible and despicable abuse, aided and abetted by one who we thought we could believe in, Mr. Potter or whatever his name is now is finally safe.

Please stay tuned for our seven part series on the Life of Harry Potter and the consequences to our world
Monday: the Ministry of Magic response and an interview with Madam Bones
Tuesday: Muggle vs Wizarding guardians
Wednesday: Wizarding arguments against Muggles raising of magical children
Thursday: Muggle replies to this issue
Friday: Trial Coverage
Saturday: A surprise!

September 2, 1991
Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry
Great Hall
Gryffindor Table
7:11 am

Hermione Granger shook her head as she read the Daily Prophet. "So it was him. I can't believe the Headmaster! How could he?"

A young dark haired boy from further down the table rolled his eyes. "You shouldn't believe the Prophet, they've been lying about Dumbledore for years. This is just another lie in their attack, just like the lie they had about him stealing from the Potter accounts."

Hermione shook her head.

Ronald Weasley stood up. "Dumbledore did steal from the Potters' accounts! For years, he's been our family patron and protector. For years, he's given money to help us. For years, we looked up to him. This summer opened our eyes. When Dumbledore came to our house in July with a sack for Galleons and Sickles, we set it aside and we have not spent it at all. When we finally see Harry Potter, we will return it. Every paycheck, my Father puts a bit more money in the sack because we owe it to him. We've seen the Goblin approved records. Money came from the Potters' accounts into Dumbledore's. Money came from Dumbledore's account into ours. The Weasley family are not thieves, that is why we will not accept the money."

He looked at the other tables and their eyes focused on them. McGonagall at the head table seemed frozen in shock. Ron took a deep breath, "That is why my family will no longer shelter under the Dumbledores. I know that he has helped many families since the war ended with money and other supplies. We know of his reputation of helping the families devastated by the war. How much of it is stolen, we don't know. We won't accept it. We can't accept it."

Draco Malfoy stared at Weasley before he stood up, "Weasley, you are wrong about one thing. There are some families that have been devastated by the war that he doesn't help. Like the Copleys.
They were Dark but they didn't support the Dark Lord. We… the True Dark Families, supported
them, no one else. Dumbledore didn't support the Neutrals like the Allenyes or the Bandries. We, the
True Dark Families, supported them. What about the Corans, who are Light but fought on their own,
he didn't help them. We did, though they are Light and we are Dark. They are, after all, purebloods.”

Severus looked at his godson and tilted his head in acceptance. He knew that Draco told the truth; for
when he was selected for admission to Hogwarts, it had been Abraxas Malfoy and Adrian Copley
who pushed hardest for him to receive a scholarship. It had been Abraxas through Lucius who made
sure he was attired properly and got the right books. Better yet, it had been Abraxas who went after
the Princes for their shabby treatment of him. Abraxas threatened to take him away from them and let
everyone know why. It was more than Dumbledore ever did. The fact that he had been neglected
and treated as a burden wasn't as important as his spying duties.

Draco cast his eyes over the other three tables. "It is an open secret that of all the Houses in this
school, the Slytherin house contains most of the abused students. They learn quickly how to
minimize their pain, how to hide, how to sneak about for food or safety. My Father is harsh but not
abusive. He is strict and he is demanding but my ability to be cunning is prized by him. We are not
merely made up of abused students but also of those who can most help them. We of Slytherin house
know how to wheel and deal. Every year, we collect funds to put even the poorest students through
school in a manner that befits a Slytherin. With books, clothes, spending money. I know of at three
guaranteed Slytherins whose families have accepted that money for their children. Some of the others
did not get into Slytherin but we won't pull our support. Those who we did not know of but did get
into Slytherin will get support.

"I can see that you all wonder what we 'slimy gits' get from this… a strong culture. Wizards who
aren't ashamed of themselves. In later years we trade favors and help, we network. We, and those we
support, have received nothing from Dumbledore except a twinkling smile and a murmured 'it will all
work out'. When our houses and Manors are raided, we get nothing. When we are accused of evil,
we get nothing. When our homes and livelihoods were destroyed, we got nothing. When our families
were destroyed, we were twinkled at and told that it was our own fault, by the Great Dumbledore
himself. We of the Dark and of the Neutral, do not support Dumbledore because we know that Potter
was abused." Draco turned to the head table and held up a sheaf of paper. "We have the transcripts,
both from the trial and the interview. The interview in which Petunia Dursley laughed at holding her
seven year old nephew's hand in boiling water. Where she berates him for bleeding on a rug and
destroying it, despite the fact that her husband just whipped him raw. And if any of you want a copy,
two copies for a knut."

Furious whispers and cries broke out among the tables. Simon McGill watched as Hermione Granger
smiled. It was not a pretty smile, it had fangs. Nodding, he stood up.

"Many of you don't know me. You don't know my father. I am Simon McGill, my father is Carmus
McGill. He came here years ago. He had a friend called Sean Daton, who was a haruspex… a
prophet. Sean left Dad a bunch of prophecies and stuff. So when one of those prophecies revealed
where Harry Potter lived and that he was being hurt, Dad did the sensible thing. Someone went in to
investigate. Sure they may have overstepped their bounds when they took Potter away but
considering what Petunia said, I don't blame him. Dad funded all this and it makes me proud to call
him Father. I only have one question of the Headmaster." Simon's voice took on a crackle of
electricity, "Did you ever think to check up on him?

"Don't tell me about the blood wards on his aunt's home were sufficient. They couldn't be. For them
to work, those… scum would have to be willing to love him, want him, fight for him, shed blood for
him, and care about him. Those wards are based on love, will, and intent. There was no love, no real
intent to keep him safe, and no willingness to love him. They couldn't work, which the Headmaster
would have known if he had gone to check. Hell, he didn't even know he was a wizard! They tried to beat it out of him! So tell me… when did you ever check on him?"

Minerva McGonagall stared in shock at the four students who had… turned breakfast into a- a- sideshow. Standing up, her nostrils flared.

"Fifty points from Gryffindor, each! Fifty points from Slytherin! For exceeding disrespect of the Headmaster."

Severus Snape shook his head. "Fifty points each to Gryffindor for standing up for what's proper. Fifty points to Slytherin for telling the truth. 10 points from Slytherin for revealing Slytherin secrets."

McGonagall whirled around. "Severus Snape! How dare you condone such vile lies about the headmaster?"

"Because they aren't lies, Minerva. I know they aren't lies. I know because I was the one who initially examined Harry Potter."

The crash of plates and silverware deafened the room.

Teacher's Lounge
7:55 am

Minerva McGonagall walked into the Teacher's lounge. The children had been dismissed for the day. Her face was white and pinched. She sat gingerly in her seat. Filius Flitwick had a furious expression on his face. Even his whiskers seemed to bristle. Hagrid sat on his creaking chair, fat tears rolling down his cheeks. Several other teachers had expressions varying from disbelief to outright outrage. Severus called a house elf and whispered to it. It was back a moment later with several thick folders.

Minerva turned toward Severus, clearing her throat. "S-Severus, what exactly are those for?"

"Minerva, you must understand, I do not do this out of anger or a desire to hurt Albus. I love the daft old codger, but… the Potter situation. I- I made copies of his medical records, for the teachers. I made them in preparation for his attendance here. You need to know what has happened to him so you can understand his limits. I already have permission from the one who adopted him."

Flitwick shook his head. "It must be bad if you are willing to be so helpful."

Severus frowned. The door opened to the left of him and the headmaster came in.

Minerva stood up. "Albus, you must address the students. You must reassure them that this isn't true, that you knew nothing about the horrible abuse Mr. Potter went through. Albus, please."

Albus Dumbledore stood eyes wide as he looked over his staff, eyes a twinkle. "Of course I knew nothing of it. If I had, then I would have surely found another home for him. I merely wanted him to have a normal life with his aunt and her family."

Snape nodded and faced his mentor. "Did you ever check on him?"

"I couldn't risk it. If-"

"THAT IS A LIE!" Severus Snape seethed as he stood up. A flick of his wand sent folders to each
person. Grabbing on he slammed it into Dumbledore's chest. "You could have sent any number of people to check on him. Arabella Figg lives but a few houses down. I know she has a home near Godric's Hollow. She was your watcher, but did you ever check up on him? You could have sent even a Muggle social worker, Moody, any of the old crowd. You didn't."

"Severus…"

"You weren't there to realize that this child's ribs have been broken no less than four times. That he still had a growing hematoma in his brain. That the reason he wore glasses was because his eye frame had been fractured. They never took him to hospital. They just threw him in the storage cupboard and let him heal."

Minerva gasped, hand pressed to her mouth. "Dear Merlin, Severus! Why didn't you say anything?"

Poppy Pomfrey growled as she stood. "He did, to me. Tell them all of it, Severus."

Snape sat down. "Do you remember at the end of June when I got a letter? It was from a friend, Carmus McGill. Yes, the father of my other favorite godson. He said that he needed potions for a 'child in desperate need' which means badly abused. I took ingredients from my personal store and potions before I floo'd over to his home. He sat me down and started to tell me a bit about the child's life and abuse. Then he asked me to give him a Wizards' Oath to protect the child. The oath required my silence on many points until due time. He asked me to keep the child's health, name, family, location, and all identifying characteristics secret. I gave my oath, which is not so unusual an oath. He led me upstairs and that's when I saw Potter. While Carmus rested and took care of his son, I called Pomfrey into the case after administering the same oath. She saw him and advised me to get someone else, a Healer who is a specialist in these things. I had him write up the report. The next night, I made the Adoptio Asylum. I can't give you the adopter's name because they haven't chosen to reveal it so my oath still keeps me from telling you."

Albus stared at the young man. "I see… I understand, in such a… vile case, it is important to protect the child. May I?"

Severus held out the folder. "It is worse than you can possibly know. I will leave you to read this over. Right now though, I must talk to my godson. Revealing Slytherin secrets! I thought I taught that boy better."

Severus spun around, causing his robes to billow as he left the room. Those children will be the death of me.

In the dungeons
7:35 am

"Draco, wait up!" Simon was following his godbrother downstairs. Draco didn't seem to want to hear him. Growling, he put on a burst of speed and grabbing the back of Draco's sweater. Draco turned around and slapped his hand.

"Don't stretch the fabric, McGill."

"Would it kill you to call me Simon, like you have been for weeks?" Simon wrapped one hand around Draco's bicep. "I just… wanted to thank you. For what you said. It was really brave but I thought you guys did cunning, not brave."
Draco snorted, "Yes, my father will have words with me about that. Just think, everyone will now assume I'm the worst Slytherin. Won't they be surprised?"

"Yeah, so are you going to show me your room?"

"A Gryffindor in Slytherin?"

"Well…" Simon pulled Draco closer. "Take me to your room and I'll tell you a secret."

Draco stared at Simon for a moment before nodding. Heading off to the Slytherin dorms, Simon smirked. He knew just what would make Draco invite him to the dorms but how would his friend respond to the secret.

Slytherin first year dorms
8:20 am

Simon groaned and dropped back on a bed. Draco had been raging for the past half hour. Not even his other roommates wanted to deal with him. The throwing of items scared them away. Sighing, he burrowed down into one of the green beds and waited. Suddenly the door slammed open and a tall dark shape entered the room.

"Draco, what is the meaning of this?" Severus stared at his godson.

Simon slid off the bed and closed the door. "It's sorta my fault, Severus. I told him something and he threw a fit."

"Then it most certainly is not your fault. Not matter what you told him, there is no excuse of this kind of brattish behavior and you will clean this mess up with no help from Simon, your roommates, or house elves."

Draco stared at his godfather, he was breathing hard and his eyes were flashing like a superbly cut and polished grey diamonds. "Tell him… Simon."

"The hat wanted to put me into Slytherin but it also said I'd do well in Ravenclaw but not really in Hufflepuff. I asked it for Gryffindor. I told it that between us two we could maybe unite the houses. But Draco wouldn't let me tell him that, he just freaked and went on a tear, so I decided to hide on one of the beds."

Severus nodded. "Draco… is quite spoiled but more importantly, the fact that he is your friend, he knows your real name, and a greedy spoiled brat means that he doesn't like it when he perceives something he likes or cares about to be taken from him. Before he could be upset at the hat and despise it but now you admit it was your own choice. He is angry at you, he wants to despise you but he can't and he doesn't do well with conflicting emotions. That however is no excuse for this behavior."

Simon nodded and walked over to Draco. Wrapping his arms around his friend, he hugged him tight. "I didn't do it to reject you; I'd never reject you, Draco. Hell, I threw pumpkin juice all over McLaggen for you. You are my first friend, my best friend. When everything else is all cracked up, I know I can come to you."

Severus watched the two of them and sighed. It would work for them, of this he was sure. Clearing his throat, he watched as Simon squeezed Draco once more and turned so they were both facing him. Pulling two slim volumes from his robes, he held them carefully. "I actually came to give you both
something… special."

Severus handed one to both boys. He watched as both books ‘bit’ the boys. Gold flowed over each book as their names were written on the spine. "They are now blood locked to you. Write in one, it appears in the others. No one can write, open, or read them. Keep them safe. Now, Simon, it is time to leave Draco to cleaning up his mess.

Severus placed one hand on Simon's shoulder and maneuvered him away from Draco. Together they walked out the door, Simon glancing backwards to look at Draco.

Draco sighed and looked at the mess. Damn! And I can't call a house elf.

Headmaster's office
12:00

Dumbledore sighed as he read over the file again. So much pain, so much trouble for this young boy. Sighing, he realized that he had indeed made a mistake. In fact between the Black debacle and now this… travesty, many were losing faith in him. He stared at the recent articles and wondered for the first time if all this sacrifice had been worth it. Yes, the boy was the destined weapon to take down the evil Dark Lord but at what price. He knew what he was doing when he pulled the baby from Black's hands. He knew what Black would do. It was necessary! Did they not know that, it was necessary!

Frowning, he stood up and walked towards a blank spot on the wall. Pressing his hand against the spot, the stone faded out. Reaching in, he pulled out eight flat books. He ran his fingers over the title. Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone. Sighing, he picked up another book and opened it. The Time Between. Flipping towards a marked page, he ran his finger down the page. On it was a list of every person that was supposedly in Mr. Potter's class. Nodding, he realized that it was indeed accurate. Everyone was placed into their appropriate houses. However for the first time, he realized that Harry was not listed.

Daton was truly the best haruspex he had ever known.

September 2, 1991
Ministry of Magic
Minister's office

Cornelius Fudge paled as he read the article, this was the most horrible thing that has ever happened to him. First the whole Black debacle, then the Potter brat disappeared, thank goodness both of those were obviously Dumbledore's fault. Perhaps if Dumbledore hadn't been so determined to undermine him then he would have been more sympathetic to his problems. Now it was revealed that the Potter brat had been horrendously abused. Of course that was all to the better, oh not for the brat's sake but for his, yes, this was better. He had to conduct a press conference, one in which he wished that troublesome brat good health, yet make people that the ministry is looking at the charges. If he worked it right… wait, wait, the article.

Fudge moved to pick up the paper again and looked down near the end of the article.

IC: Well, you should check them out, because the fact that it did indeed take, is enough evidence to bring the abusers and anyone involved with the abuse to trial without an indictment by the
Wizagamot. The very nature of the spell proves the abuse happened.

DK: Really? I guess my next stop is Amelia Bones (Head of the Department of Magical Law Enforcement). The Muggles including Ms. Dursley are already on trial, who would they go after?

IC: Whoever placed Mr. Potter there? If they never checked up on him or monitored his wellbeing through direct contact then they are in violation of the law.

Fudge grinned as he bustled out of his office. And such a violation of law… that meddlesome headmaster will never recover from, if he played this right Dumbledore would fall. Fall hard. Nothing incenses the public like crimes against a child. Yes, yes, this would work well. Right now. He had to see Amelia.

Amelia Bones office

Carmus sipped his coffee as Madam Bones read the file. Sighing, she lowered the folder and looked at him. "You do know that prosecuting Dumbledore while, not a mistake, will be hard. This file and the statements of the Dursleys, do however prove neglect. Also, Dumbledore was not named magical guardian by either the Potters or by Black, therefore the withdrawals from the Potters' accounts will be made good by the Dumbledore accounts. I understand that you, on behalf of Mr. Potter, will be holding an auction of the Dursley belongings. The monies raised will go towards repaying Mr. Potter for rent, care, and embezzled monies, is that correct?"

"Yes, ma'am. It is little enough that they owe him, in my eyes."

"Truly. Very well, I have no problem with that. Now, Harry, is he okay where he is?"

"Safer than ever, Madam Bones. I swear it. I can't tell you where, not won't, can't. For his safety, very few know where he is. If you don't know, you can't do anything about it."

Amelia nodded. "I find that I can believe that Albus did do this, he has this… air of infallibility about him, but I do have to wonder how he might have thought about this. If he truly believed that Mr. and Mrs. Dursley might care for the boy."

"Madam Bones. My best friend is Severus Snape, his 'sister of the heart' was Lily Evans Potter. He came to me one day and he was angry, so very very angry. He had gone with Lily to see her sister. Lily was three months pregnant. She wanted to share that with her sister. Her sister kicked Lily out of the house, screeching and screaming. She said and I quote 'I wish to god you were dead rather than admit I have a disgusting freak of a sister. I know it would have been better for all of us, for mom and dad, if it wasn't for you. You, who drove them to their deaths. This entire world would have been better if you had never been born.'

"Now, Lily came back and was in tears. Albus was there when they came back. Lily hugged him and told him what had happened. He knew how Petunia felt about Lily. I can get Severus to give you the memory. Just for reference, the Evans died when a drunk driver crossed the line and hit their car. They fell off the side of the road and the car rolled. They were dead almost instantly.

"This is how they died. Apparently Petunia blamed Lily, though I don't see the connection. I had my lawyers get a copy of the Potters' wills. Both of them were witnessed by Albus Dumbledore but he was not named executor of the will. As you know that means he had no right to place Harry anywhere. Molly Weasley, Arthur Weasley, and Remus Lupin will all testify that Dumbledore removed Harry from Black's arms. That Black tried to hold onto Harry, he was upset and hugging
Harry tightly to him. Once Harry was removed from Black's arms and given to Hagrid, Dumbledore took Sirius aside to talk to him. That's when Sirius gave off a howl of grief and ran off."

Amelia Bones sighed and placed her head in his hands. "Of course, Dumbledore will claim he did what was best for the child based on the information he had of the will."

"He can't. According to the wills, which both Dumbledore and Sirius witnessed, if he couldn't take care of Harry then care would devolve onto the Longbottoms, then the Tonks, then the Weasleys. The Longbottoms are an old pureblood family. They have very secure wards. The Tonks based on blood magic since Sirius is his godfather. The Weasleys were last because they already had so many children. He should have given the child to the Longbottoms, but I have here an article from the Prophet from the day after the attacks in which he said that the attack on the Longbottoms happened before the attack on the Potters."

Amelia nodded, "Yes, we knew that."

"How did you know that? Because Dumbledore said so? Madam, if the Longbottoms were chosen before the Potters, then Neville would have been the Boy Who Lived. Madam, Bellatrix Lestrange and her husband tortured the Longbottoms into insanity. They did this, intending to hold Neville for Voldemort to kill. Voldemort. Was. Not. There. He had gone to the Potters to kill Harry first. The attack on the Longbottoms could not have happened first, otherwise he would have been there to kill a prophecy child. Something so vital, you think he's going to attack simultaneously?"

"We found the Longbottoms at four in the morning. The attack on the Potters happened a half hour before midnight. We merely thought, that the attack on them went unnoticed longer."

"Check again. Ask Pettigrew. When I checked the interrogation transcripts, I noticed something he had said. 'She was furious about the prophecy and the children. After the Dark Lord left to the Potters, she went to torture the Longbottoms because they dared to birth a prophecy child.' We all assumed it meant that the Longbottoms knew the prophecy and after she tortured them, they went after Harry. What if it meant after Harry fulfilled the prophecy that Bellatrix was furious at Harry destroying her 'beloved lord', that she tortured the Longbottoms in retaliation because they had the only surviving prophecy child."

Amelia sat back, her dark blue eyes wide, "Dear Merlin and the Founders! Albus couldn't have known that the Longbottoms had been attacked. He couldn't which meant he had no intention of honoring their will… he placed, he knowing and willfully placed a child into an abusive home and for what?"

"Well the steel is best when tempered, you eliminate the flaws and emphasize what you consider the qualities."

"That is enough, no longer will he be allowed… oh the children, and I read your brief on Tom Riddle. I asked several psychologists and mind healers what kind of person would develop from this kind of upbringing. You will not be surprised at their utter and complete disgust towards the vile manipulation of the teacher in regards to the student. Each agreed that it was a prime example for basically raising a child to be a murderer. I have three who asked if this was a true case sample and if it was if this teacher was being prosecuted. All of them asked me if the child or if he was grown now, the adult was receiving massive therapy. How do I tell them that he's become a terrorist? One said that what happened was no more than the same grooming and cultivation that extremists did to create angry children who they would later use as suicide bombers. They would hire someone to yank the child from joy to pain and make sure they placed the blame on the certain party they want the child to hate."
"I know. That's why I want Albus Dumbledore to be removed from Hogwarts, he did a lot to help but he's fallen into a trap, the trap of infallibility. It doesn't work but everyone trusts him because he was a HERO. He made an exquisitely human mistake. However, they look at him as a God. He's not. People obey him without question because he's the GREAT ALBUS DUMBLEDORE! He's a man but now he's bought into his own myth. Amelia-"

The door behind Carmus slammed open and a red faced Minister Fudge stood there. "Bones! We have got to do something about this… this… this…"

Carmus stood up, "Good day, Amelia. We will continue discussing what needs to be done about Dumbledore later."

Minister Bones chuckled and nodded.

As the door closed, Carmus could hear Fudge yelping, "What… Dumbledore, was that McGill?"

Carmus chuckled as he moved quickly down the corridor.

Grimmauld Place
7:25 am

A howl ripped through the house. Sirius curled up in his bed and waited. A few minutes later, the door flew open, plaster falling from the ceiling at the impact. Remus Lupin stood there his eyes as amber as any wolf, panting. His voice held a growl. "You knew. You knew since yesterday."

"I thought you already knew, Remus. I… I failed him and he… he…"

Remus crawled on the bed. "We will destroy Dumbledore for hurting our cub. Swear it!"

Sirius nodded. "Yes, we will. I swear it."

Remus nodded and pulled Sirius closer, burying his face into Sirius' hair. "I have listened to Dumbledore for too long. He told me long ago to deny what I knew for your sake but now I think it was for his sake, he couldn't have you be stable. Now, you need to be if you are ever going to get my cub back, is this clear?"

"Yes, but what are you talking about?"

"I've known for years but after that cruel attempt at murder you tried to use me for, I wasn't sure… I mean I was sure but could I trust you? Was it jealousy that made you be so cruel, could I bind myself to someone who thinks like that?"

"Yes. Because I will never do that again, I know now what I did was… evil, not Dark but evil. Snivel… Severus, didn't deserve that. I didn't deserve his help now but I will be worthy of it. And you, if you let me."

Remus nodded. "That's the type of mate I want. A good mate, one who doesn't try to use me."

Sirius Black turned to look up at him. Closing his eyes, he pressed closer. "Please… I've always been yours. You… didn't want me."

"I didn't want a murderer. I've always loved you, Sirius, you idiot."

"He really didn't want me to have this, you, in my life, did he?"
"If you had, would you have risked it to hunt Pettigrew? Would you have, knowing as you did, the Werewolf Laws, left Harry with me knowing that the Ministry could and would take him from me or would you have taken me and Harry off someplace safe? Away from England?"

"He couldn't let that happened. Harry Potter, not a Briton? Would have thrown people into furor."

"I know… I only wonder… if Dumbledore planned all this. James and Lily, the Longbottoms, hell… he created Voldemort. McGill thinks he created Voldemort as a smaller evil Lord so that Dumbledore could rescue the Wizarding World again."

"Yes, I'm starting to think so… right now though, I don't want to think of that… bastard, I just told you that you are my mate and you are talking about Dumbledore… not a good image."

Sirius laughed. "My mate… wait you mean. MATE as in never going to leave me again, love me forever, and never ever deny me anything kind of mate."

Remus laughed. Ten years in Azkaban and yet there are still some things that won't change.

Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry
8:00 pm

Draco tapped his foot as he waited for someone to come to the portrait. Finally it swung open and Simon popped his head out the portrait hole. Several other Gryffindorks waited behind him.

Simon smiled and turned around, "It's just Draco."

"Just Draco? Just Draco indeed. I don't think I'll give you the message after all." Draco moved a step before Simon grabbed him.

"What message?"

"Professor Snape wants to see you in his quarters. I'm to escort you down there."

A third year stood up and moved to the portrait hole. "I don't believe you. The only use Snape has for Gryffindors is to torment them. McGill is going nowhere."

Turning, the third year called for someone to get McGonagall.

Simon scowled. "I think it should be my decision. Professor Snape is not evil."

"True, he is not, Mr. McGill but I am wondering why I got an alert while I was on my way here to speak to the tower?" Professor McGonagall asked coolly.

The third year stepped closer, "Malfoy here claims that his head of house wants to speak to McGill but classes haven't started yet nor is there any reason for this. I don't trust Malfoy's mission."

Simon growled. "What I wouldn't give for another jug of ice cold pumpkin juice."

The older boy flinched but set his shoulders stubbornly.

"Look, Professor Snape is not evil. You have no idea how much he risks for you, what he sacrificed, yet you just assume since he was a Slytherin, he's evil. I don't know why you stupid gits buy with this mandated prejudice but you do. Hufflepuffs are silly slow but loyal. Ravenclaws are brainy but distant. Gryffindors are brave but impetuous. Slytherins are sly and evil. Which is just plain stupid."
The Slytherins I know are loyal, fiercely and maniacally loyal after all they have to be. An innocent 11 year old child is sorted into Slytherin and suddenly three quarters of the school automatically hates them. You know nothing about them but you hate them anyways and yes there are muggleborns in Slytherin. As for why PROFESSOR Snape wants to see me is simple. He probably got a message from my dad and is doing his godfatherly duty in making sure everything is okay with me. Thank you very much. Now if you excuse me I'd like it if you got the hell out of my way!” Simon pushed past the older boy. Turning to his own head of house, he nodded. "I shall return immediately after Professor Snape and I are finished.

Minerva McGonagall stared at her house in disappointment. Shaking her head, she waved the two boys in. "First let me make the house announcement then you can go."

Draco and Simon nodded and stepped into Gryffindor tower. Within a few minutes everyone was gathered in the common room.

"I know that many of you are both angry and disappointed about the tragedy that has happened to Mr. Potter. We were informed that he is in a safe environment with the love of a true family. Many of you don't know what Adoptio Asylum is so we will be going over it during classes. Just understand that it is the best outcome for such an awful circumstance. As for the Headmaster… I am appalled that if everything of which he is accused of turns out to be true, then we never really have known him. My office will be open for those who wish to talk about this."

Chatter broke out all through the common room. McGonagall waved Simon and Draco towards her. Leaned down, she took a small pouch from her waist. Draco smiled as Simon rolled his eyes. "I think I should go first so I can catch you."

"Prat."

McGonagall smiled at them. "Oh and Mr. McGill, 5 points for language previous. Now then, Professor Snape's Quarters!"

The floo powder turned the flame a strange purple as Draco went through them and Simon followed. Draco spun shortly through the castle before jumping out on his feet, turning around, he held out his arms and stepped to the side, catching Simon as he fell out of the floo.

Simon looked at him before standing up and brushing himself off. "Oh hush!"

Severus watched his godsons with amusement. They interacted well together. True, Draco was somewhat a brat but Simon always knew how to defuse him. Stepping forward, he beckoned them towards his study. Sitting at his desk, he handed them their schedules.

"You have six classes together: Potions, Defense, Care of Magical Creatures, Herbology, and Ancient Runes, Flying. You have three more in common though you don't share them; History of Magic, Charms, and Transfiguration. Draco has chosen Arithmancy and you chose Divination. Is there no way I can convince you otherwise? Perhaps Muggle Studies, it'll be an easy grade."

He watched as Simon looked at Draco then back to him. "Ummm, sir, what's wrong with Divination. I think it'd be cool to tell the future."

Draco snorted.

Severus shook his head. "It would indeed be… cool, if it could be taught. Some people can use the Tarot, fewer still the higher you go into Divination but true Divination such as Daton is rare and most often born, not made. It is like loving the piano but not being born with the coordination necessary to
play. No matter how much you love it, if you can't play, you can't play. There are other classes such as Astronomy which is interesting.

Simon nodded. "Astronomy then."

Severus tapped the schedule and the class changed leaving Simon a free period on Tuesday and Thursday mid morning. "Good… now that we have Simon's schedule sorted. We need to speak about Potter. We… Carmus and I, believe the public will be best suited by a letter written from Potter to them. Also, Simon, Ms. Bern will be coming twice a week to speak to you. Tuesday and Thursdays at 10:00 am. Also I have several trial transcripts for you as well as summaries. Yes you may share them with Draco but they won't be allowed out of my quarters. Time permitting, I do hope to have you both over for lunch every Sunday, your fathers may be joining us. Even though you, Simon, were not blessed to be sorted into Slytherin, I want you to understand that I will be as strict on you as any of my Slytherins."

Simon nodded.

Severus sat down and sighed as he sent his godsons to bed, Simon to the tower and Draco to his room. For once, he would make Malfoy listen to him. It would be perfect. Suddenly the flames flared up and a paper phoenix came through the floo, landing on the desk.

Setting down his drink, he opened the note from the Headmaster. Crushing it after reading, he stood up and left his quarters. Carefully, he examined his Occulumency shield. Robes billowing, he entered the Headmaster's office.

"You wished to see me?"

"Yes, Severus. I have been looking over this medical report. I have failed Harry and his family. Wondering if you could tell me where to get in touch with Mr. Potter."

Severus shook his head. "I'm sorry. But as I mentioned before, as is protocol with many child abuse cases, I took an oath to keep certain knowledge quiet. That includes his current location."

"I see… Severus, do you blame me for what happened to Mr. Potter?"

"Albus, no one went looking for Potter at his aunt's because all of the Death Eaters knew that Petunia despised Lily. *Lucius knew it.* The only time I remember Petunia using magic was when she sent a howler to Lily one weekend morning. In which she said that their parents were dead, Petunia had already buried them, and now she was relieved to cleanse their home of all freakishness. She told Lily to never come back again. How can you say that you were thinking of the child's best interest? Petunia took out every hatred she had for her sister on that child. Are you to blame? Yes, you are, Albus. Maybe, in some minuscule way you did not know of Petunia's hatred however, if you had spent any time visiting that child, you would have known. The blood wards didn't work. They never loved him. They never wanted him. They didn't care if every drop of his blood spilled from his body as long as they didn't have to lift a finger. The blood wards didn't take. They never did. If you had gone there and checked it out, you would have known this. What you did was simply criminal neglect. And that child almost died for it. Now, you will have to pay for it. Carmus is his intermediary, and Carmus knows law backwards and forth."

Dumbledore nodded and sighed. Severus stood up and left, a gentle smirk tugging at his lips.
September 5, 1991
Malfoy Manor

Lucius Malfoy read over the letter one more time before refolding it and sealing it. He stared at the impression made in the wax and knew the moment that this missive left his hand, he would forever be remembered as a man who abandoned a cause that he had spent years supporting. For his son, he would do anything. Turning to the large eagle owl, he handed it the letter and opened the window.

His son's future relied on that small roll of parchment.

September 7, 1991
Triton's School of Excellence
Headmaster's office
2:30 p.m.

Edward Shelton Maquey, headmaster of Triton's School of Muggle Excellence, sighed. He really didn't want to come to this meeting but it was, after all, necessary. Whether or not, young Dudley was related to this whole mess wasn't the problem, it was the other children's belief that he was. Pausing with his hand on the door, he took a deep breath and entered.

"Mr. McGill, I'm Headmaster Maquey. I asked you here to talk about Dudley. I do hope I am wrong but I fear I am not, is he indeed the Dudley spoken of in the Prophet. Son of Petunia and Vernon?"

"Does it matter?" Carmus raised on eyebrow.

"Yes, for his security it does. You see, many of the children here have, understandably, been raised to think of Harry Potter as a hero. Now they have this young man whom, they believe, was an active abuser against their hero. They are taking their anger out on Dudley. Dursley unfortunately is not a common name, and Dudley isn't either. Together they aren't at all common, add into that fact that when asked his full name, he proudly announced it was Dudley Vernon Dursley."

"I see; I was hoping he wasn't quite that stupid but I should have known better. Normally, I'd have him change his name, however, he refused to. As you can tell, he's not the brightest bulb in the box. He honestly and truly believes that what he and his family did was not wrong. That it was their job to stamp out such abnormality, such freakishness, as they could find. He was a full and completely willing participant in the starvation, assault, and abuse of his cousin."

"The boy is little more than bully. He harassed other children into shunning Harry. His parents bought him out of trouble, and into status. I couldn't send him to public school because I don't want him reconnecting with them. I can't send him to a Muggle school because the same tactics that worked once can work again. I had to send him to a school where no one would believe that Harry was an attention seeking prat. So then I choose the best of the schools. Triton's."

The headmaster nodded. "I see. I also notice that you have him seeing Healer Aurora Bern. I am guessing to deal with this turn of events?"

"Yes, twice weekly. She insisted on treating both boys, she says she might have to treat them together but for now; Harry sees her on Tuesdays and Thursdays while Dudley, Mondays and Wednesdays." Carmus leaned back. "So what exactly is happening with Dudley?"

"Well, first he's being ostracized by the other—"
3:20 p.m.

Dudley sat outside the Headmaster's office, sulking. All week long it was Harry Potter this and Harry Potter that. That ridiculous story…

Two days ago
History Class

"Now, I know many of you are following the Muggle trial of Harry's Aunts and Uncle. Some of you know who Harry is and what he is famous for, but I know some of you are squibs who have been raised in the Muggle world or Muggle relatives of witches and wizards, so you wouldn't have known what he was famous for. So let me tell you what he did.

"Over fifty years ago, a young man born of a witch and Muggle entered our world. His name was Tom Marvolo Riddle, and he suffered greatly as did most orphans of that time. Orphanages were underfunded, they often were not places of safety, children were beaten, neglected, abused, and raped even. Tom Riddle was in one that was slightly better than norm but still quite bad. He was invited to Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. He was happy because it was a boarding school. He knew he would get fed, see a doctor, and learn fascinating things. He already knew he could do things and now he could learn what he really could do.

"He was sorted into Slytherin where he did his best to conceal his Muggle father, since Slytherin has the most of the pure blood students. He learned many things, but one thing he did not learn was that he would have to go back at the end of the year. He did. And those bullies who had oft times before hunted him were waiting and each summer grew progressively worse. There was no Wizarding Family Services, no one to rescue him, and so he grew angry and bitter. What made it worse was one of his professor's at the school named Albus Dumbledore, who is now headmaster, did not trust the young Slytherin, and was convinced that due to his being sorted in Slytherin the young man was evil. This mistrust only served to further twist Riddle into the monster he later became. When Riddle tried to get a job at Hogwarts, the only place he felt safe, Dumbledore forbade him and did everything in his power to block it.

"After being denied, he traveled the world and learned all sorts of Dark Arts. These Arts are called Dark because they are ruled by passion and fueled by emotions. To give one self over totally to emotion is to lose what makes us human. When he came back, he achieved some small political power but not enough to complete the task to which he had set himself. To make sure that what happened to him would never happen again. To this end, he advocated stealing magical children and placing them in the wizarding world, obliterating any Muggles who interfere with wizards, and killing Muggles who are viewed to be problems or attack wizards.

"He located his father who refuted him, this only crystallized his belief that Muggles are evil and deserve death. Soon, he put his ideas into action and became a terrorist, he murdered people left and right. Until the Potters, a prophecy revealed that a child would be the one to destroy Riddle, who was by now going by the name of Voldemort. Why Harry Potter, I don't know but we do know that they were betrayed by Peter Pettigrew. Voldemort attacked, he killed James Potter with two words, the worst two words in our world. As I am a Muggle who married a wizard, they have no effect from my mouth. Avada Kedavra. The killing curse. He attacked Lily Potter who fell also to those words. He turned to the child Harry and once more said those words."

Angela Harst looked at her class. Twenty children, looking at her, their faces ranging from enthralled to the boredom of the Dursley child. Walking between the desks, she wandered, seemingly aimlessly. Stopping in front of Dudley, she leaned down.

"Everyone in the history of this spell fell to it, except for Harry Potter. He survived, he did what no
one else, not even the great Merlin could do. He turned the spell from himself back to the caster. Voldemort fell." Straightening up, she smiled. "A child, a fifteen month old child destroyed someone so evil. This is why we celebrate him and it is why, we of the wizarding world, take such exception to him being abused."

Dudley glared at the other students, turning his glare onto the teacher to demand she do something, he flinched at the hatred in her eyes. Her green eyes bore into his.

"It is reprehensible for anyone to abuse any child but to take a child that saved so many lives and abuse him so severely is even worse. Then again, there are some people who are so miserable that they can not bear to thank anyone who saves their lives." She turned away from him.

Dudley turned his head around and around, all the students cast looks of pure hatred except for one and that one was worse, pity. He was Vernon Dudley Dursley, son of Vernon Horace Dursley. Puffing himself up, he was surprised to here a hiss by his ear.

"Hey fat boy! It's too bad, yer Potter's cousin, otherwise we could do so much with you. There's a lot of old recipes for a child's fat and you got enough of it. Like I said it's too bad that yer Potter's cousin. But I'm not stupid enough to make things bad for the Boy Who Lived. No, not half so stupid as you!"

Dudley spun around, his face red with anger. The other boy's hard black eyes glared back at him as well. Growling, Dudley pulled one meaty fist back to punch him but it never landed.

The door to the classroom flew open and a word was yelled. Dudley tried to move and realized he was frozen. A young woman walked up to them. She was short barely five feet tall.

"Fighting is not permitted, you will receive five demerits and a visit to the Headmaster's office. Mobilicorpus."

Present

Carmus stepped out of the Headmaster Maquey's office with a grim face. "I'll be taking him home now, thank you, Headmaster. I will talk to him."

"Thank you. And please, when you have a chance, tell Mr. Potter that we are appalled by our inaction. We have, I have to admit, forgotten how to think our way through things. We much rather allow someone else to deal with the problems. We are trying to step back and allow our students to try things. Hopefully, they won't inherit our weaknesses."

"It was fatigue. One can't blame you, but I remember a book that I once read about a High King who didn't seem to be holding onto his kingdom very well. He had been a great king who did battle with many people to bring peace to his many lands. It was a hard long tiring battle. It ravaged the land. He was tired, so he started listening to a spirit that told him to rest, to let others take on the burden. He almost lost his kingdom. Dumbledore was the wizarding world's spirit, but unlike that spirit, he was active. He knew that you would allow him to use his strength and you did. But now, if something seems too good, then it may be."

McGillis House

Carmus opened the door and shoved Dudley in.

"DAYN!"

Dayn popped into the hallway in front of her master. Carmus closed the front door. Sighing, he
stared at his house elf. "Dayn, remove all furniture from Dudley's room. Replace his bed with a cot. Remove all clothes and leave only uniforms. For dinner, he may have soup and a sandwich; for breakfast, he may have porridge. Thank you."

Dayn nodded and popped out.

Carmus turned to Dudley. "You are a fool, an utter and complete fool. Did you not listen to me when I said that your cousin was your only saving grace? If it wasn't for him, the Headmaster would kick you out. If it wasn't for him, you'd be dead already. Do you think those children don't have magical relatives? They do! Those relatives would love to get their hands on you for two reasons. One, you share blood, they can use your blood to find him. Two, to punish your father, mother, and aunt; they would slaughter you in the most aggressive violent bloody way they could. Instead of trying for once to be semi intelligent, you seem hell bent on getting yourself killed. So let me lay it out for you, Dudley. Either you get your act together or I'll send you to Canada. There are no Deatheaters there, but you'll never step foot on English soil again."

Dudley stared at his guardian as he walked out of the room and wondered if he really could do that.

September 6, 1991
Inside the Headmaster's Quarters
1:37 p.m

Albus looked out the window to see the McGill child run up to the Granger girl. They talked too quietly for him to hear them. placing a finger on the frame, he used his power to focus the picture in the window frame.

"- so anyways, I realized that you and all the other muggleborns are at a disadvantage. Those who were raised in the Magical world tend to know some things that you wouldn't, nor would it ever occur to us that you need to know them. They are common knowledge things. Such as Coke… it is either a dangerous drug or a drink. If you told a wizardborn about snorting Coke, they would think it was a very peculiar and mad thing for a Muggle to try to drink through their nose. However, when you realize how most wizards see Muggles, you'll understand why they never ask you to explain anything?"

Granger shook her head. "I never thought about it but the information they gave me really isn't that complete though I love *Hogwarts: A History*. It's fascinating!"

"Yes, it is, but you do realize that it is, by its own nature, biased. It is written, updated, published, and maintained by Hogwarts. Not the school but the Board of Governors. Some governors are very truthful and honest but others are self aggrandizing fools. What's important is which the current governors are. Even so, the current governors can not rewrite what previous governors have written, only add notes."

Granger bit her lip. "I see. Is this common knowledge in the Wizarding world?"

"If not common, at least not hard to find."

"ARGH! No one tells us anything!"

"And you hate that don't you, Granger?"

"Call me Hermione, and yes!"

"Tell you what, Hermione, I'll talk to some of my friends. Some of the wizarding raised halfbloods and purebloods, you get the muggleborn, and we'll go somewhere and have a no holds barred
Albus leaned back, it seems that Carmus McGill has engaged his own son into his plans. Masterful, second only to himself, he might have to worry about McGill.

"Tell you what, Hermione, I'll talk to some of my friends. Some of the wizarding raised halfbloods and purebloods, you get the muggleborn, and we'll go somewhere and have a no holds barred summit. Any question can be asked, no boundaries on the practices or rituals of any wizards; Muggles, halfs, and pure. We ask you and you ask us, with the understanding that since we know little or nothing about our counterparts, what may seem invasive to you may not be so to us or vice versa."

Hermione nodded. "Okay, say a week from today, that'll give everyone a chance to make it."

Simon nodded. "Yes, now I just have to convince Draco to go along with it."

Hermione laughed. "Good luck! Do you know why we have a ghost for a professor?"

Simon smiled, it was nice out here, just walking by the lake. "Well, it seems…"

Draco stared at the bushy haired lion cub. He didn't care if Simon was placed in Gryffindor, the way he went about it was totally Slytherin. Frowning, he tried to recall the bylaws his father had mentioned, surely there was a way to be granted a resort, wasn't there? There had to be. Once Simon did what he wanted, he could be resorted into his proper house. Gritting his teeth, he watched Simon laugh at something the stupid little mudblood had said. Let them laugh now, Harry was his; his friend, his brother, his…

Swirling around, he stormed back inside the castle

Simon's eyes caught the swirl of a blue cape. Sighing and shaking his head, he said goodbye to Hermione and jogged up to the castle. Slipping past the gate, he stopped short as Severus stepped into the hall. "Simon."

"Hello, sir."

"Remember lunch, tomorrow, my quarters, 1 in the afternoon." The potions master stated serenely.

"Yes, sir. Will Draco be there?"

"But of course, in fact, I just saw him heading towards his room. Lupanar."

Simon nodded and headed towards the staircase for the Slytherin dungeons. As soon as he was out of sight of Severus, he took off. Five minutes later, he stood huffing and puffing outside the Slytherin dorms. Moving closer to the wall, he whispered, Lupanar. The door opened and Simon slipped in, waving at the students in the common room, he headed for the first year corridor and opened the first year dorm. Draco was sitting on his bed, back to the headboard and reading. Simon walked over silently and climbed up on the bed. Draco continued to read. Simon sighed and sat next to his moody friend and waited.

After about an hour and ten minutes, Draco put his book down and turned to Simon who was lightly dozing by now.

"What do you want, McGill."

Simon opened his eyes and smiled softly. "Simon or when we are safe you can call me Harry."
Mostly Simon though, I wanted to talk to you but you didn't hang around."

"I have nothing to say to that ill groomed mudblood."

"Draco! I told you before if you are going to insult people I am trying to be friends with, I won't talk to you. Every time you get in a mood you act like a total ass and it isn't funny! Hermione is a nice girl, bright and dedicated to her schoolwork. We were actually talking about the task the Hat wants me to do, though she doesn't know it. Other than you and godfather, I don't think anyone needs to know. Well, maybe Father but that's enough. I wasn't even going to tell those two but you threw that fit, remember."

Draco flushed, and nodded. "Yeah, so you weren't going to tell them?"

"No, I wasn't but you wouldn't talk to me again! You just get upset and blow up without talking to me! You don't ask questions, you just go off in a snit. And I like you, Draco. I really do, you're my best friend but one day, I'm not going to chase after you when you throw a fit. I don't want my whole life to be chasing after you because you're angry. I was forced to do that with the Dursleys. He'd destroy something, get angry, blame me, and they would force me to apologize to him. He wouldn't accept it, and of course that's because I wasn't really apologizing. According to them, I was really just mocking him. It would take a week of constant apologizing and finally groveling. Then he would accept it but only if I let him hurt me. That's why I can't keep this up. To you, this is a ploy to get your way or to get me to come to you. I know that. I do. It's a normal thing for you, something you learn from your family. A way to keep power, but to me it's just the same thing they would do to me. And I can't keep doing that. I look eleven but I feel 30 and I'll do this a little longer because you need to grow up some but I won't do this forever, Draco, I can't."

Draco stared at his friend before moving to place one arm around him and pull him closer. "So what were you two talking about?"

Simon grinned as he leaned against his friend. "Well, I figure we can start by getting everyone—"

September 7, 1991
12:43 pm
Gryffindor Common Room

Draco leaned his head back and placed a long fingered hand over his eyes. How on this good green earth did Simon stand this? Those horrid colors. Red and gold weren't bad if they were placed in a harmonious balance; say make things a warm rich blood red with gold highlights, perhaps some of the furniture could be gold. Like the couches, yes, gold laced light wood for the frames, red upholstery, red and gold patterned pillows with golden or red fringe. That would be proper, yet they had that monstrosity, a red and gold STRIPED couch.

A hand pulled his down from his eyes and green eyes stared at him. "It's not that bad."

"It's a red and gold hell. Who decorated, the bloody headmaster?" Draco snarled.

Behind Simon, one of his roommates snorted. "Nae, if it was the headmaster, it would be all bloody houndstooth, checks, and stars."

"Seamus, don't encourage Draco!" Simon laughed. "Come, Draco, come away from the sparkly common room."

"Hey, Simon?" Another voice called from behind him.

"Yes, Neville?"
"What's the Slytherin Common Room like?"

Draco opened one eye. "Elegant."

Simon laughed again. "He's right, it is elegant, it's a bit formal but not cold. They use varying shades of green, not just one shade. My favorite chair in there is a dark rich green, serpent green, with lighter, almost leaf green designs all over it. There are silver threads in it, and it had buttons, inside of big diamonds. The buttons are dull silver. It's beautiful, I'll sit there before the fire and we talk. The fire grate is antique silver and if you really look, you will see little snakes hidden everywhere. The colors there are cool colors but the greenery, they believe in green. There are plants even. Everything there is about blending, blending in or blending to combine. Here, we have warm colors, but they spend so much time in conflict. I love our common room but I sorta understand why Draco finds it overwhelming. We don't use shades of red, only use blood red. We don't use shades of gold, only bright gold. I think this place would be nice with some rust colored sofas with bright gold designs. Anyways, I have to go. Can't be late for Professor Snape!"

Simon moved over to the portrait hole and was out before anyone could stop him. Draco took one more look at the common room and shuddered before he followed.

12:59 p.m
Professor Severus Snape's Quarters.

A knock sounded on the wall outside his quarters. He flicked a finger towards the door and it opened to reveal his godsons.

"Good, you are on time. Come in."

The boys entered quietly. Simon ran one hand over various furniture. Snape seemed to prefer cherry wood and hunter green, grey, and maroon in his office. It was beautiful, understated, and very him. Leading them through his outer office, they came to three door. Silently, he waved for them to step up to the left door. Draco placed his hand on the wood of the door and Simon followed a second after. The wood warmed under their hands for a moment.

Suddenly, it opened and Severus waved them to go first. Simon looked around the hallway before stepping in; he liked his godfather but the man was sneaky. The hall ended in a room that was surprisingly light. Above was a magical skylight, it had to be magical because Simon knew they were still in the dungeons. The table wasn't very long, it could fit six people. Three settings were already in place. Severus strode to the head and stood behind his seat. As soon as they too their place as well, food appeared along the length of the table and salads appeared at their seats. Sitting down, Simon smiled. This was family, his family, not the Dursleys.

An hour later after a wonderful lunch, Simon followed his godfather into a study. At the snap of the fingers, two cups of spiced apple cider and a scotch. Taking the liquor with a raised eyebrow at Draco, they talked. Snape suggested reading materials as well as explained topic to them. Simon smiled as time passed, this was everything he ever imagined. Everything…

"Harry?"

"Huh?"

Severus stared at his godson, black eyes flickering over him. "Are you alright?"

"Yes, sir. I… it's just, is this the way normal families are?" Simon asked, tearing his eyes away from his godfather's.
Draco frowned, remembering the people on trial and reached out to put one hand over Simon's. If he ever got his hands on them, or his wand, he would make them suffer indescribable torments until they begged to die.

Severus raised his head. "Normal is an inaccurate definition. There is no normal, what they were... is not normal. A norm on the other hand is made up of several variables and you take the average of them and anything that falls within a predetermined range around that average is considered adhering to the norm. Now, if you are asking did I have such times as this with my father. No, I did not. My father was a Muggle of the worst type, much like your so called relatives. As for Draco, I do believe he had several times similar to this with his father. He and I, of our own choice, have spent many lunches like this. However, I do not believe your friend Weasley spends time like this with his father, considering the number of children and the lack of available room. If any part of this day bothered you, then I expect you to say so. If you do not like cider, say so. If something was served that you didn't enjoy, say so. We will find our normal together. Is this clear, Simon Harry?"

Simon felt Draco squeeze his hand and nodded, "Yes, sir."

"Good, now before you run off, Carmus has sent some secure mail for you. Two are interviews that you need answer as Harry, another is about an ally. I have placed them on the desk over there. I will remain in case you need any assistance."

Simon nodded, placing his cup down, he stood up. Draco followed and together they walked over to the desk. The first envelope was a letter from Carmus.

Dear Simon Harry,

The school does have post owls you know. I know that school started only a while ago, however, I still miss you. Dayn misses you as well, she bustles around here wondering if they are feeding her little one right. How exactly did you win her over so quickly?

Well, let get on to the business part so we can get over it. I have included two questionnaires for you to fill out. They are interviews for the Daily Prophet and the Quibbler. I have already checked them for tracking charms and any harmful magicks, though I'm sure Severus did so as well. Fill them out honestly.

Dudley is being Dudley, less said about it the better. I understand that life is harder for him than it was but well... we'll see. I am thinking of sending him to boarding school.

I am working to eliminate Dumbledore's influence in the outer world. Several clandestine meetings have happened with secrecy spells abound. Those who can't be trusted not to run to Dumbledore, and yes, Sean did leave me some names. Just enough to get started, I told you how he feels about too much help. Minister Bones is helping me get things prepared. Fudge is so convinced that this is proof of Dumbles conspiracy that he had an Unspeakable put an Occlumency barrier in his mind. Somehow Dumbledore's propensity for Legilimency got out. I do wonder how?

There should be a care package with some biscuits, treacle, and snacks from Dayn. If they aren't here, give Severus a good look.

I must say that, Harry James Potter, I may have only had custody of you for two months but I have loved you longer than that. In those two months, I found you totally stole my heart. I love you, my son. Write back, after all those post owls get rather fat if you don't use them often.

Your loving father,
Harry smiled and tapped the letter. "So did you enjoy Dayn's crumpets, godfather?"

Severus turned and raised one eyebrow.

Harry finished the last question and sat back. Draco reached over and took his hand, massaging it firmly. Harry turned and smiled at him. "I hate this, I don't really like Harry Potter."

"I know, Simon but it's necessary, for a little longer anyways. I mean, sooner or later they're gonna find out who Simon is but Simon isn't Harry's cover. Harry will be Simon's cover. Give us some time and we'll figure a way for you to use that whole legend for your sake, unlike Dumbledore who tried to use it for his own."

Simon nodded.

Snape watched as Draco tugged Simon up and led him to their room in Snape's quarters.

Dumbledore will pay. Sighing, he turned back to his book. The evidence of horrendous and violent abuse was written in Simon's bones but no one remembered him being injured for more than a day. Something was going on. He would find out what and when he did… they would pay for hurting Lily's son.

1:45 p.m.
McGillis House
London

Carmus stared at the letter and tapped his finger. Growling, he got up and picked up the first book. Flipping the pages of 'The Sorceror's Stone', he growled. There was no mention of this happening! Such a major decision, it would cripple Voldemort but how could he do this to Simon?

He got up again, this time looking for the book of prophecies, he hated resorting to the prophecies, he knew that he couldn't order Simon's life to them. Dumbledore had and the result was… damning! Sighing, he opened the book and flipped through the pages. Nothing, nothing, nothing. Tossing it on the desk, he leaned back. A piece of paper peeked from the pages. Sitting up, Carmus pulled it out. He opened it and read it quickly before bursting into laughter.

Car,

Stop dithering. It's better than what 'FATE' has in store for him. Just say YES!

SAH

Nodding, he pulled out a stiff sheet of faintly green linen.

To the Lord of Malfoy,

In regards to your recent missive, I have found that your suit has found favor with me. I shall inform my son of this recent engagement and expect you to hold not only to the words but also to the spirit. We shall meet to discuss the terms.

Lord Carmus McGill
CHAPTER ELEVEN: Blindness

Tuesday, September 10
Grimmauld Place
6:12 am

Sirius moved slowly, trying not to wake the werewolf lying next to him. He could feel the pleasant
burn from last night. Thin fingers traced down his side, over his flank and down to his knee. A soft
growl caused his hair to ripple. Blunt teeth nipped his shoulder. Sirius chuckled as he turned his head
around. "Good morning, Remus."

"Morning, my mate. So what are we going to do today? The greenhouse? Maybe the ingredients
room?"

Sirius chuckled. "Didn't we already do the greenhouse?"

"I meant to clean, you maniac!" Remus sat up, grinning. "If you want to entertain guests and get
back on the pureblood society circuit we need to get this place in order, not to mention, Harry."

Sirius stilled. "Harry. Do you think he will ever forgive me?"

"For being manipulated by Dumbledore, or for you running off rather than being sensible? I don't
know. I wonder if he will be able to forgive me. You were imprisoned. I wasn't. I was neglectful to
our duty. If I hadn't been, then I would have visited him several times a year. I should have
demanded to know where he was. I could have at least checked Petunia's even though I honestly
believed that no one would be foolish enough indeed to leave Harry there. I would have known what
they were doing to him and maybe I could have spared him a lot of pain."

"Remus…"

"There's no excuse, Sirius. I failed my cub. I failed my mate, I won't let that happen again. I don't
know if we will be able to have Harry visit but I want him to have a place so if he does, he'll be more
than welcome."

"Yeah. Remus?" Sirius looked at him, one hand running up and down the wolf's back. "I know that
you didn't tell me everything. I wasn't ready for it. I think I need to know though. What exactly
happened?"

Remus paused for a moment and looked at his lover. "I don't have the full knowledge myself. What I
know of it, comes from the papers, some Muggle papers, and some details from Narcissa."
"Then let's get up, perhaps we need to visit my cousin and see what she can tell us."

Remus nodded, kissing Sirius once more before getting out of bed. A renounced Dark wizard and a werewolf were going to Malfoy Manor, what a world this is becoming.

Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry
6:47 am
Great Hall
Breakfast

Simon watched as Ron stumbled to the table, half asleep. The young man hated waking up early. Laughing, he turned to his left and smiled at Hermione.

"Hermione, can I ask you a favor?"

"Sure."

"You know the packet every muggleborn gets from Hogwarts? Do you still have yours?"

"Yes… actually, my parents have it. Why?"

"My father wants a copy but for some reason, it's restricted to only parents of muggleborns."

"Only to the muggleborns? Why wouldn't they allow everyone to read it? I'll write my parents."

"Thanks, Hermione… I have to write my father anyways, so if you give it to me later, I'll mail it off with mine."

"Thanks, Simon. UGH!" Hermione rolled her eyes and shook her head as she watched Ron shove some food in his mouth.

Simon laughed and looked up to see Draco watching them, the blond rolled his eyes and shuddered at Ron's performance. Simon picked up his juice to hide his laughter.

Malfoy Manor
8:15 am

Narcissa handed the parchment to the owl for delivery and turned to her husband. "My cousin will be coming by today. He wishes to know more about Harry."

Lucius nodded. A graceful pale finger tapped the table beside his plate. "And how do you see him reacting?"

"Like a true Pureblood. He is disillusioned by Dumbledore, not to mention this is something that cuts more than any learned behaviors. He will be as Dark as any of us when it comes to this matter."

Narcissa sipped her coffee slowly.

"In fact, it might be a good idea to invite some others, such as Andromeda and the Parkinsoins."

Lucius nodded. "I will leave it to you to arrange, Narcissa."

Narcissa stood smoothly and nodded to her husband before going to make her plans.

Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry
10:07 am
Simon knocked on the door.

"Enter, Simon." Therapist Aurora Bern called out.

Simon entered the old classroom and looked around. The walls were not the gray as it was everywhere else. She had covered them with patterned heavy white linen, over which was very thin color fabric. The sheer fabric was printed with runes. It gathered together at the middle of the ceiling, almost like a tent. Instead of a fireplace on the wall, there was a circular pit, the fire screen had dancing nymphs and trees on it. Around the fire pit lay low couches and beanbags.

"Wow.

"Thank you, I'm glad you like it. Those runes are to make sure that no one, not even the Headmaster may eavesdrop on us. So, Harry, how are you doing so far?"

"It's okay. You heard, of course, about the Welcoming Feast…" Simon lowered his head and grinned through his bangs. "Dumb didn't know what hit him! It was wonderful, no one knew it was me… they know me as Simon and really, that's how I think about myself. Simon McGill, Harry Potter was either a hero on a pedestal or a weak child. Simon… he… I am a well loved child of my father and I love that. I love that everyone just assumes I'm a regular guy."

"You always were a regular guy who had extraordinary things happen to him. Why don't we talk about…"

Malfy Manor
11:45 am
Green Study

Sirius leaned back, his long dark hair peppered with gray was now combed and tied back in a proper braid. Weary gray eyes closed slowly. Sitting up, he folded his hand together. "I am still Harry's godfather, that tie has not been severed. Due to an unfortunate delay, I could not act as I should. This will change. I do not know what McGill is up to save to keep Dumbledore too busy to bother Harry. I will be filing suit against Dumbledore of course, because they expect it. However, I am a Black and I demand retribution in the Black manner. I plan to use the Alltudedd chan Chyfraithritual."

The gathered purebloods sat back, eyes wide. Such a punishment had rarely been called before. Richard Parkinson cleared his throat before leaning forward. "Lord Black, which variant do you plan to use?"

"Alltudedd chan Chyfraith Byth. He deprived my godson of a healthy life from the time he was one until he was ten and half. Those are very ages when all children, magical and muggle, need love, attention, and encouragement. My godson will be stunted lifelong because of that. For this to happen to a magical child, we all know what can happen, we all know what Dumbledore was trying to do to Harry. I will settle for nothing less than for Dumbledore to be banished from the Hall of Magical Law for the rest of his life. By my blood, I swear it. By my magic, it will be done!"

A pulse of soundless thunder passed through the room. Narcissa's lips pulled back from her teeth. That fool Dumbledore will learn to never mess with a Black. Oh yes, he has finally gone beyond the pale, he harmed a child beloved of the Blacks and she couldn't wait to see how he squirmed.

Remus tightened his fingers and sighed. His family was not as old as the Blacks but they had favors they could call in.

Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry
Draco shook his head as someone stopped Simon again with a question. The news of the meeting apparently has been getting around. They had left Hermione to get the news out, Draco still didn't know where this classroom was, only that it was on the seventh floor and that the door would only be open from 9:45 to 10:15 after that, anyone who missed it would just have to suffer. One would think with all the people talking about it, some teacher would have come up to ask them what was going on. It seemed that Hermione had also told them not to talk loud enough for the portraits to hear. Smart thinking even if it from a muggle born witch.

Draco shook himself out of his reverie as he noticed Simon staring at him. The other boy raised one eyebrow as if he knew what Draco had been thinking. A faint blush mantled over his pale cheeks. He hated blushing. Tossing his hair, he tugged Simon closer. "Are we going to eat lunch or not, McGill?"

Simon growled playfully, "Yes, cranky serpent. Let's go eat."

"Malfoys do not get cranky. Remember that, McGill."

Simon laughed and headed over towards the Slytherin table.

Albus Dumbledore stared at the two young boys who had just sat at the Slytherin table. McGill and Malfoy. They refused to do as others did and fight. As Slytherin-centric as the Malfoy family was, he had expected the Malfoy heir to abandon his Gryffindor friend. Things were not falling out the way that Daton had predicted. Everything else was right but not this. Of course Daton was McGill's friend. It wasn't impossible that he had left information for McGill. Not to mention that Daton had once had black hair and hazel eyes. That child… well now, he'd have to ask Severus, it could be possible. It fit with the child's 'mother' being… dead.

He watched as Severus strode into the Great Hall, his robes swaying. A nod here, a flick of the hand there and his children calmed down, soothed. Slytherin was a house of subtle gestures and deep movements. Yes, a house of hidden dangers and cruelty. It was always sad to see new children go there. Their lives over so quickly, they would be drawn into a web from which there was no escape. Sighing, he sat his cup down and smiled over the groups of children. Still it was better they were singled out and not left to poison the bright young minds of others, though he had to admit it was upsetting to see McGill diving willingly into that den, perhaps there was a way of stopping this before it infects everyone.

To his dismay, he noticed young Nott sitting at the Ravenclaw table. It was already spreading.

742 Evergreen Terrace
London
1:45 pm

Carmus checked the address once again before knocking on the door. He had located the good doctors Granger through the telephone book but had been informed that neither was in on Tuesdays. Therefore he was approaching their home. He was surprised when Hermione's letter came through the floo with his son's. After reading Simon's letter, he knew that his son was a very smart young man.

Knocking, he waited as he heard steps from within the house. A older man opened the door. He was maybe in his late thirties, with still brown hair, though not as thick as it once was. He wore simple wire frasme glasses and had a long face that looked prone to smiling.
"Dr. Alan Granger?"

"Yes."

"Hello, My name is Carmus McGill, my son goes to school with your daughter, Hermione. I was wondering if I could speak with you?"

Doctor Granger opened the door, and gestured for Carmus to enter. The other Dr. Granger came out from the kitchen and introduced herself. Soon enough they were settled on couch. Carmus handed them the letter and allowed them to read in peace as he scanned the room. Mr. Granger got up and headed towards his study. He came back with three book and a yellow legal pad.

"Mr. McGill, these are the books, and here are my notes on them. Can you tell us exactly what you are looking for?"

Carmus nodded, picking up the first book, _A Muggle's Guide to the Wizarding World_. Turning it over in his hands, he examined the cover, fingers running over the linen. "Strange. This has not been approved by the MRRO. If it had been, the seal would have been embossed on the cover."

Carmus opened the book and started to read.

"The MRRO?"

"Muggle Rights and Relations office. Usually it's just called the Morrow office. Have you read this through?"

"Yes, and took notes." Mrs. Granger waved a hand at the pad on the coffee table. "Will you tell us what exactly are you looking for?"

"Can you tell me Hermione's responsibility to the Wizarding World?"

Mr. Granger frowned and tilted his head to the side. "Her responsibility? I guess to use her magic responsibly, to not abuse others with it, to keep the secret of the magical world."

"You didn't mention her responsibility as one of the Ladies of Wizagamot. She's a Small Lady. Titled but not landed.

Dr. Alan Granger sat back against the couch. "Sir, I have read these books, all three, several times and I can assure you there is nothing in there about our daughter being a noble. Please," Granger rubbed his forehead, "explain what you mean."

Carmus nodded. "Very well. The Wizarding World is a meritocracy. Meaning, it's based on achievement, skill, or merit. But unlike other meritocracies, it's not on what you achieve but what you can achieve. It's based on magical power. Hogwarts is a very prestigious school, it only take perhaps 3% of the magical world into their environs. Hermione is one of four Gryffindor girls. She is one of nine Gryffindors in her year. She is one of forty-two students in her year. The average per year is 45 to 50 students. So using that, remember that Hogwarts teaches seven years, so in all, there are approximately 315 to 350 students in Hogwarts. How many magical people do you think are in Britain?"

Dr. Ellen Granger frowned, "Well, perhaps a million, maybe two?"

"More, in Magical Britain, we number about eight million. So why would only 315 students go to Hogwarts? Why do you think Hermione qualified for Hogwarts?"
Mrs. Grange leaned back. Even if you live longer than us, that means at any given moment you might have between a quarter million to two hundred eighty thousand children between the ages of 11 and 17. Yet only three hundred and fifteen go to Hogwarts. That's just over a tenth of a percent."

"Exactly, only those who are extremely powerful go there and remember that power is relative. What is powerful compared to the ordinary wizard is not compared to a Hogwarts wizard. So they are quite powerful. The responsibility of the powerful is to protect the weak. Hogwarts is the training ground of nobility. By being powerful enough to attend Hogwarts, Hermione was granted her noble status. There is a catch though. By being ennobled, she also has responsibilities.

"She is expected to take her seat in the Wizagamot before one year has passed after her graduation. She is expected to deliberate fairly and without prejudice on the laws placed before the Wizagamot. Since she is the only member of the Granger family to be magical, she has a seat reserved. If she had a younger brother or sister, they would be alternates or proxies if she could not attend her duties or like others, she might let her seat lapse to the next qualified sibling. Her job is to help run the Wizarding World.

"Now as for vassals, yes, we still use a modified vassalage system. The weaker members of the Wizarding world can not ward their own homes and businesses, so they ask us. That is a hard thing to do, so we get paid by the other wizards. Since so many wards are built on intent, it makes sense to use a wizard to which you have some connection. Also, the more powerful wizard listens to the less powerful to bring their voices to the Wizagamot. Mostly when magical war breaks out, then the more powerful wizards are the ones on the front lines.

"So in case of war, her duty is to fight to protect her fellow weaker wizards. In times of peace, she helps build and govern, or she would if she took her seat. Most muggleborns don't. That is one of the reasons purebloods hate them so much. Not that it isn't justified. How would you feel if you met someone who had the very skills you needed and welcomed them into your world, only to have them call it quaint, old fashioned, and backwards. You give them an education and access to an exceptionally fine library which they don't use. You offer them a seat in the government and access to the nobility which they then refuse only to turn around and accuse you of disenfranchising them, of denying them their rights! And they wonder why the purebloods are disgusted by them?"

Carmus sat back, his nostril flaring, hands clenched into tight fists on his knee. "Sorry it is something that is so very frustrating. They are given such opportunities and they throw it away. We, the purebloods, don't understand why they would do that. Then I opened a prophecy of sorts. It said:

"*South's Song*
*The one who steals has painted*  
*over the briar patch.*"

Ellen Granger frowned, "That's a prophecy?"

"Of a sort. It means nothing to you but it wasn't meant for you. It took me a while to get it. I was at home playing with the words to figure it out and I suddenly had a memory of Sean and I, Sean is the man who gave me the prophecies, when we were young. It was one of the times we went into muggle London. We saw a movie, called *Song of the South*. There is a story in there about Br'er Fox and Br'er Rabbit. Br'er meaning 'brother'. Br'er Rabbit acts like he's afraid of being thrown into a briar patch. You and I know that no rabbit is afraid of briars, they run through them like dogs on scent. The point is that Rabbit convinces Fox to throw him into the patch by acting like he's afraid of it. Muggleborns would love to be able to have a say in the government. The words 'the one who steals' are almost always used to describe one particular person… the same person who stole a child and condemned him to hell."
"Dumbledore." Ellen Granger growled. She nodded at Carmus' upraised eyebrow. "We've been getting both the Daily Mail and the Daily Prophet.

"Ahhh... yes, in any matter, the prophecy says he painted over the briar patch. The Song of the South was animated. If they had painted over the briar patch, Br'er Rabbit would have nothing to enter. He wouldn't see it. Maybe the muggleborns don't see their entrance. Which brings me back to the books. You said, you both read them cover to cover and found nothing about your daughter being a noble of the Wizarding World?"

"No... not a thing. Why would he try to keep muggle borns out when he claims to want them to be a part of the Wizarding World?"

Ellen Granger stood up. "Power. He wants the Muggleborns to feel helpless and dependant on him. The more wizards who look to him for representation and help, the more power he has. The muggleborns feel cheated and won't work with the purebloods. The purebloods, believing the muggleborns knew about their seats on the Wizagamot and deliberately spurned it. They didn't. By fomenting this trouble, Albus Dumbledore becomes a great peacemaker. For God's sakes Alan, don't you see, he can go ahead and tell these kids that after a long fight against the poor misguided purebloods, he wrung out a concession that will allow a few muggleborns seats on the Wizagamot, seats perhaps available only by approval with a sponsor who is already on the Wizagamot. For all we know, he might introduce the bill to limit the muggleborns allowed to apply at the same time he's telling them he's fighting for them. And do you know the worst part, Alan?"

"Yes, he's using our daughter as a pawn. I dislike this immensely. Mr. McGill, is there nothing we can do?"

"Two muggle voices are easy to ignore however... an average of fourteen muggleborns enter Hogwarts each year. Dumbledore has likely been doing this since he became headmaster in 1955. So thirty six years time fourteen. That's... 504 students who have likely been deprived of their rights. If you are willing to help me on the Muggle side, I believe we can shout loudly enough? First thing first, we contact the muggle born recent graduates so they can all take their seats."

Dr. Granger wrapped her arms around her husband. "We would be honored."

Carmus smiled, poor foolish Dumbledore.

7:27 p.m.
Malfoy Manor

Narcissa flicked her eyes at Remus' left hand once more before catching her husband's eyes. A subtle flash of her own ring and it all added up. Sirius' calmness, his attentiveness to Remus, the fact that he placed Remus to his right. The diffuse light of the chandelier made the werewolf look less tired but that might also be because they had finally accepted each other as mates.

Lucius stood, raising his glass. "To family, above all. This is the pureblood way."

Everyone raised their glasses. Repeating, the first line. Sirius stood up. "To my consort, Remus John Lupin Black. To my Godson. Family, above all.

Again they repeated the last line. Remus' golden eyes widened before his sipped the wine. It didn't seem like much but their toasts was tantamount to acceptance into their society.

September 12, 1991
Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry
Simon waved at Aurora before slipping out the door. It was nice of her to let him out early. Simon ran down the hall and headed down the stairs. This was Severus' free period. Heading to the potions room, he entered the storeroom and knocked on the far wall. Silently it slid back and Severus Snape looked at his godson.

"To what do I owe this… pleasure, Simon?"

"I got a letter from father. He went to see the Grangers." Simon pulled out the letter and handed it to Snape. Snape read through it once, then again before pinching his nose.

"Yeah, it's going to be mess. Could you do me a small favor, godfather? You know of course about my planned meeting this Saturday in the Room of Requirement. Could you be there, hidden to check for anyone planning anything? I know once in the Room, the Room will keep people from doing awful things, but in the hallways… we have no power. Some of the older students object to it, the meeting, but I think it would be good. Especially if we want to keep them from him.

Severus nodded. "Indeed. I believe I have what you need, it will be given to you before Saturday. And Simon, two points for acting most unlike a Gryffindor and thinking ahead.

Simon laughed and headed off to Flying!

September 14, 1991
Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry
Seventh Floor
9:50 am

Draco hurried towards the Room of Requirement. Simon had showed him where it was earlier. He could feel the ward Severus had placed. His eyes flickered to see all his classmates passing through the ward. Letting loose a silent sigh, he waved them into the Room.

Simon waved at him and Draco headed over to see him pulling huge cushions out of a large box.

"Come on, no chairs, just cushions. It'll make us all on the same level."

Draco smiled, Simon was just so cute in his optimism, he only hoped it wasn't going to hurt him too much.

10:15 am

"Welcome everyone, to what I hope is our first bi-monthly round forum. In case you aren't sure what's happening here, let's go over the rules.

What is said here, stays here.

No question is out of bounds, but that means no answer is either.

Don't just take offense at everything. Everything said is from that perspective only.

The room will silence whoever isn't holding the ball.

You have five minutes maximum to speak per turn

Think! Think before you speak.
Simon held up a ball, it was about three inches round, gold with engravings on it.

"Okay, let's start. Hermione, you had a pretty good question."

"Hermione caught the ball, "Why do purebloods look down on us Muggleborns? We didn't choose to be muggleborns but you lot just seem to hate us."

Draco raised his hand, catch the ball when Hermione tossed it to him. "We don't hate you. We despise you. For good reason, you come in to our world. We welcome you. You get your education then you leave, taking your very powerful magic with you. What's the point in teaching you when you won't use your magic?"

Hermione opened her mouth and held out her hand. "Bollocks. We wouldn't leave if we weren't hated. Welcomed? You sneered at me the first time you saw me. How is that welcomed? How do you know we'll leave?"

She tossed the ball back to Draco who had Theodore Knott take it from his hands.

"My father works for the Ministry of Magic, we keep records on the muggleborns who leave. Out of the twenty muggleborns only three stay. As for a welcome… we invite you to our highest school. Hogwarts isn't any old school. It's the school of wizarding nobility. You can't buy your way into here, you can only earn it through magic. Exceptionally powerful magic earns you an exceptionally powerful education. Just earning your admission here made you noble and yet eighty-five percent of all ennobled muggleborns go right back to the muggle world and ignore their rights and responsibilities to this world!"

Angela Boan, a muggle born from Ravenclaw, stood up and stopped before Theodore, holding her hand out. As soon as the ball was placed in her hand, she knelt down. "What do you mean? There was nothing like that in A Muggle's Guide to the Wizarding World?"

Draco reached over and took the ball, "Of course there is, Dumbledore himself approved the books to be given to the Muggle families. It wouldn't fail to mention the fact that you are titled nobles or the seat you get in the Wizagamot when you graduate. Why else would we despise you? You complain about your right but you refuse to help the wizarding world. You want the magic but not the responsibility!"

Simon sighed and reached to take the ball. "Actually, the three books given to the Muggle families are not MRRO approved. In fact, it doesn't say anything about their titles or their seats. No one told them, Draco. Not a single Light family told them. Dumbledore didn't tell them. Lady Hermione Granger has no clue.

"And apparently neither has any muggleborn from around 1955 or so. When Dumbledore became Headmaster."

The yells would have been deafening if it hadn't been for the Room silencing ward. As it was, the faces of the older students were twisted in frightening anger.
"Unacceptable. Completely unacceptable. There is no other option. You will allow her to speak without censorship to all the Wizarding World. You forget yourself." The man sneered, "Minister you forget that you and the entire Wizarding World are still Her Majesty's subjects. Even though you are not signatories on some of the more recent laws, Her Majesty still rules you directly. If you dare to even suggest that you can impede her, she will take pains to remind you that, under Article 2 of the Accords, you are still her personal subjects. Is. That. Clear?"

The florid face of the man in front of him paled as he sat back; his hands clenching and releasing the broad black rim of his bowler hat.

"Y-y-yes. Perhaps her Majesty would like to do the radio broadcast next Saturday. That would be the 21st."

"Too late. No, she will address the Wizarding sector of her demesne tomorrow. In fact, the shambles you call a newspaper will carry the announcement. I am sure you will allow a special run for this momentous occasion. Just to make sure that everything flows smoothly, I will be sending liaisons to accompany you. Mr. Bannerson here is one of my own aides and will be useful to help you plan for the oversight which will be coming from my office. For too long, Fudge, we have let the Wizarding sector of Britian go on its own way. However, now that we have seen the fruits of that endeavor, we realize it was a mistake. From now on, the Wizarding office of Minister of Magic shall report to the Minister of the Interior who in turn shall report to me."

Cornelius Fudge sat in the office of Sir John Major, the Prime Minister of Great Britain, and realized that this was the day he got his wish; he would enter the history books. Unfortunately it would be as the Minister of Magic who had ended nearly a hundred and fifty years of virtual self-rule.

Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry
Slytherin Common Room
1:00 pm

Severus stood in the corner watching his House. For all that others claimed it was everyone for themselves, Slytherins knew the true meaning of brotherhood. Once a Slytherin, always a Slytherin. No matter what.

Pansy sat up, pressing her back against the bottom of the couch. "Sir, why don't we have a Wizarding Studies class? There is a Muggle Studies."

Several of the other students nodded. Draco smiled at his friend and slightly bowed his head indicating that she did well.

"I do not know but after some research it seems as if the Wizarding Studies course was discontinued under the auspices of Headmaster Dippet. I have not been able to locate the minutes of the meeting in which the course was eliminated, only a mention that it was decided after a staff meeting that it was to be suspended while the course curricula was revised and updated. This happened in the last full
year of Headmaster Dippet's services. The next year, Headmaster Dippet died suddenly and his Deputy did not wish to ascend to the post, so the then Transfiguration Teacher Albus Dumbledore was asked to assume the post until the end of the year. Afterwards he was kept on."

A hand rose from a dark corner, and Harrison Culdon stood up. "Is it possible that Dumbledore had a hand in Dippet's death?"

Severus sighed. He thought back to the book Simon had handed him earlier. The very trace of such compulsion spells and the knowledge of who had put them there chilled his blood. "Previously, I would say no. Now it is possible.

Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry
Hospital
1:23 pm

Matron Poppy Pomfrey looked at the blue parchment that she had received through the Floo. The Wizagamot was requesting the school medical file of Harry Potter. Normally, she would refuse, but upon pulling the file and reading it, she noticed something odd. There were several notations that she did not recall making. Notations about Muggle doctors who she had apparently corresponded with and yet, the names were totally unfamiliar to her. Worse still, there were no copies of the letters.

She always kept copies of letters from Muggle doctors. She had a simple yet effective color coding system. Family doctors were pasted on stiff pasteboard, pale yellow for Wizarding families or light blue for Muggles. Emergency services were red for Muggles and orange for Wizarding. A student was classified by folder by the main color of their house so naturally, a student's medical jacket could be and often was a riot of color. And yet despite many supposed communications from Muggle doctors there wasn't a single blue sheet in Potter's file.

Sighing, she got out a piece of parchment, and for the first time in her professional life, she broke patient confidentiality.

Minister Bones,

Here is Harry Potter's file. I am afraid this file and I may have indeed been tampered with. In my past thirty years as Head Matron I have established a simple yet efficient system for organizing my files. Potter's file does not in any usual way correspond with my usual method of filing. Worse, for some reason, I am the healer of record as to giving him every physical examination for the beginning of year. However, he does not appear on my appointment record. I also no longer handle Muggleborn physicals; a Muggle doctor who knows about the Wizarding World handles it. His name is Dr. Mortimer Robinson. He can be found at...

Hufflepuff Common Room
1:18 pm

Pomona Sprout sat on a comfy padded seat and looked at her House surrounding her. Their faces held a strange light: Disappointment, resentment, a seething anger. Sighing, she sat up as tall as she could and said, "Very well, you asked for a House meeting."

A seventh year boy named Norman stood up, "Yes, sir. Despite the Gryffindors' reputation, we usually have the highest amount of Muggleborns in this school, right?"

Sprout nodded.
"Then why, ma'am? WHY? Why were we not told anything about the Wizarding World. You told all of us that we could depend on you and the other wizards here. You said that Hufflepuffs were Light wizards, Good wizards. Yet Light doesn't mean good, does it? A lot of you are even purebloods, so you know what getting into Hogwarts means. We didn't. Maybe we were nave or stupid, but if so, we were encouraged to be.

"We had to learn from someone else that when I and my fellows graduate this year that we have the option to join the Wizagamot or not. No one told us anything! Not once in all seven years did we get a lesson on the politics of the Wizarding World save that it is run by the Wizagamot.

"My brother graduated three years ago. He should be the one to take the Wizagamot seat but he can't, ma'am. He can't because he knew nothing about this and none of you not our Head of House, nor our fellow students, told us about this.

"Maybe the Slytherins are vocal in their disgust for Muggleborns but at least they didn't claim to be good or Light or anything but what they were. They didn't say they were our friends and hide our rights from us. Right now, this entire House disgusts me."

Norman turned and headed out the doorway. Silently, the Muggleborn students stood and followed him. Their eyes full of anger and fury. Behind them, they left a saddened room and a depressed herbologist.

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Ravenclaw Central Study
2:15 pm

Fights in Ravenclaw tended to be reasoned discourse backed by proofs and determination. They rarely got raucous but they could get loud. Today's fight was the quietest fight. Muggleborn and some few purebloods were arranged on one side of the room. The other side was populated by the other purebloods.

"The knowledge was there."

The oldest seventh year male and female looked at their counterpart. "Not that we found in the past seven years. Not even in the Restricted Section."

"There is more than Hogwarts."

"For Wizard born, yes, but most of us don't even know where the Ministry is. You do realize that the instructions on how to get into the Ministry do not mention the Location of the Ministry."

"You could Floo."

"Not from Hogwarts. Of course, if one knew where to get Floo powder. It's not sold in Hogsmeade. Not publically at least.

"Your parents can"

"My Muggle parents? Ah logic lapse." Several of the people behind the two Ravenclaws smirked. Turning as one great flock, they left the common room, heading for the Great Hall.

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Great Hall
5:45 pm
Simon glanced around the Great Hall. Dinner was oddly quiet today. Of course, maybe it was because today he wasn't at the Gryffindor table. The Slytherins seemed amused at the division of the Houses. At the Ravenclaw table, which was closest to the Slytherin table, sat perhaps two-thirds of the house. Those who sat at the table were mostly Muggleborns. Every time a Pureblood approached, they spread out their books to block them from sitting. There wasn't a Ravenclaw alive who would move another's books. therefore, those unfortunate Ravens had to seek refuge at either the Hufflepuff table or the Gryffindor table. The Hufflepuff table was unlikely as a surprising number of Hufflepuffs were Muggleborn. Most of the Ravens therefore ended up at the Gryffindor table, which had lost quite a few of its members to both the Hufflepuff and the Ravenclaw tables.

The fights in Gryffindor were spectacular. They had broken down into two groups. One believed that if Dumbledore was the driving force behind the hiding of the Muggleborns rights from them, mind you they did not think he was but if he was, then it was for their own good and for the 'Good of the Wizarding World'. The other group believed without proof that Dumbledore was behind it but believed it was for his own nefarious purposes. After all, hadn't he willingly allowed a child to be abused and they took time to point out all the other mistakes that Dumbledore had made. Blows had been exchanged and there black eyes all throughout the house.

Simon caught Draco's eye and gave a slight nod. Draco cut his eyes over to Theodore who tapped Pansy. Pansy turned around ostensibly to ask for a jug of pumpkin juice.

"Careful. He's watching us." Pansy took the jug and placed it on the Slytherin table.

"It's too late he wasn't here when Simon came down earlier. We gave him all the letters for our families Just wait for owls tomorrow."

Simon allowed the joy within to swell up though he did not smile; his eye caught his godfather's eyes.

/\The teachers are all quite upset with the splitting of the houses. Bravo, my boy. Bravo./\n
McGillis House
Kingston-upon-Thames
McGill's Study
10:48 p.m.

A barn owl landed on the old wood desk. A small hoot broke the silence. Carmus was startled. Putting down the book that he had received earlier today from Simon for investigation, he reached into the desk to pull out a treat. Severus was right about the compulsions but they could be unwound. Come morning, this particular book would destroyed once and for all.

"Oh, sorry, little one. May I see what you have brought?" Picking up the tied roll of paper, he laid it flat on the desk.

Daily Prophet, front page, September 15

Carmus smiled. A sneak peek at tomorrow's front page. Very interesting. Almost as interesting as the article he dropped in Xeno's lap.

_ALBUS DUMBLEDORE,_
When will it end?
by Rita Skeeter
Dear readers, this writer wonders if the depths of Dumbledore's depravity will ever end. I have recently received some distressing and unfortunate news.

Now many of my readers know about the deep and divisive schism that mars many a young witches and wizards Hogwarts years. The festering disgust and distrust between those sorted in Gryffindor and those in Slytherin. The dismissive way those in Hufflepuff are treated and the treatment of Ravenclaws as mere walking and talking textbooks. We know this and as parents, many of you, my dear readers, have sought to soothe your children.

The main reason for this schism has been and continues to be Muggleborns and their place in our society. If you had asked any Gryffindor in the past fifty or more years, they would say that they support the Muggleborns and wish them to live in our society. The Slytherins do not support the Muggleborns and claim that introducing the Muggleborns to our society, considering the lack of preparation the children receive, would cause our society to be unstable. Or so most would say that is the position of what are considered to be the two sides of the 'Muggleborn Problem'.

This seems to be so simple but again it is not. And why is it not? Once again Albus Dumbledore! Every Muggleborn child is supposed to receive several books from the Muggle Rights and Relations Office. They are:

1. So You Are A Witch/Wizard! What Now? By Vari Able
3. What Are My Magical Rights And Responsibilities? By C. I. Vics
4. Why Do I Have To Keep It A Secret? By N. O. Scere

I was invited to the home of a Gryffindor Muggleborn student to talk to her parents. They will be identified solely as Jane and Daniel Lewis, which is not their real names, for the protection of their child.

JL: Ms. Skeeter, I can tell you that I have never seen these books. In fact, this is the only books I have ever received about my child entering the Wizarding World. [Jane hands over A Muggle's Guide to the Wizarding World, Hogwarts: A History, and Why Do I Have To Keep It A Secret? (a much abridged edition, less than a third as thick as the MRRO approved edition).]

DL: We took quite a few notes and had several questions that were not answered by the books.

Dear Readers, I have examined the books given to them and nowhere on the covers nor inside was the seal of the MRRO nor was there any mention of the Office in the books.

DL: Worse, from our perspective, is that as a parent our job is to help our child become the best they can be. How can I do that when I don't even know what opportunities my child can have? If I had known about the seat on the Wizagamot, don't you think I would have spent more time preparing my child? As a Muggle, I concentrated on academics because in the Muggle world, good academics are the only way to succeed and get a good job. Mathematics, English, and Science; those are the subjects we spent so much time reviewing with her.

JL: A fancy in plants, while a good thing, would be steered more towards botany (the science of plants). If they liked mixing thing, then chemistry (the science of substances) but I had no idea that my child was magical. If I had, don't you think I would have encouraged them to study plants for potions or herbology? My child is smart, I could have introduced the knowledge of their ability while young and perhaps got them a tutor in the basic arts. Now I have failed in part because of this stupid
secrecy. I understand you wish to protect your world. I understand that you don't want people who know nothing about your world to just up and make random decisions. I understand and its proper, but my child wouldn't be such a stranger if we had been told about their ability earlier.

DL: And by earlier we mean, more than four weeks before the term starts. Here we were preparing to send our child to the next grade. We went out and bought clothes for the new year, and supplies, and we thought it was all set, when suddenly a bird comes through our window with a letter. It said that our child was able to come to Hogwarts and that a teacher would come by the following day to give us more information.

JL: [shaking her head] The next day, Albus Dumbledore appeared to speak to our family. He gave us these books. He said and I quote, [here she picks up a curious pad of blue lined paper and reads from it] "My dear, here are the three books that all Muggle families receive when they are informed. These are the Ministry approved books that we use to help families such as yourselves learn a bit more about our world."

JL: We were, of course, surprised to have the headmaster of Hogwarts come, but he said all teachers took turns visiting the families of the Muggleborns so we overlooked it. We even overlooked it when he bypassed us to give our child their own *Hogwarts: A History*. Now that we know what he's been up to I told my child to destroy by fire or to give to a trusted teacher everything he ever gave to them. I don't know much about magic, but even we, [her voice dripped acidly with sarcasm] poor, blind Muggles, have heard of jinxed objects or objects that when kept into close proximity to a person can affect a person. Our child loves to read; since he gave them that book they haven't put it down.

This, My Dear Readers, smacks of the vilest compulsion placed on a child! Such Hidden Depths We Always Believed Our 'Beloved Headmaster' Had. Yet None Of Us Knew What Hidden Within.

**Tomorrow: A Slytherin's Reponse**

September 15, 1991
Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry
Great Hall
6:37 a.m.

The owls flew overhead screeching loudly. The houses were still split with the smaller number of Dumbledore followers exiled to the Gryffindor table. There were even more black eyes among the Gryffindor and some as well among the Hufflepuffs. Simon stood in the doorway, allowing everyone to see a sad expression. Squaring his shoulder and tugging Draco and Ron by their hands, he headed over to the Gryffindor table. As they approach the table, the other students shifted and moved to block them. After the fourth time, Simon stopped.

"This is stupid. Look, we aren't always going to agree all the time about everything. You are angry because the Muggleborns found out that you knew about their duties and didn't tell them. That's not my fault. That's why we had the rules. One of them is what happens in there, stays in there. Taking your anger out on us because they found they had been lied to about so many things is not my problem or yours. Now, this is the Gryffindor table. My House table and if I want to sit there with my friends, I will. Last night, I let all of you pout with your hurt feelings so as not to cause trouble but not today."

Draco sighed. "Mother always says, 'never go to sleep if there is a trouble in the air'."

Ron started. "My mom says something like that too. She says if you go to sleep on it, it makes it
worse. 'Never let trouble stew for more than a day, otherwise it becomes as tough as an old horse.'

A sigh from behind them, causing them to turn around. Hermione Granger stood there. "Muggles have something like that too. 'Never let the sun set on a fight. It's always harder to apologize later.' I once asked my mother what she did when she and dad had a fight, and she said she apologizes. I said what if it wasn't her fault. She said that she'd still apologize. What's more important, being right or the relationship? If she was right, time would tell. If she was wrong, time would tell. And you don't have to apologize for what they think you did wrong. You should apologize that the fight got so out of control and maybe for losing your temper because that's what really hurts. Maybe apologize for not listening,"

Simon smiled, "Your mother is very smart, but then again, so is her daughter. EVERYBODY UP! Go back to your home tables and make peace with your House. They are your family here, brothers and sisters, while we are all cousins."

Draco stared aghast at Simon, "Never say such a thing again"

Ron sniggered as Draco headed for the Slytherin table.

At the head table, Deputy Headmistress McGonagall nodded and motioned for the Prefects to start sorting out the students. Soon students were walking all over the hall, holding their plates. The owls nobody had noticed were still wheeling above them. No sooner than the last person sat down then twenty owls hovered over the House table while two headed for the Head Table. A largish block fell from their talons before breaking up and rolling in midair. Each roll landed by a plate. McGonagall opened the rolled paper and stared in horror. Eyes widening as she read each line, it dropped from her nerveless hands.

At the Gryffindor table, Hermione looked at Dumbledore, her eyes hard with betrayal. When she spoke, her voice was low and hard to hear. "Quod severis metes."

At the Head table, the Headmaster shivered.

Quod severis metes means "As you sow, you reap"... for he hath sown the wind and shall reap the...
Carmus entered the office of the Minister of Magic and let his eyes flicker over the men and women seated around a meeting table. Lucius Malfoy, likely there as an advisor. Sebastian Cuffe, head editor of the Daily Prophet. Amelia Bones, head of the Department of Magical Law Enforcement. Dolores Umbridge, again probably for advice. Xeno Lovegood, Editor and Owner of the Quibbler. Robert Smithe. Nodding his head, he took his seat at the table.

"Well, well, glad we are all here." Fudge said, straightening his tie. "Let's begin. Now the reason I've called you here is because of Dumbledore and the impact this is having to the Wizarding world."

Carmus nodded again, "Yes, right now we need to back off on Dumbledore." Carmus held up his hand at the shocked looks and outraged sounds. "I, above all, have a reason to see him fall, but right now, if we attack again, we risk the public becoming jaded. If they become jaded, then each new atrocity that is revealed becomes merely another story. We must allow the public to assimilate what they know he has done already. We must let them become used to the level of depravity they think he has. Eventually they will start making excuses because they can't understand how he could be evil. Then we will knock out their underpinnings with everything else he's done."

Dolores smiled and nodded, "Yes, I see. And… what else might you have?"

"More than I shall say at the moment, Umbridge."

"The Minister deserves to know. You wouldn't want to… defy the Ministry would you?"

Lucius rolled his eyes at her simpering baby voice. Carmus stared at her. "Umbitch, I didn't want you want here. I came today to talk to the minister about a way to save some face in light of what's been going on. You aren't needed. Sit down and shut up."

"Why, I ne—" she squawked.

"Mr. McGill!" Fudge exclaimed.

"If I had the choice, you wouldn't even be alive. So be quiet! Now, Minister, Lucius and I have two ideas that may help you recover some of your popularity. Lucius?" Carmus said quietly.

Lucius Malfoy bowed his head towards McGill. "Yes, first is what we are going to do about those Dumbledore cheated out of their rightful inheritance. Our suggestion is simple: we retroactively admit them to the Wizagamot. Naturally, since they are Muggleborns, they will be Small Lords. Also, we can't allow them to just join our ruling body with no preparation. Therefore, admittance will be granted only after they have completed, to satisfaction of a governing body, a course in Wizarding Culture and Wizarding Politics. This course will only be open to those Muggleborns who wish to live in the Wizarding World and have graduated Hogwarts in the past fifteen years."

Amelia Bones nodded, "That's actually a good idea. It would bring strong blood back into our world. Malfoy, how will the other purebloods handle this? It's a big strike against their popular platform."

"Most of the purebloods are offended by the way we were all manipulated by Dumbledore. We are willing to give the Muggleborns a chance to prove that they deserve to be a part of the Wizarding
Fudge nodded, "Good, good. This will be perfect for Dolores. In fact, Dolores, I think that we can put it under your depa-
"

The others jumped as Carmus slammed a hand down on the table. "Wrong. Wrong again, Fudge. Under no circumstances is she allowed anywhere near our initiatives. We want them to be considered as serious endeavors."

Fudge reddened, "Now listen here, McGill. I don't know what you have against our Dolores, but this is-
"

"Your Dolores, not ours, and what do I have against her? Do you remember my ward? Do you remember how I rescued him?"

Bones frowned, "Your seer friend left you information."

"He did more than that, Minister Bones. He left books. Books, detailed books, about my ward's life if I did nothing, and they were horrid. Horrible crosses, my Harry had to bear. One of the worst was his fifth year. Voldemort was back, but it started out terribly. A Dementor attacked Harry and his cousin. He threw a Patronus and had to defend himself in a trial, a trial by the entire Wizagamot. Worse, Fudge installed a High Inquisitor at Hogwarts. She decided to force Harry to recant his claim that Voldemort was back, but he would not. So she makes him write lines: 'I must not tell lies.' Day after day, night after night, detention after detention. Her name? Dolores Umbridge. She refuses to allow the children to practice in Defense of Dark Arts. She spews hatred about other magical beings such as werewolves and centaurs. I hate her. Now lines may not be a reason to hate someone, but when they steal a bloodquill and use it on my Harry, it is."

Umbridge shrank back into her chair. Amelia Bones eyes were widened in horror.

"Of course, when she dumped a vial of what she believed was Veritaserum and attempted to cast Crucio on him, that's when I decided I needed to find out more about her. What I have found… De…lor…es.

Bones turned to face the woman, "Crucio on a child? Veritaserum? Who do you think you are? You are an undersecretary, not an Auror or a Minister! I feared that I could not take you in based on what you would have done, but now I know what type of person you are, I will do my best to make sure you never—and I do mean never—are allowed anywhere near power!"

"Too late. She already has the ability to order the Dementors about. However, Amelia, I have something for you. Delores, for some perverse reason, acts as she does because she worships the Minister. She fails to realize that not only is the Minister just a man like any other man, but this is an elected office. He can be unelected. Knowing as I did about those future abuses made me look for current ones. I have found no less than eighteen separate cases where she abuses, intimidates, implies, or in other ways coerces people into doing as the Minister wants." Carmus reached down and pulled out a file, "Very interesting reading, and Minister, that whole Henry the Second thing is ridiculous. Take responsibility!"

Bones smirked. "Henry the Second?"

"Muggle king of England in 1170. He was fighting his best friend over a girl, but some claim they were lovers. Henry wanted the woman away because she was tempting his friend from his side. Others say Thomas deserted his friend for Christianity and became a power threat. In any case, he made his friend, Thomas a Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury. They were fighting, and Henry got
drunk and morose. He said something stupid. He said, 'Will no one rid me of this troublesome priest?' So four of his knights, who were also drunk, got on their horses, rode to Thomas's house and cut of his head. They were bringing it back when they sobered up. Henry wasn't happy. Henry did penance but claimed he didn't intend to do it. Minister Fudge does the same thing. He carefully drops the fact that he is upset because someone is doing something while his Delores is around. That person then suffers.

"Now, once, you may not know. Twice is possible, but after the third, fifth, twelfth time, please Minister. You knew and you let her get her hands dirty. We all know what type of person you are. Let us not lie. Now let's get on to the second program that may allow you to retain your position for another year.

Fudge sat back; his face pale and pasty. Perspiration beaded his wrinkled forehead. Lucius coughed delicately, "Minister, please forgive him. Mr. McGill is rather… direct in his manner. One can hardly believe he is a member of good standing in Slytherin. However, let us continue with the purpose for this meeting.

"The second program is also addressed towards the Muggleborns. Rather than those already in our world or having left it, we seek those who are entering our world. We propose that the Muggleborn children be informed no later than May 1st but no earlier than December 1st. The families will be placed under a magical binding to keep them from speaking about the Wizarding World unless they are alone with others who know of it. The children will be given books from directly from the Muggle Rights and Responsibilities Office. Dumbledore has usurped their place and left the Muggles dangerously undereducated."

The people around the table nodded. Carmus sighed, "As for Dumbledore, I have more on him, but first I need to ask you, Xeno? Did you find anything?"

Xenophilius Lovegood tilted his head to the side before nodding, "Yes, but it's not enough. I may have to go to the Continent or even hop the pond."

"Very well. Then if we are done for now, I have other things to deal with." Carmus stood up. He could see Delores Umbridge staring at him with hatred in her eyes. "Delores, you should thank me. The information in that file will keep you in the black books for a very long time. The end result of your term at Hogwarts results in you ending up in St. Mungos, a victim of a Centaur Revel after you so unadvisedly called them 'half breed monstrosities.' Good day all!"

Lucius stood up as well, making his goodbyes. As they left, they could hear Robert Smithe speaking, "As Head of the MRRO, I thank you, Minister Fudge, for this opportunity. I have already selected which teams will be covering each—"

Lucius closed the door and turned to McGill, "Quite a Slytherin. Tell me, my dear ally, how soon might we sign the paperwork?"

"The Yule is most traditional, is it not?"

"True, very well. 'Til then."

Carmus sighed. 'Til then.

McGillis House
Kingston-upon-Thames
Dudley's Room
11:07 a.m.
McGill opened the door to stare at Dudley. He was still portly but the potions were doing their job. Gently, he allowed his magic to flow over the child, checking his health to make sure there were no problems with his heart. Dudley shuddered as he felt the magic move over him. Carmus frowned but rearranged his face before stepping into the room.

"Dudley, Dayn tells me you have been obedient lately. I know that the past nine days have been hard but it was necessary. As bad as you think I have been, have I been one-tenth as bad as your father? I did not confine you in a supposed room, one too small for you even to stand up in. I did not deprive you of food. I limited your choice of food. However, you were allowed as much porridge as you wished. I have not verbally nor physically assaulted you. If Harry had done what you had done at your school, what would your parents have done to him? Just think about it."

Dudley hadn't turned around but his shoulders tightened as Carmus spoke, "Yeah, but he's different!"

"How? He is a boy like any other. Tell me, why did you never help him when your father broke his ribs or broke his arm?"

"He always got back up the next day. He was fine!" Dudley's neck started to redden.

"No, he didn't. The first break was probably when he was six or seven. He didn't get right back up. In fact, his magic did fix his bones to prevent further abuse by your father. However, it takes systematic abuse before that happens, so that means that he didn't get up the next day the first time, or the second, or the fifth. He was in pain and agony for days several times until his magic realized he wasn't getting any care and fixed his bones itself. So he didn't get back up the next day. What are you is wrong with you such that you can't feel anything for your cousin?"

"I'm not supposed to! He's a freak, a stupid freak! He's not normal. He's disgustingly ABNORMAL!"

"Neither are you. Your weight isn't normal. Your lack of academic achievement isn't normal! Abusing people isn't normal! There is no NORMAL. There are averages, but there is no real normal. You must understand Dudley." Carmus walked over and knelt beside the boy's chair, "Normal is relative. What that means is that what's normal for you is not for me and what's normal for me is not normal for others. Yes, there are societal norms; a thing that society agrees is acceptable. However, a norm for this society is not the same as a norm for another society. I'm afraid that what you were taught in that house was not a norm for this or any other society that I'd want to live in. Now, get up. We have someplace to be, okay? A present for you."

Carmus sighed, got up, and left the room. He went down the stairs to wait for Dudley. At the foot of the stairs, he called for Dayn, "You can start returning some of his privileges. Slowly. If he backslides, then you can remove them again."

"Yes, sir!" Dayn popped out as Dudley came down the steps.

Dudley was dressed in light brown slacks, a light brown sweater vest pullover with red and gold piping, over a pale yellow collared shirt. He wore trainers on his feet.

"Very nice, Dudley. You look well. Now come put on your jacket and we'll go."

Dudley frowned but went to the closet and got out a white jacket. Still silent, he put it on. Carmus stepped up and straightened the jacket.

"Hold the right collar and say 'Proxima'."

Dudley frowned. Shrugging, he did as Carmus asked. Slowly the jacket darkened until it matched
the color of the pullover.

"Well come along," Carmus opened the door, and they walked down the street until they came to an alleyway. McGill ducked down the alley and tugged Dudley after him. Stopping, he looked left and right.

"Sorry about this, it's going to be uncomfortable." Suddenly, he grabbed Dudley. A second later, the alley was empty.

East Fork
London
11:23 a.m.

Dudley retched as they appeared in another alley. Carmus stooped beside him, rubbing his back gently.

"Sorry. It's Side-Along Apparition. Apparition is horrid but Side Along is twice as bad! Yet, apparition is still less detectible than Portkey travel. I didn't think you wanted everyone to know every place you go."

Dudley coughed a few more times and stood up. Carmus stood and offered him a flask. Dudley took it and gulped greedily. Turning, he spat the water out. He handed it back to the man.

"So where are we?"

"East Fork. Come along." Carmus wrapped one arm around Dudley's shoulders and walked him out the alley. They headed down the small hill. At the foot was large grey building. Even from the top, he could read the wrought iron letter. East Fork Women's Prison.

"I thought you might want to see your mother; maybe your aunt as well?"

Dudley nodded. Together they walked down the hill to the prison.

Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry
Front Lawn
10:41 a.m.

Simon smiled as Hermione bossed the Weasley twins around. The Ravenclaws had somehow, though he really didn't want to know how, managed to find the perfect way to spread out the blankets for maximum coverage. They had even gotten together with the Hufflepuffs and managed to charm all the radios to synch together as well as spreading the radios to achieve maximum clarity. Turning, he waved to Draco, who was leading the Slytherins out of the castle. Each of them was bearing a platter or a cooler. Slipping down the wet grass, he skidded next to Draco.

"Hey. Looks like it's going to rain!"

"Seriously McGill… rain repelling charm?" Draco shook his head. "One would think you weren't a wizard!"

"Yeah, yeah! Now, Draco, you have to admit; it's good seeing the entire school get together."

Draco shook his head, "They're only here to see what the Queen is going to do to Dumbledore."

"Strange, in the Muggle world, the Queen is the Queen, but she is just a figurehead. The Prime Minister is the one with the power."
Draco shook his head. "That's odd. I guess it's because Lordships still means something to us. The people of the Malfoy lands owe personal fealty to my father. Remember, most wizards aren't powerful, they can't ward their own homes. They can't ward their businesses. They can't do most healing charms. Most of them don't even have their own wands. They have their parents' or grandparents' wands. That's why our Lordships are based on Magical Power."

Hermione spoke from behind them. "That just seems so wrong to me, actually, to most Muggleborns. We don't want to rule anyone."

Draco sighed. "Fine, don't rule anyone. You have all this power to protect a person's home from fire, their business from floods. You can heal them, but since it might inconvenience you, forget it! Look, Granger, it's not about whether or not it would make you uncomfortable! It's about the fact that you have this ability. In return for doing the right thing and helping other wizards, you get privileges. Now some people have forgotten their duties, but we haven't."

Simon rolled his eyes, "She didn't mean it like that. Out there in the Muggle world, we're taught to be individuals. We don't have the right to control anyone else or even impose ourselves on them. It's the whole Muggle vs. Wizarding raised thing again."

"That makes no sense! You impose on others every time you help someone or tell them when they make a mistake."

"But Malfoy, no one helps you in the Muggle world, and you don't help anyone. It's too dangerous. You stop to help someone with a flat, only for them to rape and kill you. You pull over to help someone with directions and they shoot you. No one helps anyone anymore. You can be a nurse or doctor, like a mediwizard, and see someone choking or having trouble breathing but you don't go help them. You can't. If you do and you press to hard and bruise them, they sue you."

Angel said sadly.

Draco stared at them. "For saving their life? And you wonder why we despise Muggle Culture?"

Draco walked away, up the slight rise to where the blankets were spread out.

Simon sighed, "Draco! It's just, you're on your own out there! No helps you, and no one expects help! You do it on your own or you sink! You don't expect help out there; half the time your own family doesn't help you out there!"

"We're not out there; we're in the Wizarding World. If that's the Muggle World, why do you go back there?" Blaise asked quietly.

"It's our world, Zabini! No matter how bad it get, we can't abandon it! It's…"

Zabini nodded. "Yeah, but that's just it. You are loyal to this idea that you can't abandon your culture, but when we say, we can't abandon the weaker wizards then you get all huffy. Most of them are so busy working and striving to live and do things, whereas we who are up for our Lord and Ladyships are needed for other things. When the Wizarding World is threatened by a rampaging dragon, it's not them who die. It's us. It's our job. When a magical plague erupts, it's we who burn out our magical cores simply to heal them. We aren't parasites. We have duties. Just as they owe us loyalty, we owe them duty as well. Being a Lord or Lady means more than just a title."

Hermione whimpered. Simon shrugged. Running up the rise, he wrapped Draco in a one-armed hug from behind, leaning into to whisper, "And that's what the Muggleborns have to learn. Even me. Although my dad is a pureblood, I was raised in a mostly Muggle area. He's had me for a while and I've learned quite a bit, but there are things you are going have to take time to explain to me Draco,
Draco stood silently.

"Please?"

"Argh, stop hanging on me McGill, at least try to act like a pureblood!" Draco tried to snarl.

"Please?"

Draco sighed, "Fine, now let go of me?"

Simon grinned, squeezed him tightly again and let him go, "That still doesn't explain why the speech from the Queen is such a big deal."

The others sat down on the blankets. A fifth year Muggleborn from Hufflepuff sat down abruptly. "Exactly. On the Muggle side, the Queen… we look on her with affection. If we take an oath of office or in the military, we still take it to Queen and Country. However, the Queen part is mostly a matter of honor. The oath to country is more important. Well, not more important, more they expect us to obey that… The idea is that since we have a constitutional monarchy, the Queen will never violate the will of the state, so really, the State and the Prime Minister is what matters."

A sixth year Slytherin nodded and sat next to the small group. "Ahhh, but we still have a working feudal system with modified vassalage system. While they have much more rights than they would have to have, since they are magical, we never were signatories to the Constitution. Your Muggle Prime Minister means nothing to us save the fact that the Prime Minister is a discreet messenger. Our Minister of Magic speaks to your Minister because in the late 1700's, almost a quarter century before the post was created, the Witch Trials were picking up again. We decided to separate from the Muggles; we decided on a Statute of Secrecy. We, at the time, knew that the King at the time, George III, would attempt to destroy us if we went our own way totally. So we gave him personal fealty: fealty to the Throne, Crown, and Scepter. Only the wielder of those could command us. Right now, the only wielder of those items is Her Majesty, Elizabeth II. So while she's a symbol to the Muggles, she is and remains our Queen and Mistress."

Hermione bit her lip, "I see. No offense, I am trying to understand…"

Simon nodded, "We understand, and Draco, here, will keep his snarky comments to himself."

Draco turned towards his friend and gave a sniff, "I am a Malfoy, we aren't 'snarky'."

A round of laughter floated through the area,

Hermione smiled, "Most of us, we are taught that democracy is the best system, that we… ummm, evolved from the primitive forms of government, which include monarchy. So this, to us, seems almost backsliding. It doesn't help that, well, we go to school in a castle, with torches, fireplace, dungeons. It's all very… disconcerting to us who have never had to worry about heating or cooling because we have central air. We have lights that come on and off with a switch or a snap; we have microwaves that cook or heat our food in less than five minutes. In fact, the only magical thing about Hogwarts is the ghosts and house elves!"

Blaise frowned, "Granger, do you think that our houses are like Hogwarts, remnants of castles and such?"

Hermione shrugged, "How do I know? Probably. Diagon Alley wouldn't be out of place in a historical drama from the two hundred years ago. Hogsmeade? The only piece we see of it shows it
to be a small rustic town that probably hasn't changed in as long."

Chang, a fifth year Ravenclaw frowned. He nodded, "I understand what you mean, Granger, but Hogsmeade and Diagon Alley are deliberately kept 'rustic' to preserve the Muggle sense that it's magic. Not just Muggles but for Wizard children too. It's almost as if you travel back in time to the Great Ages. I guess they are like Historical Villages."

Sanderson, a second year Muggleborn from Gryffindor, threw up his hands. "Well how are we supposed to know? If we ask, people smirk or laugh. If we don't ask, we don't get an answer. So basically, they could show us something more magical and inspiring but choose to preserve cold wet dungeons, drafty rooms, and stone floors out of some twisted and vacuous desire to preserve historical value over health?"

Blaise looked at the boy and started to laugh. All around them Slytherins started to laugh. Even Draco was laughing and leaning against his godbrother. Granger turned over and lay on her stomach, waiting for them to settle down.

"Sorry, Sanderson is it? Ummm, that's one of the reasons we, the Slytherin families, think Dumbledore is bonkers! The dungeon, at least our part of the dungeons, is at all cold or as Granger would say 'backwards'. In our bedrooms we have lights that react to voice or hand commands; we can even use them like lanterns except they don't get hot. Our bedrooms are not stone, or the stone is covered with a foam-like layer over which is a wood floor. And as for something spectacular, there is a room that has a piece of spell glass. It 'eats' a portion of all the magic done down there to maintain itself. It separates the room from the lake. We can watch the lake down there. Is that impressive enough?"

Sanderson nodded, "Ummm, could we… come see it? I bet it'd be bloody wonderful!"

Draco shrugged, "Ask Professor Snape."

Sanderson groaned, "He hates us!"

Simon frowned, "No, he hates what Gryffindors represent. Anyway, this is getting heavy. Let's save it for the next time we meet. Isn't her Majesty's speech starting?"

Suddenly the radios got louder, and the students got quieter. "Ladies and Gentlemen, on behalf of the British Wizarding World, I give you our Queen, Elizabeth the Second."

Land of Hope and Glory started to play.

Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry
Faculty Room
11:23 a.m.

Severus Snape sat in the faculty room where his fellows were clustered around a radio. The diminutive head of Ravenclaw sat, trying to concentrate on a game of chess… and failing. Severus swirled the liquor around in the rounded glass slowly before sipping. Finely aged scotch. A fanfare played from the speaker grill suddenly, and a light voice floated through the air.

"Welcome to all the Wizarding World. I am Erinya Eris, before we get to the main address today. The Minister of Magic has a few words. Now, I present to you, Minister of Magic, Cornelius Fudge."

"Ahem… for the first time in the past sixty years, the Queen of Great Britain, our Queen will be speaking with us. This is a momentous time and I urge everyone to listen. What she says will change many things. Thank you."
The woman came back on the air, "Ladies and Gentlemen, on behalf of the British Wizarding World, I give you our Queen, Elizabeth the Second.

East Fork Women's Prison
Room 13
11:20 am

Petunia sat in a prison orange plastic molded chair, her arms pulled close to her body. Her face was pale and her hair was held back with a cloth band. Carmus smiled genially as he entered and sat across the table from her. He nodded gratefully as the guard who had escorted the both of them in placed a radio next to them. His eyes flew to Marge Dursley who had lost quite a bit of weight but whose eyes still gleamed with maliciousness.

Petunia hadn't stood up to hug her son. Dudley sat at the table quietly.

"Are you feeling okay? What has that freak done to you? You look so small. Did he use his… freakishness on you?"

Dudley shook his head. "Umm, he's done nothing, Mum. Really. He makes, or rather his ummm…"

"House elf. A small creature with big ears, nimble fingers, large eyes, and small stature who agree to take care of a home and family in return for care and living space. Basically what you had Harry for except he didn't receive the care. If he had, he wouldn't be so small. Instead of growing, his body had to convert all his energy into magic to heal his bones and cuts." Carmus gave her a flat stare before turning his face to the wall.

Petunia shrunk back as if she had been burned. Dudley blanched before he turned back to his mother, "Yeah, they have me on a diet. It's okay though… it's not so bad. I have to exercise every day and I go to a private day school. It's... different. The people there aren't wizards or witches, they are squibs. They were born to those families but don't have any m-magic."

Carmus turned and smiled, "No, they have magic, but like your mother, it's so small it's not worth training. Think of... the Richter scale, the whole earthquake thing. Each number is 10 times the number before it. Well, think of scale like that but one to 50. Harry is ranked maybe forty-three. Dumbledore was ranked forty-seven before Grindelwald. He hasn't submitted himself for testing in a while. Lily was in the upper 30's...maybe even forty or so. While 15 to 25 is normal for most magical folk. Under ten, you would be a squib, which means you are likely maybe a twelve. Dursley actually ranks high for a squib, based off him and Marge here. So given that, Dudley should be magical," Carmus stared at the woman, whose face had drained of blood while her eyes widened.

Dudley was looking between them. He frowned, "But I'm not like you... or Harry. I can't do that."

"No, you can't. You should be though. Your mother is a witch; your father a high powered Muggle. It's one of the reasons that he's so large. Same with Marge. How do you think Wizards do magic?"

Marge snuffled, "It's unnatural, probably some demonic pact!"

Carmus laughed, "No... magic is in its simplest form is manipulating energy. If I want to move this table, I say a spell. That spell really means nothing. It's a memory device that I use to cause my magic, my ability to move energy, to focus on the table and move it as I want. Like anything else, it takes energy. We get energy from food. You store energy in your fat cells. Thus, energy is used. That's why at the school, they are fed until they are huge. They must be to expend so much energy. Of course, what happens if they don't?"
Dudley frowned, "Well, if we don't use it, it gets stored as fat."

"Right, so if you saw a witch or wizard who was fat, then…"

"They don't do a lot of magic!" Dudley sounded surprised.

"Exactly, Dudley, good job on the logic. It's also why Harry is so small and thin. His magic was eating up all his energy to fix his body. After a while, there was no energy left. So rather than kill him, it left him just energy to live."

Dudley looked gray as he whispered, "But I can't do… magic."

Carmus shrugged, "True… which is troubling, isn't it Petunia?"

Petunia Dursley drew herself up tightly. "I don't what you mean."

"I think you do, Petunia. I really do. And I will find out. Don't you worry. Now… isn't it time for the Queen?"

12:00 noon
Wizarding Wireless Network

"My beloved and most magical subjects, you have rarely heard from me and with good reason. I… though a Queen, am not a Witch and cannot truly understand how you live. That does not mean I did not care about you nor concern myself with you. You are my people. Beholden to me and I am honor bound and proud to serve you as not only your Queen but your Lady.

"Many have asked, if I cared so much why I have done so little. I did, as per tradition, harbor a great deal of trust in the office of the Minister of Magic. I depended on the honor of the personal integrity of those who hold the office to communicate to me your will. Recently, I have found that this trust has not only been misplaced but in fact thoroughly abused.

"Many children born to those of non-magical parentage were neglected, abused, or simply ignored. The sheer number of those, as they are called Muggleborns, who have been disenfranchised through trickery and deceit is horrendous. The Wizarding population has been plummeting. Before 1945, our entrance in the Second World War and the Wizarding World war with Grindelwald, there were no less than 19 million magical humans. The wars killed many. Families that had four or more children lost many of them and the population fell to less than a five million. Since then, Mundane Britain has done nothing but grow in population. Our population since the war has grown to more than ten times. Magical Britain, however, has not recovered.

"Right now, the population, as of last census, stands at 4,753,220 people. This is less than half of the post-war population, one quarter of the pre-war population. The data, which shall be made available to you, suggests that prior to 1950, more Muggleborns stayed in Magical world. Over 97% of Muggleborns stayed and with them came new blood into this world. By 1960, less than 40% stayed, and today it is less than ten percent.

"Many of you have heard of the accusations against Albus Dumbledore who it is claimed has manufactured this disenfranchisement of so many Witches and Wizards. Some may say, this cannot be for how could he do this? With the death of so many of the noble class, the one class that had the highest influx of Muggle raised children, we stopped welcoming them. The number of children born to the noble class decreased sharply. This is a problem because the only Muggleborns now accepted are not allowed entry into enough of the positions of power.

"This is where Magical Britain stands now. On the verge of systemic collapse. Tell me, what new
innovations have Magical Britain come up with? Radios? We have had radios for over a hundred years. Have you improved on the radio? Do your radios now allow people to view the broadcasters? Perhaps they are in some ways better than our radios? Or television? Are they?

"Did not think so. How long has Magical innovation been delayed, destroyed, denied, and retarded because of this puerile belief in pureblood superiority. What do you know of a Muggleborn named Richard Pawlenty? Thirty-five years ago, he tried to interest people in his idea of using Garhel Poppies and Trawn seeds in developing a cure for Dragonpox. He was turned away at every place he went to because of the ridiculous belief of how dare a Muggleborn try to come up with something. Nine years ago, a cure for Dragonpox was discovered and awarded to Targee Podmore; his cure uses Garhel Poppies and Trawn seeds.

"Twenty six years passed between Pawlenty and Podmore… How many people died of the Dragonpox in those twenty six years? Do any of you know? I do… In Magical Britain over the past twenty six years, no less than one hundred twenty thousand have died from Dragonpox… and of those who survived, there are no less than three hundred thousand rendered sterile. That is four hundred twenty thousand people. That is one tenth of the present population.

"Now, I wish for all of you to count out groups of ten people. Of those ten people, one is dead of Dragonpox; have them sit down. Another is a Muggleborn, they will leave this world; have them sit down. Now two of those remaining will chose not to have children. Please have them sit down. You likely have three couples now. One of those three either will not or cannot have children. Please sit down. Now there are two couples left… your responsibility is to have children to replace yourself and your fellows. So you must each have five children. Except most won’t. Most only have two or three… so, forty percent of people are lost every generation. How long until there are no children? Let us not forget that among those who protect the Wizarding World, among those who attend Hogwarts and are the elite, the child rate is smaller, and the consanguinity is higher.

"What does this mean? It means those who can protect you are dying out. Those who are the weaker witches and wizards are also dying out, slower but still dying out. Within two hundred years, the number of Wizards in Magical Britain will fit in the town of Hogsmeade or perhaps they will choose to live along Diagon Alley.

"This is unacceptable. I will not fail my children, and you are my children like this! I am your Queen and I will not allow Magical Britain to die! I am your Queen and I am here for you!"

The Queen waited for a moment, her breathes coming deeply.

"To this end, we have and there will be several detailed articles tomorrow, we are starting a new program in an effort to integrate Muggleborns into Magical Britain. This year is too late but starting next summer, the first year Muggleborn students as well as the incoming second years will participate in a Wizarding Studies program. Before they enter our world, we will have the Muggle Rights and Relations Office, headed by our own dear Mr. Robert Smithe, contact the families no later than May 1st and no earlier than December 1st to explain what will be happening with their child as well as to allow the children to go to classes to learn about the Wizarding Culture. It will be administered by several Pureblood wizards of different classes.

"Our next program is for those already in Wizarding schools. All Wizardborn children will have no less than five years mandatory Muggle Studies taught by someone who has been raised in the Muggle world. All Muggleborn children will take five years of mandatory Wizarding Studies taught by someone who has been raised in Wizarding world.

"Our last program is certainly not the least, but it the most interesting. The older Muggleborns, if they wish to reclaim their seats in the Wizagamot, may do so; however, they too have to pass a class in
Wizarding Culture and Wizarding Politics. This can only be open to those who have graduated from a Magical school within the past fifteen years and only to those who chose to live in the Wizarding World.

"This is merely the beginning. Hopefully the beginning of a renaissance for our world. This is not the end. One doesn't announce programs and think that will solve things, but it is a step in the right direction. I will be with you every step of the way. Now, I wish to introduce someone, Mr. Roland Bannerson. He will be my eyes and ears among the Wizarding Britain."

Bannerson stepped up to the mike, "Thank you, Your Majesty. My name is Roland Bannerson, I am a dedicated member of her Majesty's Private Guard and a Squib. I have been raised with several of my own family being both Magical and Muggle and I…"
Black frowned as he placed another book back on the shelves. All of them seemed to agree; to heal him would need a Master Occulumens and there were none of sufficient trust in the Black family. Sighing, he decided it was inevitable, life had a way of making people pay for their arrogance. First, this business of getting healed; then having to deal with Walburga. He would much rather not … grovel to her but he needed access to things that only she had access to. Well, he wasn't put into Gryffindor because he looked good in red.

Snapping his fingers, he waited for Colly to show. The house elf that had replaced Kreacher popped into existence. He was like all house elves, faintly green with large eyes and spindly limbs. However, since Sirius's return, he was ordered to wear a clean uniform made out of a black towel with the family crest located on his upper right shoulder done in silver and white threads. The old elf seemed to be recovering his senses as repairs were made on the house.

"Colly, I need to talk with my mother's portrait. We will likely fight. You are not to interfere. Instead, I wish you to work on cleaning, not shuffling around, but cleaning the upper den. The Family Seat of the House of Black has fallen in disrepair. I would be ashamed to bring anyone into here. My godson can not live in a dark, damp, filthy, falling apart place. He had enough of that when he was abused by Muggles. We are Magical Folk, we have no reason to live like this and we won't. So you will help us fix it so that we can once again hold balls and dinners to make the House of Black once more a respected place to gather. Is that understood, Colly?"

The trembling house elf nodded.

"Go, thank you, Colly"

The house elf nodded once more and scuttled out the library door.

Sighing, Sirius stood up and left the library. He conjured a chair and sat before the curtained portrait. The heavy black velvet drapes sat like a hole in the wall. Sitting down, he flicked his wand and the curtains pulled aside. The portrait had been repaired and she was quieter now, though from time to time you could still see faint lines like scars.

"Mother."

"Oh my ungrateful son."

"Mother. You and I will not agree on the issue of muggleborns nor should you expect us to, however we do agree on the dignity of the House of Black. That it should be dignified. It is one of the reasons we fought so much. I saw your stance as deranged pureblood paranoia which would result in the House of Black being destroyed and you saw my stance as weak. However, I am here and you are dead."

"Here and disgraced. You are nothing more than a convict!"

"Poor Mother. I am not, in fact the Ministry released me and paid damages because I was not a convict. The two of us both fell to the same fallacy. We trusted our leader blindly. In my case, it was Dumbledore. I honestly believed in him because I could see the problems he pointed out. That
inbreeding was leading to too many problems. He was right that we need muggleborns for the new blood. However, his willingness to sacrifice anyone and anything to make others obey him is wrong. He knew I was innocent but he allowed me to stay in Azkaban without a trial so that he could control me later.

"However, V-Voldemort is not much better than Dumbledore. Sure, he's willing to be a figurehead of all that's right and noble and Light. He's all about the greater good and benevolence. Yes, he isn't as sneaky or manipulative and he's more open about his demands but he is still trying to control people. For all your support of him, he is still killing purebloods. He killed Reggie. My little brother who I failed; the son who you failed. What did you know of him except that he said he supported your pureblooded mania? So, he promised to help you exterminate yourselves. He's a half-blood mother. Muggle father, pureblood mother. If anything you should have approved of my godson. At least both his parents were magical. Yes, Lily was a muggleborn, but she wasn't a muggle. Voldemort's father was. So out of the two people we support, which one is more worthy according to your ideals?" Sirius paused for a moment as grief touched him.

"And now, my godson, who is for all intents and purposes a pureblood, was abused so badly that the only way to heal and keep him safe was to use the Adoptio Asylum measures. You know what that requires, Mother."

The portrait stayed silent. She knew… she knew well. Subdued, she whispered. "Even you didn't go so far."

"I've lost him before I've had him and I'll not get him back without a fight. I took the wrong lesson from you. I thought of pride, of vengeance before I thought of little Harry. For that sin of failing family, failing my godson, I lost him and spent ten years in Azkaban, have I not paid enough, Mama?"

"I still do not approve of the fact that he's a halfblood."

"He isn't. His mother was a muggleborn, true but she was a powerful witch. She ranked mid 30's. She was a witch and James was a wizard, he's the scion of a pureblood family and considered pureblood. V-V-Voldemort and Dumbledore are two of the same kind. Both more interested in how they can shape the Wizarding World in their image and they are both insane."

"If we can not trust the Dark Lord nor the Light Lord…"

"We trust the Grey… the shadow, the McGill… and he has protected Harry. No one can find a trace of him, they weaved glamours over him for the trial, giving him Veritaserum every time he came into court to verify he is who he says he is and later, he disappears. So, although I will worry about him, I don't need to be worried about him.

"Meanwhile, I will restore the house of Black to its former political glory, with the help of several allies and Remus. For this, I need access to all of the family magicks. You know how to get me access to it. I know you, and you would not have left this portrait here otherwise."

"True but to trust you again, after all you did and said?"

"I'm wiser now, Mama… older, tired, and definitely a bit more wiser than when I went in. After all, I didn't follow a maniac halfblood. Dumbledore is a pureblood, even if he's just as nuts as Riddle."

"Riddle?"

"The Dark Lord, his birth name. Tom Marvolo Riddle, son of Merope Gaunt and a Muggle."
Walburga gasped, her grey eyes stormy.

"Sirius, you need to go to the tapestry and swear yourself back to the Black Legacy, if you are true about this, the magick will know and place you back onto the tapestry. If you are lying… you will pay the price."

"Understood, Mama. Thank you."

Sirius stood and flicked his wand, the curtains about the portrait shone.

September 15, 1991
Kingston-Upon-Thames
10:15 a.m.

Dudley stood up on shaky legs. Last night, he had spent a long while puking after some tests. Carmus had come in that night and told him he was getting two days off school and explained what he meant when he said that his magic had been sealed. It was hard to believe his mother had done it but considering how she felt about… fr…fre… magical folk. Had she known it would kill him? Would she have made any other choice even if she had known?

Dudley sighed as he made it to the chair by the desk. A soft pop and Dayn appeared next to him.

"Is Master Dudley going out?"

Dudley smiled, "I wanted to but I don't think I have enough strength to."

"Not to worry, Master Carmus be saying that you can have pepper-up potion and strength potion."

"P-potion?"

"Like muggle vitamin drinks."

"Okay, ummm can I have them please?"

"Yes, right away! But Dayn be warning Master Dudley, they don't be tasting very nice." Dayn popped away and reappeared with two bottles. Dudley took them carefully.

Dayn pointed to blue liquid in one. "Drink the strength one first."

The boy frowned and carefully drank the first bottle down. His face twisted in a grimace. Panting, he let it drop listlessly from his hands, Dayn snapped her fingers and the bottle disappeared. Dudley looked at the orangey red liquid. Dayn nodded.

Slowly, he raised it to his lips and drank it quickly. His face turned red as steam poured out of his ears. Jumping to his feet, he danced in place before it finished its work.

"Is that why it's called Pepper-up?"

Dayn laughed. "Master Carmus is waiting in the library."

Dudley nodded before leaving his room. He headed down the stairs and stopped at the library door. Looking at the house he noticed that it was much larger from the inside than it appeared to be from the outside, more magick he guessed and yet, if… if… his parents had accepted Harry and they had treated him right… If they had, would they have had all this, everything his parents had wanted? A large house, excellent food, money? Harry had to have money. McGill said that Harry's father was a Lord.
"Sir… did you want to see me?"

"Yes, I know that I want you to rest but I was wondering if you would like to see different types of wizards and how they live. You know about me and how we live here but we're connected to the Muggle world. There are whole towns and counties and cities that aren't on Muggle maps. Most wizards and witches live there and I'd like to show you those places.

"Some of them are nice, some are not. Today we are going to go to a pureblood's house. They are proud that nearly all their family has been magical for the past eight hundred years, if not more. You can either go there as a muggle or we can tell them that you are blocked. Consider well what you want to tell them.

"I plan to leave in about forty-five minutes. Dayn is going to make you a light meal, you really shouldn't have a heavy meal after potions. Also, you understand that if I don't unblock your magic then you will die before you are thirty. So I must, which means you need to be trained. I want to send you to Hogwarts but you are nowhere near ready. It should take about a year or maybe a year and half. That means you must be tutored. When we go to this meeting, I am going to talk to Sirius Black, to see if he will tutor you in the offensive and active magicks, while Remus Lupin-Black will tutor you in the defensive and passive magicks."

"What if I don't want to be a wizard?" Dudly frowned. "I'm not like you."

"You were born one and this blocking is killing you. Once you graduate from Hogwarts, I can wait for your magic to mature and then rebind it, properly this time! The magic won't strangle you like it is now. Of course once you enjoy your magic you may not want to rebind it."

"I will." The boy stated firmly.

"We'll see."

Dudley nodded as he turned and headed for the dining room. Carmus sighed.

Number 12 Grimmauld Place
London
Fire Room
11:07

Carmus stepped from the first and turned to catch Dudley as he tumbled out. Setting the boy on his feet, he led the way from the Fire Room to the library. A house elf popped in suddenly.

"Master say, we be meeting in front library, please be following Colly."

Carmus followed the house elf, one hand on Dudley's back gently leading him forward.

Soon they arrived at the library; Black was sitting on a tall wooden chair, its upholstery a pattern made by the Black Crest. To the left sat the two elder Malfoys with a young man next to them who was obviously a Malfoy relative. Around the room were clusters of three to five people. Light sided families, Dark sided families, even neutrals. They were all here for one purpose. One goal.

Carmus nudged Dudley to sit as far from them as possible. "Welcome. To all of you, it's wonderful to see so many people here. I am Carmus McGill. I know most, if not all of you, even though that you may not know me. Look around you, you see Dark families, you see Light families, you see Neutrals. Understand this… there is none here who are invariably evil, no matter what magic they practice. I know you have been informed of the lies Dumbledore has been feeding the last fifty years of students."
"That's two generations… not just you but your parents… not just you but your children and in some cases your grandchildren. If you want to ask me questions about Light and Dark magic please do so later.

"So to start us off, why don't we open the floor to questions… within reason. No curses, hexes, jinxes, or spells are to be cast within this room."

Carmus sat down and waited, the tension ratcheted up. A Dark wizard stepped forward, on his shoulder he wore a shield identifying him as part of the Pengel family.

"We know who you are and you know who we are, but who is the child?"

"His name is Dudley Dursley and he's in need of our help."

The roar ripped around the room, with Black lunging forward to smash into a shield, Remus behind him pulling him back. Black snarled. "You dare, you dare to bring that damned piece of shit into my home!"

"Yes, Black, because as you have found out, Dumbledore isn't all he's cracked up to be. I found out what Petunia was offered to keep Harry, what tender she was offered…"

"In return for her taking Harry in and abusing him, Dumbledore sealed Dudley's magic in. If it's not unsealed, he will die before he even reaches the age of thirty. The magic unable to manifest will consume his flesh and appear as cancer. It will devour him."

"Good… let him die!"

Narcissa Malfoy stood up, her silver dress rustling as she walked towards Carmus. She knelt down gracefully and looked at Dudley, one slim hand cupping his cheek. Whatever she sought, she found as she stood up and walked over, a flash of silver shone as her shoe caught Sirius Black in the ribs. "This is why you will not get your godson back anytime soon."

Andromeda Tonks smiled at her sister. "Carmus, such a thing is beyond the pale. It is not allowed unless the person has committed some great crime and the only crime this child has committed was to mimic those awful people he lived with. Dumbledore did this?"

"I know of very few people who could do it… less that could do it on their own." Carmus sighed. "I come to you because there are many books that we don't have, though my family is trying to correct that oversight. There are histories that your families may have that we don't know. There has to be a solution someplace. I have been studying him and with my own knowledge of the nature of magic, I have worked on dissembling this complicated work but if there is a better way, then I'd rather do it that way. My way will hurt, take two years, and he may die of it."

"Indeed." A tall man, thin and spare, with long red gold hair pulled back in a French braid moved forward to kneel beside the boy. "Boy, I am Wilfred Yanti Pike Wiley, head of the Wiley family. What you did was reprehensible and if you were an adult I would have let you die but you are a child and a stupid lump of one at that. You have done little good with your life preferring to be a bully, a brat, eating until you burst, and you only move if forced to. You whine and demand what is not yours by right. Yet you are but a child, spoiled but not spoiled through and thus I will help you and with my support so will myriad others of the Light. We seek to redeem you for your soul's sake. We seek to give you true choice. So, we will help you. This time."

Dudley stared at the wizard, eyes wide. Carmus nodded. "He won't thank you now but he will later. I do thank you, Wiley. I would also ask for a Dark sponsor to help in unraveling the bonds."
Narcissa bowed her head.

"Thank you, Lady Malfoy. Now, let's move on. I am holding off on releasing more of what Dumbledore has done because I do believe that too much, too fast would only hurt our cause. These alliance meetings will sometimes be called for the sole purpose of allowing Dark and Light and Neutrals to mix without always having up their guards. There has been many… lies spread about what Dark is and what Light is. It is only through free discourse that we can defeat the plan that our enemy has wrought."

Carmus looked at the faces of his audience. Some were set in determination, others sparked with anger. Some were just appalled at the callousness of either him or Dumbledore, whatever they felt it didn't matter. Dumbledore was going down, it would just take a bit of finesse to make sure that when he falls, he will never again step up.

"Too long, we have allowed the prejudices and beliefs color our behavior towards each others. To allow this sham of so called manners to continue would be to grant him another victory. So let's not."

Several people nodded. Leaning back into his chair, Carmus smiled. "So who would like to start?"

Monday
September 16, 1991
Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry
6:40 a.m.

Harry winced as he felt Professor Quirrell's eyes on him again. Every morning, he stared at him, and every morning, he got a headache. It was only three weeks into the school year and already he had a problem. The whole thing bothered his stomach. Draco put his fork down and turned towards his friend. "You tell Sev or I will!"

"I'll tell him, soon."

"No, you'll tell him today. We have double potions today. If we get there before class starts then we can talk to him. I'm done."

Simon sighed and put his fork down. Turning to his left, he nodded at Hermione. "See you in class."

Simon hurried off towards the dungeons and the Potions room with Draco at his side. A few minutes later they were at the door and Draco knocked. They entered as they heard the muffled call and saw Professor Snape reviewing his notes for the lesson.

"Professor, Simon needs to talk to you."

Simon groaned and stood before the desk. "Sir, is it safe to talk here?"

Snape gave a quick nod. "Of course."

"Well, sir, it's about Professor Quirrell. Is there something wrong with him?"

"Why do you ask, McGill?"

"Because every day, he stares at me. Every day, when he does, my scar burns. Even though they can't see it, I can feel it.

"I know it's a curse scar, but why is it hurting? Is it because he's a Defense teacher and he's been around too much evil magic?"
Snape nodded. "It is possible. Has your scar hurt at any other time?"

"No, sir. Dad said to tell you if it did before school started. It's on-"

The sound of a dozen or so students coming down the hallway caused Simon to stop suddenly. Snape waved them away and the boys took their seats for the first class of the day.

2:49 p.m.
Defense Against Dark Arts room

Simon groaned and banged his head on the table. If he had to listen to Quirrell stutter through another paragraph, he was going to research a hex, just for him! Draco on his left snickered while Hermione's bushy hair seemed to generate its own disapproval. Simon glared at his godbrother. "Fine, next time I won't share any of Dayn's scones with you."

Draco turned to him, silver eyes wide with affront.

Simon chuckled and lay his head back down. Ten more minutes and he could escape from the pain.

A small slap on his shoulder caused Simon to blink blearily. He noticed the other students packing up and bent down to shove his book into his own bookbag. Yawning, he turned towards Ron.

"Hey, I have to go see Professor Snape, can you let the others know?"

"Why do you have to see him? The overgrown bat gave you detention?" Ron muttered.

The distant tolerant look fell from Draco's face as Simon stared at the red headed boy. "Shut it, Weasely. I don't pick on your abundant family then you don't pick on my godfather, is that clear?"

"Whatever!" Ron turned, yelping as Simon grabbed his shoulder and spun him around.

"I mean it. Is it clear, Weasely?"

Ron stared at the two other boys then nodded slowly. "Clear."

Hermione and a couple other students stared at the three. One caramel eyebrow lifted. "Draco?"

"It's a pureblood thing, a family thing. Bring it up at the meeting. I think there's one the Saturday after next?"

Hermione nodded, and opened a notebook to make a note. "I will."

Professor Snape's Quarters
4:17 p.m.

Severus looked at the results from the scans that he had done on his younger godchild. Sighing, he waved his wand and a large flask filled with a pale luminescent blue liquid floated over to them.

"Keep this in you trunk, you can refill a small bottle. No more than 2 ounces, every 6 hrs. I will know if you use more. The pain is coming from your scar. I need to speak to your father about this. However, this potion should relieve some of the pain. I fear we did you little favor, in regards to your scar, when Carmus adopted you. I believe you have inherited the ability to sense and manipulate energy, magickal energy. However your scar reacts to certain magicks, which means it will only enhance your pain."

Draco frowned but did not stop stroking the smooth skin of his brother's forehead. "Dark Magic,
Simon frowned in thought, causing his head to wrinkle. Draco lightly slapped him. "Stop it, you'll create wrinkles that betray your thoughts."

Simon rolled his eyes and looked up at him from the lying position. "Really? I'm in great and massive pain because my Defense Against Dark Arts teacher is steeped in Dark Magic and you are worried about me getting wrinkles… what a Malfoy!"

Draco stared at him, "I am a Malfoy, and don't you forget it."

Severus chuckled and sent them off to study. Now he had to write a letter to Carmus, a warm glow started in his chest as he thought of the other man. He barely felt the twinge of discomfort in his Dark Mark.
Celebrations of Harvest's End

September 20, 1991
Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry
Room of Requirement
6:45 p.m.

"Welcome. My name is Lance Herlihy, to my left is Amber Lockley. To my right are Meredith McKay and Rodney Taber. We are all seventh years. This meeting was called because something special in wizarding culture will be happening tomorrow. It is the autumnal equinox, it is a holiday of some importance to us. It is the celebration of Harvest's End. It is Mabon."

Amber smiled at the group. "Tomorrow at dusk, tables already set up in field or parks, or any community green and decorated with the vines and leaves will be laden with food. Though they will cook all day, it is only at dusk do the people come from their houses and under sky feast and celebrate the end of the harvest season."

Rodney grinned, "Yes, there will be much food, much talking and singing. There will be rejoicing that the food is collected and we will not starve this winter. Though sometimes we may have a bad harvest in which case this celebration would be a 'at least got some food!' feast!"

Meredith twitched slightly as she caught their attention. "Even though many have felt mostly gone beyond the need for harvest in our daily lives, we must realize all our food must be grown somewhere and thus harvested some where. So let's give thanks for the end of the Harvest season. The end of the specter of hunger."

A first year raised their hand timidly.

"Yes?"

"So how do we go about celebrating Mabon?"

"Well there are several levels of celebration, for your sake and those fourth year and younger, we'll keep to the simpler celebration. Since it is a Harvest Festival it's all about eating the product of the fields. Grains, Vegetables, Mushroom, and anything else you might find in field or forest. Nuts as well, product of the vine, but also meat. For animals are harvested as well but not as much; if we eat too much, it won't last the winter.

"Since we are in school, I would suggest ribbons of rust and gold and brown. Braid them in your hair, place them around your collar. As you go through the day think of the coolness approaching, taking time to feel how brittle the air is. Take some time to go outside and pick a leaf. Later on, we write on the leaves and decorate them. You write a wish for the coming cold. Your wish should reflect the time of the year, after Saturday the dark increases."

Amber nodded, "The Dark Rises after Mabon and remember what the Dark is. Not just coldness, it is emotion, it is the deep part of your soul, it is a time of your fears and conquering them. The Dark, as in magic as well, represents the unconscious, it represents what we feel, really feel but not what we show. It is the part of us we never want to show. Still, that doesn't make it evil."

Meredith nodded, "Yes, Dark doesn't mean evil but during this time of year, life will test you, will you raise to it? That is the question. Now before we let the first through fourth years go, let's have a retelling of the Holly King and the Oak King."
Rodney and Lance stood up and took off their cloaks. Rodney was dressed in a leaf green suit with red trim while Lance was brown suit with green trim. They turned to face each other.

"The Holly King and the Oak King are brothers. And every year they do battle for the sake of taking as wife the Mother, Earth…

September 21, 1991
Gryffindor Common Room
Main Board
7:15 a.m.

Simon looked up at the notice on the board and smiled. It was only a flyer but it was enough. This was really going to happen and Dumbledore couldn't stop it. Laughing, he headed back up to change.

The Wizard World Welcomes all of Hogwarts Students to tonight's Mabon Bonfire and Feast.

Learn some of the history of the holiday and wizarding culture.

Tonight!

Main courtyard

7:30 p.m.

Hogwarts Kitchens
1:27 p.m.

Dumbledore entered the kitchens from his private door. The past week had been quieter than the week before but still… Damn that McGill! He was behind it all, and in only a couple months. Not only that but no one could find the Potter brat.

Dumbledore sighed deeply and placed a slightly distracted but kindly look on his face as he looked around the kitchens. The house elves were busy, very busy. In the corner he noticed one of older elves teaching a set of younger elves how to prepare a recipe. The batter smelled delicious and familiar.

A memory from a long, long time ago. When his brother was small and his mother was pregnant and she made… apple cakes, full moon apple cakes. His mother would make them every September, every Harvests' End. He had missed them. His mother refused to make them except for harvest festivals. And never past Harvests' End.

He walked over to the table.

"Excuse me, but are you serving full moon apple cakes tonight for dinner?"
The old elf shook his head. "Oh no, Headmaster, these be for the Harvets End festival after dinner."

"Oh? For the… festival?"

"Yes, sir. These be for the fire and party after dinner. It be good to see the children celebrating the old ways. Light dinner so they won't be too full for celebrations later."

Dumbledore chuckled. "Of course, of course."

He left the kitchen with a smile on his face and curses running through his mind. He knew that Minerva often spent Saturday afternoons in her study. He knocked on the study door and waited to enter. As he did so, he thought of how he would approach her about this. The door opened and Minerva waved him to a seat.

"Hello, Albus. How are you today?"

"Fine, fine. Minerva, I just wished to ask you a quick question. I went downstairs to check on dinner and the elves mentioned the celebrations tonight. Harvets' End, I assume?"

"Hmmm yes, it was something me and other heads thought would be a good idea after the shambles of the muggleborn education. It stems from the fact that the muggleborns are derided for asking questions about wizarding culture, have no class in which they may ask those questions, and the lack of information available. That is why we have decided that Hogwarts will celebrate the four major festivals, and each house will provide one of the four lesser festivals. This allows the muggleborn children to learn something of our holidays as well involve them with actually celebrating them.

"I know the official reasoning behind the celebration of Muggle Holidays but we should never have neglected the Wizarding ones. If we have the Muggleborns teach about their holidays, while the Wizardborn teach about ours, we will have greater communication."

"Also, Albus, we don't trust you. None of us can, that's why. After the mistakes you made with Harry Potter. The fact that you lied and misled so many of the Muggleborns. Do not tell me it was a simple oversight. It was a concerted effort on your part, if not total laziness for over 36 years. It can't be forgiven… not by them, not by us. In fact, I would not be surprised at all, Dumbledore, if the Board dismisses you. We are merely waiting for the announcement.

"Now, please leave. I have work to do for my students' sake."

Minerva McGonagall sat back down and turned towards her work.

Albus Dumbledore stood in shock. He knew that his reputation had suffered from these attacks but to… dismiss him so severely. Perhaps he had underestimated the effects of his actions.

6:50 p.m.  
Courtyard

Draco growled again.

"McGill! Why did you wait until now?"

"I got busy, Draco. If you must know, I was busy talking to Severus. He helped me make something for you, for Harvets End." Simon turned to smile at his godbrother, kneeling on the grass. "The whole point of this festival is being thankful and relief that the harvest is in, right?"

"Yes…"
"Then can't I be thankful for you and be relieved at the Harvest of Family that I have been given?" Simon grinned before he turned back to looking for his leaf.

Draco moved next to Simon and laid one hand on the back of Simon's neck. "Simon McGill, will you celebrate this festival with me?"

"I get the feeling this is something pureblood I'm missing but yes, Draco. I will celebrate this festival with you."

Draco leaned down and picked up an amber orange leaf. "This one."

Simon grinned and took it carefully. "Okay."

8:45 pm
Courtyard

Simon rested his back against the wall with Draco beside him, small fires in circles scattered through the courtyard. The main bonfire was already burning down. Between the food and the stories and the dancing… this was the most fun he had ever had… in either life. Turning to Draco, he noticed the other boy was relaxed, eyes at half staff.

"Draco," Simon asked quietly, "is this like your own Harvest End Festivals?"

"Yeah, but before the bonfire, we usually go out on the lawns and have a big feast. Everyone is invited. Even our enemies can't be turned away. The elves cook and they also get to eat with us. The festival lasts all night usually. That's why they've lifted curfew tonight. As long as everyone is actually inside the building by 1 a.m. we're good."

"Hmmm okay, can we go to the Slytherin dorms?"

"Sure, can you get up?"

Simon stood on shaky legs and nodded. "Ummm the leaves?"

"Did you write your wish on yours?"

"Yeah."

"Good," Draco led the way to the bonfire. "Bonfire means blessed fire. Bon meaning good or blessing. By throwing your leaf in the fire, you ask the flames to purify and bless your wish. If your wish is selfish or cruel, the fire will burn it away without harm. If it is a good wish, the flames will carry it out. Throw the leaf in and as you do, concentrate on your wish and keep it in your heart as the flames consumes it."

Simon nodded and looked at the wish written with silver ink on the leaf. It was selfish but not truly so. He wanted Carmus happy. Thinking about his godfather, he stepped forward and spun the leaf into the fire. The leaf sparked and danced.

"Please, for Carmus and Severus' sake."

Draco took his hand and led them inside.

11:20 p.m.
Severus Snape's Quarters.

Severus allowed himself into his quarters, all his children fifth year and under were already in the
dorms, the sixth and seventh years knew what to do. His duty for tonight was ended. The festival tonight reminded him of when he and Sean would attend the Festivals at McGillis House.

The fire was already blazing in the fireplace. As he approached, he noticed two tumblers on the chair side table, one empty and one with two fingers of scotch. One of the chairs turned slowly as Carmus stood up. He held out one of the glasses with a smile. "Will you celebrate the festival with me, Severus?"

Severus placed on hand over Carmus' and with the other took the glass. Sipping it slowly, he stared at his friend and smiled. "I would be pleased, Carmus."

Carmus smiled gently as he moved closer, wrapping on arm around Severus' waist and laying his head on Severus' shoulder. Together the two men walked towards the bedroom.
October 2, 1991
Kingston-Upon-Thames
McGillis House
Den

Carmus frowned as he looked at the notes he had written down. The plan was complex but coming together nicely. Yet, he was sure he was missing something. Sighing, he stood up and crossed to a large dark wood cabinet. Opening it, he pulled out a tray, a tray labeled with this current year; it held twelve columns of 20 vials each. Each column labeled with a month. He selected two and walked over towards the large freestanding earth globe. Opening it, he revealed a pensieve. Carefully, he looked at the label of the first vial.


He poured it in and lowered his head

===/\===

Saturday
September 14, 1991
The Golden Dove
London
11:20 a.m.

Carmus stood and held up his hand to attract the attention of the two witches who had just entered the restaurant. Andrea Pengel and Cassandra Wiley have been friends ever since they were sorted into Ravenclaw together. The Pengels are historically a Dark family as the Wiley's were traditionally Light family. The two girls were as different as night and day, Cassandra was short and dark from her hair to her eyes to her skintone. She had a serious mien though a wicked sense of humor. She managed the import and export of restricted items. Next to her stood Andrea, she was tall and willowy as a Malfoy though her color was healthier. Her hair was the color of wheat with eyes the color of her hair; she seemed to be on the verge of being blown away. Those distant eyes hid the sharp intellect that made her one of the most feared judges of Wizarding Britain.

"Ladies, an honor it is to see you today. The rest of the Governors Board is already in the private room."

Cassandra smiled gently. "Mr. McGill, long has it been since you last gave input to the board. I hope that next year, your name will be on the ballet?"

"Of that, I am not certain, I am but a naïve young man compared to those of refinement on the Board." Carmus smiled depreciatingly.

"Oh your charm," Cassandra shook her head, "tell me, does anyone ever fall for it?"

===/\===

Carmus stretched and used a finger to direct the memory back into its bottle. Carefully, he checked the second vial.

*September 19, 1991. Royalton Banquet Hall. Alumni*
Dr. Ellen Granger stared out at the filling banquet hall. The few wizards that McGill had asked to help had really done a wonderful job. There were sections for alumni from the muggle world, alumni from the magical world, and parents of former, current, and future students. She turned and watched at the clock clicked to 10:20 and the doors closed with a slam. Bright flashes went off attracting attention to the stage. A wizard stood up, and pointed his wand at his throat.

"Ladies and Gentlemen, please take your seats. My name is Albertus Pengel and I am pleased to welcome you to the first Hogwarts Parent Association as well as the Hogwarts Alumni Association." He waited for the sliding of seats to finish. "Thank you. As you have all been made aware, most of you or your children have been deprived of certain rights and deliberately left blind about certain responsibilities. This has been a concerted effort on the behalf of Dumbledore and possibly unknown associates.

"I will be giving a short presentation of what we know he has been doing then we will split into various groups to talk about how it relates to you and your choices and options. This program is part of an idea to reform our world. We have suffered under an impression that the muggle born students despised our world and wanted to force us to become more like theirs which very frankly terrifies us.

"It's true. The wizarding world doesn't have atomic weapons or suitcase nuclear bombs. We don't have guns and our drug problem is minor. One weapon we fear above all else is a curse that kills one person at a time without a mark, so can you imagine how these brutal incidents that you have absolutely terrorizes us? We are quite advanced in other realms though we tend to have a veneer of antiquity. A witch or wizard living in the wizarding world, whether muggle born or not, can expect to live for 150 years. Therefore you do understand that we take things at a slower pace than you. Understandable, is it not?

Now, is time to lay to rest this boogie man of fears through misunderstandings and instead educate ourselves about both worlds so that we will never again fall prey to a manipulation of this magnitude. Let's begin."

"Yes, sometimes all it takes is a change of perspective to see what was hidden before. Carmus grinned. And all the better to play with you!"

October 5, 1991
Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry
Seventh Floor
11:30 am

"So last meeting, we went through the meaning of different wizarding holidays and had a short discussion of a traditional autumnal equinox ritual. So any new questions?"

Hermione sat impatiently waiting for a fifth year Muggleborn Ravenclaw to sit. She knew the purpose of this particular meeting to explain the muggle world to the magical students but she was
ready for the vice versa part.

Finally, when he sat down a quite a few Slytherins stood up. They moved toward the center of the room. A few of each year from the other houses joined them. They sat, with their backs to each other, facing out towards the others.

Hermione held her hand up for the ball. Draco shrugged and tossed it to her.

"Recently, you and Ron Weasely had words. You told me to ask about it at the next meet."

Draco nodded. "Yes, let me ask you a question, Granger. Do you have godparents?"

"Yes, my godmother Aline and my godfather Lysander."

"What purpose do your godparents serve in the Muggle world? Serious question."

"Well, in the past, godparents were supposed to sponsor a child in a particular religious faith, promising to take over the religious education and if necessary to take in and care for the godchild if the parents could not. My parents, while people of faith, are not deeply religious. My godparents are like my parents in that they are deeply faithful. Lysander, even has a degree in Theology. He's a Philosophy and Religions Professor at Sumter College. Aline is an adjunct professor, by that I mean she doesn't teach full time. She owns a business. Several of them, actually. In her spare time, she teaches. The college considers themselves very lucky to have her."

"Our, by that I mean the magical community, consider godparents in a very similar way except that there is a ceremony that we conduct in which the godparents give a piece, a small piece of their magick to their chosen godchild. Their magick will recover but it changes the child's magick enough so that the family magicks recognize the child."

Nott nodded. "To give a better example. The Nott family, like most old pureblood families, have certain places or heirlooms that only a blood member of the Nott family can use. Some of those places and artifacts base their decision on who is and who is not part of the family based on the taste of your magick. Now during the Godparent Ceremony, the godparent gives you a part of their magick which makes you part of their magickal family. You will appear on their family tree with a thread of bronze. Gold descent lines are for direct blood descendants, silver is for magickal descendants, and bronze is for godchildren. This entitles you to much influence, rights, and responsibilities in the magickal world. Inheritance, jobs, networking, and so much more."

Ron Weasely nodded, "When I insulted Professor Snape as Draco's godfather instead of just complaining of him as a teacher, I crossed a line. Much as if I had insulted his parents. I can and do dislike Professor Snape, I do think he gives too much preference to his snakes, I think he's the worst teacher here and that's okay. I can think that, but I didn't insult him over that. I called Draco's godfather an overgrown bat. I called Simon's godfather an overgrown bat. How much would you like to hear someone constantly denigrating your father, Hermione?"

Hermione shook her head, "I understand. Can we talk more about magickal family and relations? I think we actually do have much in common but it can't hurt to understand.

"You mentioned that the godchild appears on the godparent's family tree, does that mean if something happens to the parents, they take the child in? What if there is more than one child? We sometimes have different sets of godparents for each child."

Fifth year Nathan Pengel turned towards her. "No, in our case, it's a bit more serious than I think muggles would do it. I mean, it's obvious that you are close to your godparents but with our
ceremony, the godparent becomes truly and magically a second family. Considering that, if you have a large family like the Weaseley's or even three children like my family, you don't want to have six new people and if the parents should die then you don't want to split up the children. It used to be that sometimes each child would have their own godparent but that was mainly because sometimes it was safer to split up the children. Now that we have our own lands, we no longer do that.

Another hand to the left shot in the air, the ball wrenching itself from Hermione's hands to the other person.

"So can you tell us…"
Edicts and Surprises

AN: Okay, yeah This is way late, for good reason. I had it sitting and waiting for a beta and decided to do 18 while I waited but then my computer crashed. I lost all of 18 and still hadn't beta'd 17. Now it's beta'd and I'm giving it to you. 18 is somewhat shorter and is mainly a flurry of letters. And beta'd does not mean brit-picked.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN: Edicts and Surprises

October 6, 1991
McGillis House
Den
12:45 p.m.

Dayn opened the door and let the man in. Carmus sat up and smiled at the other man. Making him live a proper life had done so much for the werewolf.

“Mr. Lupin, you are looking well. Please come in, have a seat.”

Dayn popped in with a tea tray and sat it on a side table.

Lupin crossed over to the chair and sat down, hand folded in his lap. He watched as Carmus prepared tea, nodding at the cream and sugar. He took the cup and saucer carefully and waited for Carmus to make his own before returning back to his desk. “Thank you; in your letter you said that you had some questions for me?”

“Yes, indeed. I am wondering how it is going with Mr. Black.”

Remus nodded. “Actually, the therapist you suggested, Ms. Bern, has been working with him, every day from 4:30 to 6:00 every day. He’s better. Not great but much better. He doesn’t lose track of days like he did before. There have been fewer outbursts and most of his accidental magic is under control. He doesn’t like the magic dampeners but we are now able to lower the settings.

“Good, that’s excellent. The reason I’m asking is because I was wondering how Mr. Black would feel about spending his birthday with Harry.” Carmus sipped at his cup.

The china rattled as Reus set his cup upon the saucer a bit more forcefully than expected. “Excuse me?”

“I asked if Mr. Black would be well enough to spend some time with Harry on his birthday. From what you are saying, he is trying hard. So let’s reward him. I understand that he has suffered great trauma and it will take time for him to recover. Spending time with Harry will give him an incentive to try harder.”

“Yes, that would be good.”

“Excellent, now for the bad part, I will be inviting Draco and Dudley with Harry. Dudley will attend because Harry insists on helping him through his current ordeals, and Draco because he is a blood relative of Sirius. It is time for him to bury that hatred he has of all that is Dark. His cousin is merely a child, an eleven year old and Harry likes him.”

Remus nodded. “Plus it isn’t good to have only one child around.”
“Indeed, Harry would soon become bored. Now, I will get Harry there around 7:30 am but he must leave by 7:30 pm. This gives Sirius twelve hours.”

“Thank you.” Remus paused, “Why?”

“Why what? Mr. Lupin?”

“Why are you so interested in Harry’s case?”

“It is not mere interest. My beloved Sean planned this out. He wanted me to rescue other children and I did but he knew that the shift of perception would be now and Harry would have a great deal to do with it. Therefore, he placed me where I would be able to help Harry become Harry rather than a sacrifice.”

Carmus stood up laid one hand on a bookshelf; it warped and twisted until one book was pushed out. Carmus moved over to stand next to Remus and showed him the cover. ‘Harry, Year Seven’. “In this book, Harry learns what his role is. He learns that he is meant to be a sacrifice. That he must allow Voldemort to kill him if he wishes to kill Voldemort. Once Voldemort kills him anyone could kill Voldemort but first he must die then come back. So he does, he resigns himself to his death and being a sacrifice as if it is a noble thing. As it if was an honorable thing. He then goes on to become an Auror and marry a red-headed witch. For the rest of his life, he thinks of himself as just like James Potter except for his eyes.”

Remus shrinks back. “He’s not James.”

“No, he’s not. However, he’s told over and over and over and over ‘You look exactly like your father, except you have your mother’s eyes,’ Nothing else. No one tells him anything else about his parents. He will have no idea about his father playing Quidditch, someone points out that ‘of course you’re going to be good; it’s in your blood.’ No one tells him what his father did with his life for years, and of his mother all he will know is that she had red hair and green eyes. When he does something it’s either shock because ‘your father would never do that’ or ‘just like your father’. No one tells him stories about them. So why not sacrifice his life, if he dies maybe he can see them.

“He is taught to withstand pain, in fact he has been taught to expect it for nothing else is given. He is to be so craving of any shred of affection that he will suffer any cruelty, harm, pain given to him. He will throw himself upon shattered rocks and do his best to excel so that he can be given a pat on the head. He was taught that his life is not for living but rather held in abeyance until it can be used and if he should survive, so be it until next time he must be the sacrifice.

“If I seem more interested in Harry’s case it is because no other child I have ever rescued has been the subject of such a pernicious and cruel abuse.”

“I see… poor Harry. So now he can grow up and become himself and only himself.”

“Exactly, he’s hidden so no one can compare him to his father, no one to be sad that he’s not EXACTLY like James. He can be Harry, just Harry. And that’s why I wanted a report on Black. I don’t want him to be expecting James reborn.”

Remus nodded. “I understand and I’ll make sure he does too.”

“Thank you, Mr. Lupin. Now we only have a few more things to discuss for the party.”

Remus nodded and sat back to enjoy the discussion.

* * *
Remus entered the front door of Grimmauld Place carrying a bag of supplies. Right now, he knew that Sirius would be in the library reading another week’s worth of Daily Prophets. He was catching up, slowly but surely. Every day, he would be there with a notepad, taking notes trying to map the information into a sensible form.

Remus smiled and placed the bags on a side table before moving to the library. Opening the doors, he walked to the far end by the windows and sat down next to his lover.

Sirius was engrossed in his reading and note taking. Remus smiled and waited. Twenty minutes later, Sirius finished the section and sat back, eyes falling on his best friend, his mate.

“Remus. Why didn’t you tell me?”

“About?”

“The Werewolf Edicts. We have to do something to get them abolished.”

“Ahhhh ummm, well… I went to visit McGill today. He had some good news.” Remus moved closer, wrapping one arm around Sirius, his flips brushing his lover’s temple.

“We will talk about this later, you can’t distract me so easily.” Sirius grinned, eyes bright “So what’s the good news?”

“McGill has asked me to prepare an informal birthday party for you, on the tenth. He is willing to let Harry be with you from 7:30 in the morning to 7:30 in the evening.”

Sirius stared at his mate for a moment before letting out a barking yelp and grabbed Remus, spinning him wildly. “Are… are you serious? No, I’m Sirius but are you for real?”

“Nope, I’m just a figment of your imagination; the real Remus should be home in a couple hours.”

Sirius turned to face his lover, mouth gaping.

Remus chuckled and walked off. “Oi! So if that’s the good news, what’s the bad?”

“Well, McGill has also invited your cousin Narcissa and her family, as well as Dudley.” Remus held up a hand. “Harry likes Draco and that’s just how it is. Dudley is being introduced to magickal society. Now, Narcissa and Lucius will join us for dinner along with Severus. It is time you remember that you are a Black and family does matter. It doesn’t matter if they are Dark, Light, or Neutral. Family matters.”

Sirius slumped. “But how could Harry like Malfoy’s brat. They were Death Eaters!”

Remus frowned and stared at him with a flat glare. “Strange, I never knew Draco was a Death Eater, considering he wasn’t even born during the war.”

Sirius threw his mate a glare, “Yeah, well his parents were!”

“Of Narcissa we have no proof and well, your parents were down right Dark, Deep Dark, and while you profess your Light choice, you are more towards Neutral than anything. Just because his father may have been a Death Eater is no reason to treat him as if he was a Death Eater himself.”
Sirius blushed and nodded. “You’re right. He’s family and if I want him to learn a different way then it’s up to me, his most fabulous and incredibly awesome cousin.”

Remus smiled gently, getting up to head into the kitchen, one hand brushing against Sirius’ hair. “Good. Why don’t you write Harry and see what he likes to eat, so we can make a special lunch for you and him.”

Sirius barked a laugh and stood up. Remus turned back to getting lunch ready. Maybe Sirius wasn’t back to normal, and likely he never would be but maybe, just maybe they could get him to something better than he was before he went to Azkaban. Maybe they could root out that self-loathing that had almost led to the death of a classmate. Maybe…

* * *

Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry
Severus Snape’s Quarters

3:15 p.m.

McGill stepped out of the fire, fingers twitching gently and causing the soot to fall from him. Turning his head slightly, he realized that Severus was still in class. In fact, he would have just started his N.E.W.T Sixth Years. Moving across the room, Carmus stopped at his beloved’s desk to leave a note and invitation. Exiting the room, he walked swiftly up from the dungeons and over to the stairway leading to the Headmaster’s office. Taking the step two and three at a time, he stopped in front of the Gargoyle and waited. The stone beast stared at him, turning its head as if to get a new perspective, this way and then that. Finally, it stepped aside. Carmus nodded to it, placing on hand on a wing and with a murmured ‘thank you’ went up to the office.

Dumbledore sat in his plush chair, wearing a deep purple robe with neon green rings surrounding chartreuse planet and fuchsia stars. His eyes twinkled over his signature half moon glasses. There were no other chairs.

“Ahh, Mr. McGill, what a surprise to see you today. What may I help you with?”

Carmus nodded and took a relaxed stance in front of the desk. “I come carrying a permission form from Lucius Malfoy for his son to attend a Family Gathering. Under Article 19, certain Family Gatherings being significant to the Health of the Family are considered reason to be excused from classes. One of which is the Birth Remembrance of the Head of the Family. As Draco Malfoy is a minor child and potential Heir to the Black Family through the distaff side, he’s required to be there. My son will also attend, as will Dudley Dursley, and Harry of course.”

Dumbledore sat smiling indulgently until the last three words hit his ears, then the benevolent twinkling turned to sharp as a knife edge glints. “I see.”

“And may I ask why Simon will be going? As far as I know, he is not related in close to the Blacks?”

“Well, because I am and because his best friend is. Plus, with Harry joining us, it would be nice to have more than one other child for him to play with. Family Head Black is looking forward to spending time with his godson but I thought it better to have more than one child around. Plus it will give the Family Head some different people to talk to.”

Dumbledore nodded, “I have heard that you have taken time from your busy schedule to help dear Sirius recover.”
“Yes, Sire Black needs all the help he can get.” Carmus let his eyes travel over the papers on the headmaster’s desk. A few letters, some forms, one peculiar blue page. All he could see of the writer’s name was Wie------ssi. Turning his attention back to the Headmaster, he dropped two letters on his desk.

“I shall retrieve both boys on Wednesday which is the ninth. They have herbology together that ends at three. They will be absent for the rest of Wednesday, and I will return them by Sunday night. I have already sent a missive to them to get their homework for the days they will miss.”

“I see, however, I am not sure that I am comfortable with allowing students under my care to be alone with a man who recently suffered such a deep trauma as Sirius, and feel that…”

“Do you think I would risk my child so? I will be there and I have already arranged for another qualified wizard to be in attendance.”

“I see… may I ask who? I understand that it might be construed as being a bit nosy but for the safety of the children, I am curious.”

“Well, who better than Severus Snape of course?”

Dumbledore eyes widened. “Truly, strange he had not mentioned it to me, yet.”

Carmus nodded, “True, however I do know he was invited and I was planning on him accompanying, though he has an invitation of his own.”

“Truly, Sirius must have changed greatly to have invited someone he was at such odds with.”

“Well, I believe he grew up.”

Dumbledore nodded and looked up as a house-elf popped in. He handed it a letter and leaned back. He smiled at McGill for a few moments before offering him some sweets. Seeing the other man decline, he popped a lemon drop in his mouth and sucked on it contemplatively. “So you are trying to help put their disagreement to rest?”

Carmus smiled. “No, surprisingly, it came from the Head himself. I was surprised when the invitation came but it seems that his time in Azkaban had left him to think much of what choices he had made in life.”

The door opened. Severus Snape strode across the room, his robes billowing. He handed it a letter and leaned back. He smiled at McGill for a few moments before offering him some sweets. Seeing the other man decline, he popped a lemon drop in his mouth and sucked on it contemplatively. “So you are trying to help put their disagreement to rest?”

Carmus smiled. “No, surprisingly, it came from the Head himself. I was surprised when the invitation came but it seems that his time in Azkaban had left him to think much of what choices he had made in life.”

The door opened. Severus Snape strode across the room, his robes billowing. He stopped next to Carmus without looking at him. “You asked for my presence, Headmaster?”

“Yes,” The Headmaster stared at the dark man, eyes focused intently. “I was recently informed that you have received an invitation to Head Black’s Birth Celebrations.”

“Indeed, I was debating whether or not to go, considering our… differences.”

McGill turned to him, “Draco, Simon, Harry, and Dudley are going and I would be pleased to have another qualified adult there.”

Snape turned to him, “And is this your doing?”

“No, surprisingly… when I spoke to Lupin about allowing Harry to join them for the day, he mentioned that Black has finally come to understand that what he did was not just wrong but evil. He committed no less than an attempt at murder. That no matter how Dark his family had been, he… who proclaimed himself saved from the Dark and one of the Light was willing to murder a fellow
student. No matter how he felt about you then, he realizes that was beyond the pale. So this is his acknowledgment of that. That is why I don’t want you to refuse the invitation. It is time to end this Severus.

“Also, it is his way of acknowledging what you did for Harry. For helping me save him from the Dursleys. He knows he failed Harry but it was actually recognition of the fact that no matter how much you hated James, you were willing to set that aside and preserve Harry’s life because he is not James. This led him to understand his own evil deed.

“And finally, it’s time he understands what Dark and Light truly are and the best way for him to do that is to make friends on both sides of the divide. This could prompt understanding between the Dark and Light, so please reconsider.

“Not to mention, both Simon and Draco want you to go.”

Severus stared at him and nodded. “Very well.”

“Thank you, dear boy.” The Headmaster smiled indulgently. “Could you stay a moment longer?”

McGill nodded and turned, smiling at his beloved. “I’ll be here Wednesday, after three. I’ll use my regular floo. The boys will be gone until Sunday.”

Severus nodded once more and turned back to the Headmaster.

* * *

Number 12 Grimmauld Place
Library
8:15 p.m.

A rustle of thick paper as an invitation fluttered its way down the chimney and onto the table next to Sirius’ chair. Sirius placed his book on his lap and reached for the letter. Opening it, he stopped, mouth dropping open and then re-read the name on the invitation. A small croak came from his mouth.

“Siri?” Remus got up from the chair opposite his mate and reached for the invitation reply.

“It’s from Sniv-Snape. He… accepted.”

Remus grinned and sat back. “Good, glad to see you both growing up. By the way, have you sent the letter for Harry to McGill yet?”

“Yeah…”

* * *

Draco stared at his Mabon gift from Simon. It was a circle about a half meter wide cut into eight pie slices by walls. Each one was about three inches high. One of the pie slices had already been filled in. It held three small glass leaves of red, gold, and amber, either transfigured or bought, likely transfigured. The stems were wrapped together with braided ribbons of red, yellow, black with a tag that read, “Will you celebrate with me?”

He wondered if Simon even knew what such a gift meant and more importantly who told him it was a good idea. He moved it carefully back to the box it came in and placed it under his bed. Sitting back up, he headed out of his bedroom and to the study room down the hall. Carefully, he took out
his books, quills, ink, and set up for studying. It was quiet in the study room, only the sound of pages rustling and pens scratching. Suddenly the cloying scent of pansies assaulted Draco’s nose as Pansy Parkinson sat down beside him.

“Draco, what are you doing?”

“What does it look like Parkinson, I’m studying.” Draco tried not to roll his eyes as Parkinson reached towards his books to grab a slim clothbound book; it was odd in that its pages were glowing a soft red.

“Oh, how pretty. What’s this book, Draco?”

Draco watched as she touched it and yelled. It caught the attention of everyone in the room, including the seventh year watching over the study hall. Draco looked up and sneered at her. “It’s my book and I will trust you not to touch what is not yours again, Parkinson.”

The black hair girl turned to face him, eyes wide with pain and mouth turned down in disapproval. “All you had to say was not to touch it, Drakey!”

“I shouldn’t have to. It’s not yours. Now do me a favor and leave, your perfume is turning my stomach. Rotten Mulch isn’t an attractive scent.

Pansy stood up, chair screeching as she stormed out of the room. Draco glanced around, a sneer on his lips. The others went back to their studying while Draco picked up the book and opened it up.

Hey,

*Did you get the letter from your dad? We’re going to Sirius Black’s birthday party. I don’t know how dad is going to swing it. I can’t be there as Harry Potter and Simon McGill, he said not to worry. Anyways, Mr. Black sent me a letter asking me a bunch of questions and what I like to eat. I’ll copy it to you with that neat copy charm you showed me.*

*It’s so strange, the whole Black situation I mean. I know because Dad told me that he was supposed to take care of me but… from everything people tell me about him, he may have been an adult but he wasn’t grown up. Here he had a 15 month old baby to take care of and he runs off for days. He wasn’t in jail until at least 2 days after my parents were attacked but instead, it was more important to go after Pettigrew than protect me. I looked up a history book; they showed a picture of the house, it was in ruins. In his letter he tells me how important and loved I was and still am by him but…*

*Aurora says that he has ‘a major case of arrested development’. In other words, he never grew up. I’m so angry with him. Aurora said it was okay to be angry at him. If it wasn’t for him, I would never have been sent to the Dursleys! I might have met you earlier! I wouldn’t be so short! I know the Dursleys are the one who hurt me but if it wasn’t for his need to kill Pettigrew then I wouldn’t have ever been there! Even if he hadn’t been able to take care of me, there were others who could have. If he wanted to kill Pettigrew so bad, why didn’t he place me with someone else?! Ever since dad told me that we were going, I keep thinking “What if? What if! WHAT IF!”*

*What if he had given me to someone in France, who didn’t care about this whole light/dark crap? What if I hadn’t been starved for most of my life? What if I had been raised as a pureblood? What if I could have learned something about my parents other than what their names were?*
What if I was raised with siblings?

What if?!!!!!

Sorry, not angry with you but I’m so damn angry about it all. Look, I’m going to go… do something else, maybe play chess with Ron. Talk to you later, oh and here’s the letter.

Dear Harry,

I don’t know how much anyone has told you about me. My name is Sirius Orion Black. I was your father James’ best friend. I am your godfather. As for why you lived with your aunt rather than me is my fault. I was so angry at our friend, Pettigrew for betraying Lily, James, and you to the man trying to kill you that I ignored my duties as godfather and allowed another to take care of you. Pettigrew then framed me for his own death and I have been in prison for the past ten years. It has made me realize something. That as a godfather, I have been a most abject failure. My first duty was to make sure you were fine and safe. There is nothing I can do to ever make that up to you. I would however like to try to be a better godfather to you or at least be a friend.

Since I have been released from Azkaban, I have taken over as head of my family and as such my Birthday, if I so choose, is an Event. Traditionally, an Event is a legitimate reason for missing school. So I am inviting you to my Birthday Celebrations. I really would like for you to come, I can’t wait to see you again.

Sincerely,

Sirius Black aka Padfoot

PS: What’s your favorite foods? We can have them at the party!

Draco sat back, a frown marring his face before he packed his books up and headed towards his godfather’s office.

* * *

Severus Snape opened his student record and touched a name. Seeing where the particular student was, he shook his head. He left his quarters and headed up towards Gryffindor Tower. As he stood in the corridor leading to the tower, he pulled out his wand and whispered a spell. The wand spun then stopped, its tip glowing gently. Snape took off in the direction the wand as pointing.

Up ahead he saw a small figure leaning against the cold grey stole sill and looking out on the grounds. Severus moved closer, quietly and wrapped his arm and robe around his godson. Simon stiffened then relaxed as the familiar scent of Severus’ robe enfolded him. Silently, he held onto the boy before turning and gently walking Simon back to his quarters. Draco was on the couch before the fire, head on the arm, drowsing.

“You’re back.” Draco yawned and blinked sleepily.

“Yes, we are. Simon, can you tell me why you were breaking curfew?”

Simon sat on the cough, biting his lip. “I… I’m so… do I really have to go to Black’s birthday party?”

Severus allowed one eyebrow to raise slowly. “Why shouldn’t you go?”

“I…”

Draco moved so that he leaned against his godbrother and murmured sleepily in his ear. “Tell him.
He’s not Aurora but, he will help if he can.”

Simon sighed. “I… I don’t hate him but I’m furious with him. I don’t know if I can be around him. I wish dad hadn’t told him I was coming; he should have asked me before he did. Black’s… if it wasn’t for him, I probably would have had dad but if it wasn’t for him, I wouldn’t have needed dad! If he hadn’t been a spoiled brat and did his damn duty as godfather rather than be a shite, I wouldn’t have been left in the Dursley’s care! Even if he didn’t want to do the job he swore to do, he could have left me with someone who would have beat or starved me! Instead he runs off and gets himself thrown into jail! He’s so fucking STUPID!”

Severus watched as Simon grew louder, his face reddening as he screamed out his anger at his original godfather. Slowly, he leaned forward and took Simon’s hand. “You are right. Black is an idiot. He did fail as your godfather. He is the reason you were stuck in that life. You should be angry and you should yell at him when we see him. Let him understand how you feel.

“And Carmus really should have asked your permission before he promised your attendance. In his defense, he merely wants you to have a wider support network. He wants more people who love you in your life. Carmus is only human and he makes mistakes.

“Tomorrow we’ll write a letter to Carmus.
October 1, 1991

Dear Headmaster Dumbledore,

My name is Wiede Rene Hoher Prinz. I am contacting you because you are the headmaster of one of the most premier schools in Europe. Many years ago, my great uncle moved to England with his wife. They had a child who would have attended your school sometime in the late 20’s or early 30’s of this century. I would like to know if you had any yearbooks that I may come to view.

Also, I have become aware that the world renowned Potions Master Severus Snape is working at your school. I have tried to contact him numerous times but he has not responded. If it would not be an imposition, I would ask you to place me in contact with him for there are some potions of exceptional difficulty that can be brewed to help us find our missing relative. It is important to my family that we find these lost members due to a matter of lineage. If you can give us any help, it would be appreciated it.

Sincerely,

Wiede Rene Hoher Prinz

* * *

A decoded Malfoy Family Message
October 1, 1991
Family,

Many of you will hear many tales about what is going on in England. Here is what you need to know. Dumbledore’s manipulations have been revealed by the current McGill.

1) He has tampered with the curriculum in an effort to keep the Muggleborn and Muggle raised children from knowing their duties and responsibilities.
2) He has tampered with the Ministry produced introduction guide, substituting instead an edited version that omits the traditions of our cultures, the knowledge of duties, responsibilities, and politics that they supposed to know.
3) He has not only allowed but supported abuse of children to make them more malleable to his plans
4) He willingly placed the Potter Heir with abusive Muggle relations and knowingly allowed said abuse so that he could use the child.
5) Placed at least one child under a compulsive web to force her befriend the Potter Heir, trust Dumbledore implicitly, and to report all things to him.
6) Supported a Pureblood family with money stolen from the Potter accounts with the goal of making them beholden to him and to convince the Potter Heir to listen to them. Said family has already renounced Dumbledore’s protection.
7) Willingly allowed the Black Heir and now Lord to go to Azkaban Prison for a decade despite knowledge that he was innocent.

Do not think these crimes will go unpunished. An Alliance of Shadows has been formed of the Old Purebloods on both sides as well as Neutrals. This Alliance is also involved in what is called an “Alumni Association” as well as a “Parent Teacher Student Association” to bring attention to Dumbledore’s machinations as well as educating those Muggleborns who never got the proper learning as mandated. It may take a couple years to destroy him totally however it is moving.
As well, if someone representing the McGills of the Alliance should contact you, inform me immediately and accept. There are many connections to be garnered as one in an alliance with the McGills. As well, any information should be delivered immediately via family code.

Purity above all,

Lucius Abraxus Malfoy

* * *

On the front of the HAARP newsletter:

October 1st

Welcome to the first newsletter of the Hogwarts Alumni, Associates, Relatives, and Parents Association. Please, if you know of any alumni or relatives of alumni who we are not in touch with, let them know about us.

Now for the information that you will really need. Inside are articles on various Wizarding topics including some written by children still at Hogwarts. This newsletter will come out once monthly for now and all submission for the newsletter must be submitted by the last twenty-seventh of the previous month so that this can come out the first of each month.

Sincerely,

Robert Smith
Managing Editor
Head of the Muggle Rights and Responsibilities Office

Xenophilius Lovegood
Consulting Editor
Editor of the Quibbler

Sebastian Cuffe
Consulting Editor
Editor of the Daily Prophet

Schedule for Remaining Governor’s Meeting for this year. All meeting will take place in the Golden Dove in London. Each meeting begins promptly at 4:00pm. Please tap name for directions. If you wish to speak to the board during the meeting, please send an owl or a letter to:

Hogwarts Board
1245 W Owllet Road
W12 7TP

Dates:
11/08/91
01/02/92
02/03/92
04/17/92
06/09/92

* * *
At Breakfast
Great Hall

October 7, 1991

Dear Father,

Severus suggested that I write to you in the hopes that you can explain why I have to go to Sirius Black’s Birthday Celebration. I… I don’t know if I can be so kind to him. Every time I remember that it is because of his stupid self absorbed and cruel personality, he was more concerned for vengeance than his fifteen month old godson. Because of him, I spent three thousand one hundred forty seven days with those…

How do I forgive him? Aurora said that he suffered from arrested development, that he was coddled and never forced to grow up until recently. She pointed out that for all the time I was with the Dursleys and even after I was rescued by you, he was still stuck in Azkaban. She talked about how horrible it was and even now how he’s still recovering but… Dad, I’m so… angry yet if he had done the right thing then I wouldn’t have you.

Draco keeps worrying about me, because every time I think about him or Dumbledore I get angry again. Severus seems to understand and knows when I don’t need to talk. Aurora says I need to work through the anger.

Must I go?

Your son,
Simon

* * *

October 7, 1991

To my fellow members.

Welcome to the Alliance of Shadows. I encourage everyone to seek more members based on the principles of the Alliance.

This Alliance is not a club to destroy Muggleborns nor condemn Purebloods. This Alliance’s purpose is to further the health, safety, and vigor of the Wizarding World. To this end we will welcome new blood while still maintaining our culture.

Once it was made clear that the Muggleborns did not dismiss their responsibilities nor were they intending to show disdain or disregard but rather it was a concerted effort to not let them know of their duties in a way to fracture our culture, then it was easier to forgive their years of disregard. It is my hope that the Pureblood members of this Alliance will take steps to help the Muggleborns become part of this world.

As one of the members of the Alliance that have allies in both world, I was part of the committee who met to discuss with the Minister, the head of Muggle Rights and Responsibilities office, the head of Magickal Law Enforcement, and the managing Editors of both the Prophet and the Quibbler, as well as Lord Malfoy to discuss how we should integrate the Muggleborn alumni of Hogwarts.

To this end, the committee has decided to institute two major operations. The first would be to contact all Muggleborn and/or Muggle raised alumni with an offer to take their place in our society and in the Wizengamot based on their completion of an in-depth Wizarding Culture course. The second initiative is for those who will attend Hogwarts in one year. It involves introducing the family
to the Wizarding world earlier as well as pairing each Muggle family with Wizarding family. The Muggle family will spend time with the Wizarding family and each will trade holiday celebrations to further understand the culture of both. Summer vacations will be split among between each.

Also during the summer before they begin at Hogwarts, the students will go to a summer session to help them understand the fundamentals of Magick. As for the safety concerns, they are being addressed with magickal oaths for the safety of the family.

There is one more step we are taking but it needs to be approved by the Hogwarts board. At the moment, Muggle Studies is taught by Miss Chasity Burbage. She is brilliant in her own way but she has never lived among Muggles for any length of time. We are proposing two mandatory classes for the first three years. Wizarding culture for those Muggle raised and Muggle Culture for Wizarding raised. I do have two people in mind for those positions but I need to speak to each one before I release their names.

Many of you know that the Alliance is opposing Dumbledore. We do not do this out of any preference for the Light nor out of any support of the Dark but because he has damaged the Wizarding World by insisting on the false definitions of Light and Dark and perverting the Magick of the children under his care. Attached to this letter are several sworn affidavits of the children who have been damaged by his decision to manipulate the Wizarding World as well as those who have suffered from the fall out. Share these with others if you think it shall help.

Yours between the Dark and the Light,

Carmus McGill

* * *

October 8, 1991

Dear Cousin,

I have taken the information you have given me and attempted to locate the child you are searching for. The information you gave was very sketchy however we have traced several child from around that time period and the area. As you know it was common practice at the time to suppress the magickal aura and power of a child to smuggle them out of the country. Considering the time period and the area, there were less than 200 children of the appropriate age +/- 6 months. Of those 179 children, one hundred and five were male. That leaves us with 74 female children. Now it is possible that someone used a sex change potion on the child but not likely. If we can not find the child then we will consider this.

Of the seventy four female children, fifty eight of them were claimed by family. That leaves sixteen female children. Four have died without issue and their bodies located and a sample taken from their remaining bones. The test, while it did give us information on their birth family, proved them not to be the child you are looking for. In accordance with policy, we will locate and send notices to the families of the newly located deceased.

Given that the consequences of a long term suppression of magick usually results in an early death, it is unlikely that the child still is alive. We are looking at historical records, marriage certificate, and death notices to locate the child. By now the binding should have broken. As you know, such a binding can be passed from parent to child but rarely to grandchild or great grandchild, Magick usually eats away at the binding until it falls by the second descendant generation. It is for this reason
that I do not believe that the child or their children know of the magickal world. If they had then they would have gotten the binding removed the first time a mediwizard scanned them.

This of course leaves twelve children. It would be amazing to me that the father of the child would not seek to find his child and considering the strength of his power, if the child was in Great Britain, I do believe they would have been found. Bound or not. Tracing the dozen girls was not so hard. Two went to America, one to Australia, three stayed in Great Britain, and six were traced to mainland Europe. Five to Switzerland and one to Italy. We can discount the three in Great Britain though I have included their dossiers. As for the six in mainland Europe I don’t believe it’s any of them because the father is wide traveled and would have surely searched Europe first. That leaves the three who went overseas.

First and who I think is most likely is Violet Emma Reese. She was adopted by a Muggle family. Captain Alan Edward Reese and Ivy Elizabeth Lance Reese. He was a captain in the United States Army brought over to participate in an exchange program. She eventually had three children. Her folder is green.

Second and next likely, is Joanna Ruth Green. Adopted by Eric Randall Green and Ruth Janice Eaves Green, her family evacuated after their house was bombed during the Blitz. They moved to America, New Mexico, to be with Janice’s family. She eventually had two children.

Third is Ellen Lewis who was adopted by Augustus Eider Lewis and Jennifer Anne Randall Lewis. Her adoptive parents lived in a small community on the outskirts of Sydney. She eventually had six children.

As far as we can tell, none of their children were magickal. We will proceed to their grandchildren. However, America is so large it would not be surprising if a sealed child was lost. So I will start with that one. She was Violet Emma Reese adopted by an American serviceman (Reese, Alan) his wife (Ivy).

I hope to have more information for you when next I write. Since it will be relatively easier to track those in mainland Europe and there is living family that would need to be informed of the other three children I mentioned, I will, in the meantime, send Geo to Italy to track down Isabella Bruscii and Willie to check for those three left in Great Britain, he will start with Emily Rose Wynter. I will also be sending Anissa to check for the five sent to Switzerland.

Yours in blood,

Sofia Angeliqute Sestras-McGill
Private Investigator

* * *

October 8, 1991

Dear Simon,

I understand why you are angry and why you don’t want to go but I wish you to go. Let me explain to you why. I am the McGill but most don’t know the extent of my influence and I really rather not flex my influence too early. It is to our benefit if Dumbledore and his cronies don’t realize who and what we truly are. However, your Harry Potter persona is still fragile as Dumbledore is still trusted in many ways. Even your Simon McGill persona needs some extra layering of protection. This is why I
have not asked you to hide your relationship with the Malfoys nor with Severus, my dear one. They both give you a layer of protection. Lucius is influential in the Ministry as you are his son’s godbrother, he feels a small need to protect you. Narcissa is a power in Society and will protect you for the same reason plus she likes you. Severus at Hogwarts, because he sees you so often and is very familiar with Dumbledore’s magic that means Dumbledore can not cast any subtle web on you. Especially now it’s revealed that he did so to Ms. Granger.

 Sending you to this party as both McGill and Harry involves the Lord Black in your protection. As his godson, he won’t be denied his right to protection and will in fact defy Dumbledore. The money, power, and will of a Black is hard to deny. Remember Narcissa was born a Black. Now that Sirius is aware and maturing, he’s more a danger to Dumbledore and the ‘Light’ than ever. Dedicated to you, in both your personas, he is a powerful ally to protect you.

 As for how he is tied to you in your Simon McGill persona, well… remember it if wasn’t for me, he’d still be in Azkaban. This created a debt, one he will be honor bound to. He will fulfill it by defending you both as a friend of his godson and as the child of the one who rescued him.

 Everything I do is for your protection, my son. There may come a day when I can not protect you from something because to do so would be to harm you. I am providing you with others on whom you can call when needs must.

 Now for you anger… yes, you should be angry at him but I would tell you this: Forgive him. Not for him but for you. Realize that Aurora was right, he was a selfish child. He never should have been made your godfather. Look at how spoiled Draco is. Now combine that attitude with someone who was never had Severus in his life and instead was encouraged to see life as nothing but fun. Imagine if Dumbledore had been Draco’s godfather. Can you see what a stupid mess that person would be? That was Sirius. Stupid. Selfish. Childish. Never held to account. Told that because he rebelled against his family, he was special and proper. Told that he should dismiss everything they taught him since they were Dark it meant everything he was taught was EVIL. Which is not true. He learned much the same manners, procedures, meditations as the Light Purebloods but was told to ignore everything and be irresponsible. That was the life he was living.

 Now he is older and wiser. Give him a chance because he is not the idiot he was.

 With all my Love,

 Carmus McGill

* * *

October 10, 1991
To Lady Augusta and Lord Neville Longbottom,

Good day, my name is Sofia Angelica Sestras and I work for the Argus Investigations. While pursuing a case of a missing child during the Second World War and the War with Grindelwald, I found several deceased unclaimed or lost children. I naturally did tests on the bones of deceased to see if it was the child I was looking for. It was not, however it was the bones of a young woman who died at less than thirty years old due to the consequences of the magick-binding she had undergone in an effort to smuggle her out of a war zone in France. I would like if you would come in so that I may give you all the information about her and how to locate her.

Sincerely,
October 10, 1991

To Lord Black,

Good day, my name is Sofia Angelica Sestras and I work for the Argus Investigations. While pursuing a case of a missing child during the Second World War and the War with Grindelwald, I found several deceased unclaimed or lost children. I naturally did tests on the bones of deceased to see if it was the child I was looking for. It was not, however it was the bones of a young woman who died at less than fifty years old due to the consequences of the magick-binding she had undergone in an effort to smuggle her out of a war zone in France. I would like if you would come in so that I may give you all the information about her and how to locate her.

Sincerely,
Sofia Angelica Sestras
Private Investigator I-10
Argus Investigations

October 10, 1991

To Madam Finnegan,

Good day, my name is Sofia Angelica Sestras and I work for the Argus Investigations. While pursuing a case of a missing child during the Second World War and the War with Grindelwald, I found several deceased unclaimed or lost children. I naturally did tests on the bones of deceased to see if it was the child I was looking for. It was not, however it was the bones of a young woman who died at less than thirty-five years old due to the consequences of the magick-binding she had undergone in an effort to smuggle her out of a war zone in her.

Sincerely,
Sofia Angelica Sestras
Private Investigator I-10
Argus Investigations

October 10, 1991

To Lord and Lady Malfoy,

Good day, my name is Sofia Angelica Sestras and I work for the Argus Investigations. While pursuing a case of a missing child during the Second World War and the War with Grindelwald, I found several deceased unclaimed or lost children. I naturally did tests on the bones of deceased to see if it was the child I was looking for. It was not, however it was the bones of a young woman who died at less than forty years old due to the consequences of the magick-binding she had undergone in an effort to smuggle her out of a war zone in France. I would like if you would come in so that I may give you all the information about her and how to locate her.
Sincerely,
Sofia Angelica Sestras
Private Investigator I-10
Argus Investigations
Strange and Black Happenings

Chapter Notes

If there is anyone interested in helping me improve this via beta, drop me a line. Thanks.

Wednesday
October 9, 1991
3:14 pm
Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry
Gryffindor Common Room

Simon leaned back and wondered if Draco would like the new set up. Apparently several of the others had taken Draco's reaction to heart. A few days of… asking Professor McGonagall about changing things had borne fruit. The common room had been given an update. Now it was separated into several sections and there was less fighting about room.

Cool hands reached forward and covered his eyes.

"Draco!" Simon turned around and grinned happily. "What do you think?"

Draco turned around slowly and nodded. "Better. The reds aren't so… disturbing."

Simon grinned. "Each year got to decorate a section."

"That explains the different styles."

Simon pointed towards one corner. The furniture there was leather and the colors were burgundy and brass. The two walls that made up the corner were covered with books. The tables were large and seating for up to ten. Under the windows, they had additional lights from burgundy shaded banker's lamps.

"That's the study corner, the fifth years did it. I guess the idea of having a place to study especially for OWLs was a good thing."

Draco nodded.

Simon placed his hand on Draco's shoulder and turned him gently. "Across from them, as far as possible is the Game center. If we want to play Exploding Snap or Wizard's Chess. It has one way silencing charms. We first years got to do that."

Draco nodded, noticing some squashy looking large bags in red and gold of all combinations. It was riotous but for a game corner, that was fine.

Simon turned him again and pointed to another corner. "That's Quidditch Quarters, for anything Quidditch related, trophies or photos or even strategy planning. The fourth years did that, with the help of the Quidditch team."

Draco moved closer and noticed that there were figurines of all the Quidditch teams and wondered if they could do something similar in the Slytherin dorms. The colors here were blood red and bright
gold still but the demarcation of each corner confined the colors to a section rather than a jumbled mix. Here it was brightly lit though there were curtains to seal off the section.

Simon pointed to the last corner. "That's the quiet corner, the bookshelves have Muggle and Wizarding literature in them. That was the second years' contribution."

Here the couches and chairs were wood and plush in sedate colors under a large window. Draco nodded, it would be better to read in comfort here. He looked at Simon and raised one eyebrow.

"Of course there are one way silencing charms. It's on all corners. And the center is the common room for everything else. The sixth and seventh years helped redo it. Do you like it?"

Draco nodded. "Much better. I noticed the new rugs and carpet. Also the couches are now solid colors with patterned pillows. Much better. I knew all this training would introduce culture to you."

Simon rolled his eyes and several others laughed.

Hermione stood up. "Well, we may not see eye to eye about a lot of things but you did have a point about the common room, Draco. One day I want to see the Slytherin's common room though."

Draco nodded, "Perhaps next weekend, but for now, Simon are you ready?"

The Gryffindors in the common room turned to Simon, who nodded at his godbrother. "Yeah. See everyone on Monday!"

Ron looked up, "But— where ya going mate? We have a meeting… Saturday!"

Simon shrugged. "The prefects know how to get into the room, and so do other, like Hermione. Tomorrow is Sirius Black's birthday. He's invited Draco myself, Dudley, and Harry to join him. It's only going to be close family because well…"

Draco wrapped one arm around Simon's waist. "He is still recovering from the ordeal that the corrupt ministry and Dumbledore have forced him into. So we are keeping it small to not over stress him."

Hermione nodded quietly. "I understand. Perhaps you can convey my best wishes to Lord Black and Gryffindor's regrets of him being let down by all of Gryffindor."

Draco nodded, pleased. "I shall. Ready, Simon?"

Simon nodded, before waving at his dorm mates and followed Draco outside. They stayed silent as they headed down the steps to the dungeons. With practiced ease they entered Snape's quarters and sat on the small couch before the fire. Draco tugged Simon until he had laid his head on his godbrother's shoulder, the two of them just let themselves rest until it was time to go.

Several minutes later the door opened and Snape entered, his robes billowing about him. He stopped before the two of them and stared.

"Simon, it will be fine. Carmus has a plan and I will be there. Draco and I will be there."

Simon nodded, eyes still closed. "Yes, Severus."

Draco shrugged, dislodging Simon and stood up. "I'll go first so I can catch Simon when he falls out."

Simon turned to him, eyes narrowing. "BRAT!"
Draco smirked and reached up to the floo powder on the mantel. "McGillis House."

Severus handed Simon his bag and pushed him towards the fire. Simon reached up and grabbed some powder. "McGillis House!"

He hated Flooing, he though as he spun through the system only to have it spit him out towards Draco who was braced to catch him. Simon heard his father laugh and turned towards him. Carmus stood looking at them. "Welcome home, son."

Simon grinned and walked over to his father who hugged him tight as Severus came out of the Floo.

"Now that we are all here, let's go get a snack. Dudley should be home soon and Draco, you will be spending the night. Your mother already sent over a selection for you to choose from." Carmus said, his hand on his son's back as they left the entrance room.

October 9, 1991
Wednesday
11:18 p.m.
McGillis House

The bed dipped as Severus slid in. Carmus reached out blindly and stroked on slim ribcage.

"Will you tell him?"

Severus breathed out as he fidgeted into a familiar position. "I do not know."

"He won't appreciate you hiding things from him." Carmus slid down and turned to face his beloved. "I'm just afraid."

"Of Black?"

"Yes, he won't like you being so close to Harry. He is still… a bit… dotty."

"Then perhaps I should not go?" Severus returned thickly.

"No, he has to face what he did. As much as I despise Lucius for bringing you to Voldemort, I hate Black for making you fear. That night, it was so thick, so rich, so fluid. It dripped off you like thick dark treacle. Worse, I could see Malfoy and the others wanting to cling to you, to suck your pain and anger, your fear into them and delight off it. Yes, the dark is about emotions but there are emotions of good and emotions of evil. We can feed off love or we can feed off hate. We can feed off security and happiness or we can feed off fear and misery. The days you felt full of love, Sean and I reveled in it. It nourished us, especially when we knew it was because of us. That night it clung and dripped off you and we could barely wade through it but we did because that kind of horrid mess can only be dispelled through feeding you our love. Sean was a Dark Wizard, he was never ashamed of it."

Severus leaned forward and placed on hand on Carmus face, just cupping his cheek. "If I tell him now…"

"Perhaps not now but soon, he knows his parents died of a prophecy."

"Let me sleep on it?"

"Of course, my love." Carmus moved closer to him and with a wave of his hand extinguished the lights.
Simon stretched on his bed, feeling his joints loosen. Sitting up, he realized he was home once more. Grinning, he looked at the clock, it was only just past seven in the morning. Slipping out, he grabbed his dark grey robe and slipped into his a pair of soft slippers. Tying it tight, he slipped out of his room and headed for the one across from him. Knocking once, he slipped in.

Draco stared at him, hair still spiked from sleep.

"McGill, didn't anyone ever tell you to wait before coming in?"

Simon grinned and shrugged. "Nope, and you know why."

Draco nodded once and rubbed his eyes. "What do you want then?"

"Help? I don't know what Black expects but remember last night Dad mentioned that he had told them that I was being raised by a nice family somewhere where they couldn't find me."

"Yes, and?"

"Well, I figure they'd be the type to teach me proper manners and proper clothing, even if they didn't belong to the upper crust of pureblood society."

Draco raised one eyebrow. "True, so what do you need help with?"

"What do I wear?"

Draco grinned slowly. "That my very dear friend, I have no trouble helping with."

"Somehow I figured that. Great, I'll go tell Dudley, you'll be glad to help us!" Simon spun around and rushed out.

"OI! I never said I'd help…" Draco groaned. "Damn brat."

Resigned, Draco got up and started getting ready for the day.

Twenty minutes later, hair brushed and shower done, he dressed in the clothing that he had picked out the night before. First came an underrobe of sparkling bright silver, over it lay a tabard of rich black velvet with a high collar that rested just under his chin. Sitting on the bed, he put on black trousers and silver socks. Next came the shiny leather heeled boots. Standing up, he looked at himself in the mirror, adjusting what needed it and over that was placed dark green, almost black robes with delicate silverly vines embroidered along the hem tangling with runes. The two wide lapels that ran the length of the robe from hem to collar and circled the neck were in silver as well. Finally, he pulled on gloves of silver. The last thing he pulled out was a light chain that worked as a choker with dragon claws on each end. The claws held the Malfoy crest on a medallion between them. Satisfied with what he was wearing, he packed a back with a set of jeans, a Slytherin shirt, sweater, and his broom.

Leaving his room, he headed across the hall to Simon's and knocked. The door opened to show Simon and Dudley. The Muggle was sitting on Simon's bed while Simon held the door open. Simon's eyes ran down and back up.
"You're kidding?"

Draco signed. "I am not. We will start out in these clothes but we'll pack a bag with regular day off clothes. He'll probably show us to a room where we can change into them. Then we put this stuff back on for the formal dinner before we come back but to not wear such is to give disrespect to the head of the family that we are visiting. Even if Black himself doesn't get it, that doesn't mean we don't do it. We give him the proper respect because we know better even if he doesn't, do you understand, Simon? Dudley?"

Dudley shook his head. Simon frowned.

Draco sighed. "Look, at school most of the students don't like Professor Snape, right? But they still call him Professor Snape because no matter how he acts, we know how to act properly. Does it matter than Professor Snape may not be acting the way we think a teacher should act? No, we do it because we know better."

Simon nodded. "Yeah, but he's not that bad. He's a bit harsh!"

"True, but he isn't really abusive though his tongue is a bit sharp."

Dudley followed the conversation with a frown then shrugged. In the past month, he had lost a good bit of weight. "Do I even have anything like that in my closet?"

"Probably, and in Potter colors which are bright robin's egg blue, royal red, and bright gold. Simon, have you ever seen the Potter crest?"

Simon shook his head.

"I'll try to find some of it later. Right now though, since you are going to this thing as 'Harry', we need to find some formal clothes for you." He beckoned both of them over to Simon's closet and pushed aside all the casual clothes to find several sets covered in tan drop cloths tied at the bottom with the curved handle of the hanger sticking out of the top.

Draco pulled one forward and flipped over a tag. Holding it up for them, he showed them the tag. On it, it listed every item and in what order it was to be put on. The one he had was in McGill colors.

"You can't wear that or he'll know that you are living as a McGill. Listen up, because this is an important lesson in Pureblood culture. The colors you wear are important. Most crests have two main colors with one accent color. You would think this limits the number of combinations but not really. Jewel or metal tones for the accents and the two primary colors come in many shades. The Malfoy family uses a dark verdigris green and jet black with antique silver. The Black family uses jet black, pure white, and bright silver. The Potter family uses as I said a bright blue much like robin's egg or sky blue, royal red, and bright gold. The McGill family uses a bright grass green with black and brushed silver. Questions so far?"

"I've seen the McGill shield. It has green on both sides, light on top and darker on the bottom on one side, and vice versa on the other side, with a border of black and an outer border of silver, and three linked circles. Don't the circles count?"

Draco shook his head. "No, not really because the circles are not fixed. For your personal device you could use a trefoil of different metals or just one, but what is fixed is the divided shield, and the colors on the edge. Your personal device is used to describe you. In the Muggle world, I believe the device is limited by your rank in family, birth order, and such, but not here. In the Wizarding world, it is merely your personal device. And no one is allowed to use the same device with that shield so
it's unique. I think it's custom for McGills to use the three metals to symbolize the three worlds they consider themselves part of. Magical, Muggle, and Half-bloods.

"So this outfit, is in the McGills colors. Grass Green and Black, with accents of silver. Dudley could wear this if he was trying to say that he denies any connection to the Potters. It would be foolish especially considering what his family is on trial for but he could. Better would be if he wore something similar to this but on the edges on the front lapels was a twisted band of red and blue in the Potter colors and the runes on the bottom to be in the gold of the Potters. It shows that while he honors the family that took him in, he still acknowledges the Potters as his family.

"Alternatively, do the opposite. Dress in Potter colors with a twisted braid of McGill colors. In fact that would be better because it shows that he places the Potters above the McGills. Acknowledging his fostering as the same time showing that he is part of the Potter family. Considering what his family has said and what's been put in the papers, people including Black will see it as him giving up the evil of the Dursley's and embracing his heritage."

Draco watched as what he said sunk into Dudley. Giving the larger boy a bit of a stare, he turned back to the closet. Moving a couple of hangers, he came to one that he pulled out. Laying it on the bed, he unknotted the bottom and pushed it up to reveal a set of robes similar to his own but they were a rich blood red with slim blue lapels and bright gold stitching. Instead of leaves there were lions gamboling all over.

Simon stared at them shocked. "No way. I have to wear something that bright?"

"Better you than me." Dudley replied.

Draco smirked. "Don't forget that you are going to wear something similar with even more colors!"

Dudley groaned and sank back on the bed.

"Come on, did you both already have your shower?" After twin nods, he clapped his hands together in excitement. "Good. Start getting dressed, Simon Harry and I'll take Dudley to find his own outfit."

Simon groaned and collapsed back onto his bed as his godbrother and cousin ran out of the room.

Twenty minutes later, Simon came down the stairs, his soft red robes whispering, he had been able to find one that wasn't so busy, the lions merely at the bottom and around the cuffs. Each lion was holding the tail of the previous between two paws. Looking into the dining room, he shook his head. Everyone was dressed in high fashion like himself. Except Carmus' looked more comfortable.

"Wow… ummm we're a colorful bunch." Simon dropped into his seat as Draco winced.

"Simon, we don't flop into our seat at the table, we sit down."

Simon stared at the other boy.

"True. Sit up better and eat, then we'll glamour you to look like how they expect you to appear." Camus said softly. "It will be fine, and we'll all remember to call you 'Harry', alright?"

Simon nodded and started to eat.

Lucius casually stepped from the flames and waited for Narcissa to follow. As she stepped from the
flames, a small wandless spell twitched her clothing and any soot fell to the ground. Before them stood a house-elf. It was dressed neatly and cleanly in a tea towel tunic.

"Masters be waiting in the dining room with the children. They be having breakfast. Please follow." It said then turned to lead them to the dining room.

Lucius stared at the small thing and tried not to be insulted but he realized that in his own way McGill was not trying to be insulting while at the same time realizing that McGill knew he would feel insulted to be met by a servant, one who doesn't even announce its name. Biting back his feelings he followed the servant to the dining room. As before Carmus was at its head and Severus at its foot. A large child who was obviously the Dursley child sat to McGill's right, and next to him was… Harry Potter. To McGill's left and a position of honor was Draco.

They all stood as the older Malfoys stepped into the room. A small bow from each male and Carmus stepped forward.

"Lady Malfoy, you look stunning in that dress. Like a star come to earth herself. Please join us for breakfast. I feared to send the children over to Black's without even a bite to eat. Though I told them not to hold their own breakfast, I'm sure the children won't mind a second breakfast." Carmus led her to the chair beside her son and pulled it out. "It's just seven so we'll be there in time."

Thursday
October 10, 1991
12 Grimmauld Place
London

Sirius leaned against the old varnished honey oak door and sighed. He thought about the letter Harry had sent him and Harry was right. He had screwed up big time. McGill was right, there would be so much he would have to do to even earn Harry's time, though he was coming to the Celebration. Now because of the visits from Narcissa, he understood more about his family now than when he lived with them. The information that McGill had given him about his brother. About how Reg had died. About how Reg had loved him so much. So much that he had gone against the family and died for it. Now… his room would become Harry's.

He entered the room which wasn't all green though he had kept the green rugs that covered the floors which were the same color as the door. He had lightened it to more of a grass green. The walls were a soft sky blue while the baseboards were a grass green as well. The large bed was of wood the same as the floor but the carved headboard had been replaced with a stylized 'H' with the Black crest to the left and the Potter crest to the right. The bed had royal blue curtains and comforter with silver brooms zipping around. It was so different from how Reg had his own room.

"Reg. I was stupid. I let him fool me. I let them convince me that Dark was Evil. Mom was evil. Dad wasn't. Mom was crazy and I left you with them, with her. I failed you as a big brother and I failed Harry as a god father. I'm can never make that up to you but hopefully I can to Harry. I've redone the room for him. For now, he's my heir. I'm so sorry Reg. I love you."

Sirius straightened up and took a letter from his pocket. It was thick heavy parchment tied with a black ribbon and sealed with light gray wax with silver flecks in it. In the wax was stamped the Black family seal. Letting it fall to the heavy oak desk with a sigh, he turned from the room and headed down to wait for McGill, his cousins, and the children.
similarly to himself but in black, white, and silver. His cuffs adorned with what looked like silver
dogs. Remus stood next to him, dressed in a matching outfit save for the underrobe being a warm
brown and brown wolves on his trim. Nodding, he held his hand out to Sirius.

"Lord Black, may I congratulate you on our betrothal."

"Thank you. It is one of the bet choices I have made as of late."

"Indeed." Carmus turned towards Remus. "Blessings to you and may your life be well."

Remus nodded and thanked him.

"Please excuse my bluntness Lord Black but before the rest get here I thought we should have a talk.
Harry will be here, do not worry, he is coming with Draco and his family, Severus, and Dudley. He
has tried hard to forgive Dudley as Dudley only did as he was taught. He feels that Dudley deserves
a second chance. So against my better judgment we will be giving him on and it, as much as it pains
me to say it, seems like he is really doing better. And how are you doing? With Aurora?"

Sirius sighed, "Better I think. She said that she couldn't really help me because my case wasn't her
specialty, so she gave my case to Her sister, Eos. But, it is getting better. The nightmares aren't as
bad and I don't forget when I am so much anymore."

"Very good. Now one more thing about Harry, then I'll ask them to come. He's not happy with you,
so if he gets angry at you and yells at you, don't take it too harsh. As he sees it, everything that's
happened to him has been because of one decision you made. When you gave Harry to Hagrid to
take to Dumbledore. I know Hagrid said that people were out looking for you but if you knew that
you had not betrayed your friends, what did you fear. Why didn't you demand Veritaserum or
demand to give a penseive testimony in open court? You were so consumed by anger and a desire to
vengeance that you allowed Dumbledore to paint you as someone out of control. Why did you not
take Harry to Dumbledore or better yet retreat to one of the properties settled on you with your birth,
they could not stripped from you even upon being disowned. You could have locked down the
wards there."

Carmus paused, breathing deeply. "And I could not tell him why you did not. He is angry at you,
justifiably angry."

Sirius nodded. "I know. I screwed up and my mistakes don't just affect me, it hurt harry. It hurt
Remus. It hurt people I didn't even know because it allowed Dumbledore to run roughshod over
them. There is no excuse, no reason I can give him."

Carmus nodded. "No there isn't. I told him it was because you were immature and you trusted
Dumbledore but he was still angry."

Remus lifted his hand and gently massaged Sirius' neck. "We understand. I have no intention of
leaving Sirius alone with Harry today. While he is getting better, I understand why you would be
cautious. Thank you for arranging this."

Carmus stared of them before nodded. Turning, he held out his hand and a soft silver mist floated up
from his palm to for a small striped bristly wild boar. With a snarl, it leapt up and away.

Severus stared at the three boys bickering over some inconsequential thing when the fire flared green
and a hooded person stepped out of the fire. Warned by Carmus last night, he didn't react. Lucius
tensed but stopped when Severus didn't move. The figure moved towards the boys before dropping
their hood. 'Harry' jumped up as he looked at the newcomer. Turning to Draco, he squeaked.
"Do I really look like that?!"

"Of course you do, 'Harry'! You see this face every morning." 'Simon' replied.

"Yeah, but it's different when I look at myself from the outside."

Draco laughed.

"Well, come on. Andromeda, Ted, and Nymphadora are already there."

A silvery stripped wild boar entered the room, approaching Severus. Severus reached out to it, listening carefully before it up, he reached up to the urn of floo powder.

"Lucius, you and Narcissa first. Then Draco with Harry. Simon with Dudley. Then myself. You are going to Grimmauld Place."

Lucius gave a nod and offered his arm to his wife. Together they stepped over to the fireplace. Taking some powder, he cast it in the fire before saying loudly, "Grimmauld Place."

After they disappeared Draco took Harry's hand and tugged him over. A quick shout and they disappeared into the flames. Simon took Dudley's hand gently.

"Don't be afraid, Dudley. Floo does not hurt. The powder turns the flames green to show that they are not real, green is the color of life. Once they turn green, it take five minutes or a destination for the flames to turn back to yellow. It will be okay, just hold tights, because it's much like a roller coaster. If you fall out at the end, it's okay. It take a while to come out standing up, just don't fight it. Alright?"

Dudley nodded, clutching his spare clothes bag in one sweaty palm. Simon reached for the Urn and pulled out some powder. Tossing it in, he pulled Dudley into the flames and called out their destination carefully.

The flames roared up as Dudley gasped and a sudden pressure. Simon grinned as they zipped through fireplaces, a giggle erupting from the larger boy before they tumbled out onto the floor of the Floo Room. Simon helped him up.

"We made it."

Harry smiled.

Carmus smiled and flicked a couple fingers until the soot left their clothes. "Once Severus gets here...

The fire flared once more and Severus stepped out gracefully.

A house elf in the Black Family livery. "I be Hammy. My Master be coming."

As the door opened, Hammy disappeared and for the first time in ten years Sirius Black and Harry Potter met.

Harry stared at the two men in the doorway. The one in front wasn't as tall as his father but the one behind him was just as tall. They both wore black, white, and silver.

Carmus moved to take his son's hand. "Harry, this is Lord Sirius Black, head of the Ancient and Noble Family of Black and also your godfather. Behind him is his fiancee, soon to be Consort Lord

Harry grit his teeth and stepped forward. "Thank you for inviting us, Lord Black. May this day be the start of a special and honored year for you."

Sirius took a deep breath. "Thank you, young Lord. Know that you are always welcome in my house and in my life. As your godfather, know that though I have hurt you by my actions and inactions, I swear now and forever to place your welfare first and foremost."

Harry stepped back, letting Draco wrap his arm around his friend. "Why?"

Sirius looked at Remus before nodding. "That… is both hard and easy to explain. Let's get out of the floo room and head into the sitting room. Andromeda and her family are there and there are many apologies and questions to get out the way. This way, you all get to ask them, without me having to explain it more than once. I deserve every bit of anger and disappointment you have towards me Harry. I do, but I hope that you are better than I and will give me a chance to earn better."

Sirius turned and headed down the hall, expecting the others to follow him. Harry turned towards Draco, giving him a small smile before moving from his arms and following.

Sirius led them down the hall and pushed open the door at the end. Entering the room, he allowed the others to enter. It was a large room; it actually appeared to be three rooms in one. To the left and right were large marble fireplace with actual fires in them, if fires were meant to be blue and purple and red. If you turned left, you saw what looked to be a library. The floor all through was a rich dark cherry that was polished to a high shine. An area rug of night blue covered the floor of the library, with silver tracery. There were bookshelves that ran from the mantle to the corners then up to a third of the wall space of either side. On the rug was a large desk that gleamed, it wasn't metal but wood like he had never seen before, it was a pale silvery gray that had an inner light. The center part of the room was left empty except for the stained glass that stood opposite the door. It was made of small tiles in a thousand shades of blue and silver. At the rounded top was an arched scroll in pale gold. On it were the words, 'Astris venimus ad astra revertamur. Numquam nos decidet'.

Draco leaned forward and whispered the translation into Harry's ear. "From the stars we came, to the stars we return. Never shall we fade."

Harry nodded and turned to the last third of the room. Here there was no carpet like the middle, but a series of burgundy and navy couches, five of them in a semicircle around the fire. A long semicircular table sat in front of the sofas.

Sirius glanced back to the expression on the children's faces and smiled.

Seated near the fire were two women and a man. One of the women and the man were seated on the far side elegant burgundy sofa, it had wooden arms and legs carved with vines and herbs. She had long light brown hair, pulled back in a long braid, her skin was pale with clear gray eyes. She was dressed in black robes that seemed softer than night. One short fingered hand was being held by the man who wore his robes as if he was unused to them. His hair was somewhat long, hanging only to his jaw. It was a jet black and thick, bristling brows over hazel eyes. Laugh lines framed his mouth. Across from them on another burgundy sofa though the wooden arms were carved in a different pattern sat the other woman who was somewhat tall with brilliant fire engine red hair.

The four children stared at her.
"Harry, Simon, Draco, and Dudley." Sirius indicated each child as he named them. "This is my cousin, Andromeda Tonks, nee Black and her husband, Ted Tonks. The lovely sweet gentle young woman with the bright hair is their daughter, Nymphadora."

"Call me Dora," she replied glaring at her cousin, "Really, Dora."

Sirius let out a barking laugh before turning back to his cousin. "You, of course, know your sister, Narcissa and her husband Lucius Malfoy. The charming towheaded young man holding tightly to Harry is their son, Draco. Standing slightly behind him is Simon McGill and his father Carmus, to whom we all owe gratitude, me most of all. Next to Carmus is Severus Snape, a good man. Between Snape and Simon is Dudley Dursley, Harry's cousin."

Andromeda and her family stood up and bowed once the introductions were complete. "It is good to see you all. My family and I have been staying here to help Sirius readjust to civilization, and though this is meant to be a significant Moment, a formal Celebration of Sirius' life, forgive the departure from tradition. We felt it would be a softer introduction if we were to have a discussion and a buffet."

Narcissa strode forward, holding out her hands, "But of course, dear sister. However, perhaps it would be advisable for the children to change. While Draco is used to wearing traditional clothing, I'm afraid Harry and Dudley are not."

Andromeda laughed delightedly. "Oh Narci. I do understand! Even we, as children, relished the relinquishment of traditional clothing. Colly!"

A small pop and a house elf in Black livery stood there. Andromeda turned to it and asked the house elf, Colly, to take the children upstairs.

Fifteen minutes later, the children were back in the Library, all four of them on one couch. Sirius and Remus sat on a loveseat with their back to the fire but facing everyone. Andromeda had retaken her seat with her husband but this time her daughter had joined them on the far burgundy couch, next Severus and Carmus sat on a navy couch, next to them was another burgundy couch where the four children sat and on the navy blue couch next to that were seated the Malfoys. The last couch was bare save for two small golden pillows.

Sirius looked around at them. "Okay. Before we start the interrogation, I have some apologies to give. Andy, Narcissa, I'm sorry for what I have done to the Black name. There are other ways better ways to change things. Instead I abandoned my family, slandered them to everyone without thinking about the effects to you, or Regulus. The words, 'I'm Sorry' are really not enough but it's all I can give. And I am willing to accept the judgment of my peers."

Andromeda sighed, "Accepted. Narci and I will however demand a boon."

Sirius nodded again. "As you will. Harry, now that my closest blood, have had their piece, it's your turn. I don't know if there is any way I make it up to you."

Harry frowned. "Make it up to me? I mean just because you didn't do what you're supposed to do?"

Sirius winced. "Not exactly. Rather I broke my word to you. So you are granted a 'boon'. A boon is task that I must keep since I failed you. When I became your godfather, I swore on my life and magick to protect you. To love you as if you were my own son. When I failed to do so, I created a debt. The fact that my failure almost cost you your life created what is called a Life-Debt. It means that you can ask me for anything, even my own life if necessary."
"However, the Blacks who follow the Old Ways, believe when one has trespassed so greatly upon the Family as a whole, one must make it up to the Family. The only members of the Family now are you, Andy, Nymphadora, and Narcissa."

"But, what about Mr. Tonks, or Mr. Malfoy."

"They aren't Blacks by Blood or Bond. You are. When I became your Godfather, it was a Blood Ritual, it bonded me to you."

Harry got up and moved to the couch next to Severus. Even though there was no obvious actions, it was clear that he was receiving comfort none the less.

Harry nodded again. "And if you fail again?"

Sirius winced. "I won't."

"Then can I think on it."

"Sure you can. Take as long as you need"

Carmus cleared his throat, "Well now that that is out of the way, why don't we excuse the kids to change into less formal clothing."

Sirius perked up at that. "Yes, they can use Harry's room. I redid Regulus' room" Sirius' smile fell a bit as he moved towards the doorway. "Regulus… he was my baby brother. He was two years younger than me and I left him here. I didn't want to be like my family. I told them that I hated them. I ran away to your father's home when I was fifteen and left him. My parents doubled down on him, became even harsher claiming that it was their… gentleness that led me astray.

"He tried so hard to be the heir they wanted. He joined the Death Eaters to prove himself to them. Then in 1979, he was only eighteen. He died. We don't know how. We don't know what happened to him. We didn't even have a body to burn. He was just gone."

Sirius stopped before the door and turned to the left, towards a large tapestry. "All we know is that his date of death appeared there and we knew he was dead." He gave himself a shake, "But I did love him, he was my brother and I failed him, too. I think that he would be glad for you to have his room. For him to know that I have come home, that I have place Family back where it belongs, he would be happy to hear that. To this end, I've decided to redo the rooms upstairs on the third floor for Family. There will be our room, your room, one for Draco, for Narcissa and Lucius, for Nymphadora, for Andy and Ted, one for Simon, and one for Dudley. I guess I can give Severus and Carmus one as well. But that's it." Sirius grinned as he ducked out the door.

Remus sighed as he waved the others ahead of him, "Not to mention that there are only nine rooms up there, one for the Masters of the House, and eight Family rooms."

Sirius led his guest up the two flights of stairs quickly, practically bouncing like an overeager puppy. He led them down the hall until he reached the door next to the main bedroom. Throwing it open, he stepped back to let them look at it.

Harry stepped in. Eyes widening. The room was… amazing. The walls were painted a sky blue so realistic, it was like walking among the clouds. The floor had rugs, thick plush rugs over light wood. Green as dark as Harry's eyes. Along the walls half way up were shelves, the same color as the floor, probably even the same wood. Draco stepped forward and nudged Harry, then flicked his eyes to the ceiling. Harry raised his head and looked. The ceiling was painted dark with points of glimmering
colors. Faint lines connected the points.

'Simon' moved closer. "The Blacks were always firm believers in the stars. A child's way to learn the constellations. Walburga was a noted astronomer. While her husband, Orion, was an excellent astrologer."

Draco nodded. "He cast every child's birth chart when they were born. He died on September 19th in 1979. I was born two hundred and sixty days later. A full orbit of Venus. The length of time a child spends in its mother. Walburga loved me. She died when I was five."

Harry nodded. "It's beautiful."

"Yeah, well... I remember a report said you liked to fly. When you were younger, your dad would take you on his broom. Pissed your mom off. He would laugh and point out that you were in a snuggi on his back. Didn't help him. Ever.

"Your mom would call him all sorts of names before taking you back and walking around the house with you. She usually settled down in the living room where there was this sofa but one end was a chaise lounge. If she stayed still long enough then Ringle would come out."

"Ringle?" Harry asked gently.

"Yeah, he was of all things a fox. Your mother did a spell for a familiar and she got Ringle. She loved you and would sleep next to you in your crib. Never let you pull her tail but she was a lovely little vixen. We would tease your mother about her hair color and Ringle's were so similar. I... I haven't been able to find anything from Godric's Hollow."

Remus reached up to massage Sirius' neck. "Why don't we leave the children to explore this room."

Sirius nodded and moved back. "Let's look at the other room. They aren't all finished but maybe you'll have some ideas of how to do it up?"

The four children stood in the room before moving to explore. Harry moved to the bed with its zooming silver broomsticks. "So... Carmus?"

'Simon' smirked. "Of course. It's a blood craft that allows me to take on the appearance of family member for up to twenty four hours. You are my son. Now, I have to admit this room is... amazing."

Harry nodded before letting himself fall back. "I guess he's trying. So what is this about a boon?"

'Simon' nodded to Draco. "Between the two of us, we might come up with something. Basically it's exactly what he said. It means a favor but it has to be in scope of the crime he committed. You can ask anything of him. Even send him back to Azkaban but in that case, it would limited to the time you spent with the Dursley's, to the exact number of days."

Dudley shook his head. "Harry is not cruel, he wouldn't do that."

Harry nodded. "No, I won't send him back there."

"You can exile him. For a span of twice your life with the Dursley's." 'Simon' remarked. "You can pretty much demand anything of him, even of his abdicating his Lordship, in which case it would become yours."

Harry shook his head. "Let's try something a bit less extreme."
Draco smiled. "Well, you can require that he serve you for the next fifty years. Alright, but what about demanding he fund some schools for the Muggleborns to assimilate. Maybe even turn a few empty properties over."

"What would you ask of him, Draco?"

"Right now, nothing. I would hold it in abeyance until some future time when it was necessary to save my family."

Harry covered his face with one hand, "Maybe I could use it to force him to try to like Severus?"

'Simon' laughed. "No, don't even try. They'll work it out on their own."

"What about you or the Alliance?"

"No. Don't even think of it, love. This boon is for you. For now, tell him that there is nothing worthy of such favor to use the boon on and you will wait until there is something worth the price. It's polite, face saving, and gives you time."

Harry nodded. "Yeah… so, brooms? Flying?"

The other boys laughed and Draco ran from the room, followed closely by the other three.

The boys came back in, cheeks reddened by the wind. As they entered the library, the adults turned towards them. Remus smiled. "Did you enjoy the rides? The wards let us know you went out."

"Yes, thank you." Simon replied. "Is it dinner time, should we dress?"

Sirius shook his head. "Nope, but you can eat. I had the house elves set out some food. Harry?"

"Yes, sir?"

Sirius winced, "The letter I left for you on the dresser… take it home, okay. You can have McGill and Snape examine it if you want, but it's just a bit of stories about me and my brother. I think he would have liked the idea of you using his room. Actually, if Rabby had lived, he would have stepped up and taken you in after my foolishness claiming familial responsibility. And Dumbledore couldn't have stopped him. As my heir at the time, he would have had the responsibility of my godson."

"You miss him a lot, and you never found him?"

"Nope, we know he's dead and when he died because the tapestry updated when he died. His body and how he died… that's a mystery. I once tried to call up Rab's ghost but it didn't work."

Andromeda gasped softly. "Nothing happened?"

Sirius shrugged. "It might not mean anything, Andy. I am no great shakes at necromancy anyhow."

McGill leaned forward, "I am. If you wish, we can try this Samhain, after we do a ritual at Hogwarts. If I am not mistaken, Mr. Malfoy has something to share."

Lucius nodded. "As you know, the school has decided to celebrate the Sabbats as well as the Muggle holidays. The four lesser Sabbats will be celebrated by the houses, one house per sabbat. The four Great Sabbats will be conducted by the House heads, staff, and members of the community. They have decided to have a Lord of the Dark do the Samhain ritual."
Draco turned to the others, a smile on his face. He realized what his father was really saying.

McGill nodded. "Wonderful. What ritual are you planning?"

"A simple Remembrance ritual. McGonagall said they will have a preparatory ritual in the houses earlier since this will be their first experience. Something on the par with what we do with eight year olds but as each year passes, it will bring them up to speed."

McGill frowned, rubbing his lower lip. "Sirius, you called your brother Rab, I thought his name was Regulus."

"Yeah, but He's Regulus Arcturus Black. R. A. B."

"I see… oh dear, it make more sense now. I remember you had a house elf Kreacher, where is he?"

"Dead. He didn't want to serve me, kept insulting me so Remus killed him. I guess it was too close to the full moon."

"I don't regret it, he was mad, absolutely insane." Remus replied softly.

"I think I know why he was insane. Who is your head house elf now?"

"Colly!" Sirius called out, a soft pop as Colly appeared. He was neatly attired in his uniform. "McGill has some question, answer them all fully and truthfully, alright?"

"Yes, Master. Colly will answer."

"Thank you, Colly. Kreacher had a den here, you most likely cleaned it out. Did you see a piece of silvery jewelry with an 'S' made of emerald or green stone?"

Colly nodded, his large ears flapping. "Yes, Colly did. Colly put it up because it felt bad. Colly didn't want Master to touch it until he was well!"

"Will you please bring it here, Colly. It's a terrible thing and must be cleansed. As the McGill, Servant of Magick, I can do so. This way the evil can't touch your Master."

Colly nodded frantically, disappearing and reappearing quickly. The heavy locket hung from a curiously deceptive thin silver chain. He looked at the locket with revulsion, trying to keep it as far from him as possible.

McGill leaned forward, taking a silk handkerchief from his pocket, he spun it slightly so that he could see all sides. Gently he closed the handkerchief around the locket. "Yes, this is it. May I call my personal house elf?"

Sirius nodded, looking at the cloth wrapped bundle. "Yeah, but what's so important about that? Why would it drive Kreacher crazy?"

A pop of displaced air and Dayn stood there levitating a large book. Silently the house elf set the box at his Master's feet. Carmus moved his thumb to the lock and brushed it against the hidden pin. With a wince, he let the blood fill a depression on the lock's face. The top flew open and from inside rose another box who top opened and yet another box. Until seven boxes hovered.

Narcissa gasped as she realized what she was seeing. She realized that of all the adults there only Severus was not astonished. She noticed the children seem confused by the adults. Reaching over, she placed a hand on Draco's arm which caught all their attention.
"That is a seven lock box, a special type of seven lock box. It's made for containment and, if need be, purification. Each box is a different material. Each one sits in the other. Together they layer protections. That he feels that this locket warrants such a box is troublesome."

Carmus smiled at her. "It warrants this box indeed. This piece of jewelry holds part of the Dark Lord's soul. It is the evilness of the act that makes it so uncomfortable and likely lead to the madness of Kreacher. Perhaps 'Rabby' asked him to destroy it but he was unable to because he didn't know what it was. The first and innermost box is of Ash, a wood of purification and captivity and it is bound with bands of Platinum which has properties of being female and grounding. Next come a box of Oak which is a tree of strength which can withstand the lightning it attracts and it is bound with electrum. Next comes Alder which is considered a warlike masculine tree and it is bound by gold. Following that is Willow for inspiration and bound by silver. Next is Rowan for purification bound by willingly given bone for determination. Sixth is the Apple box bound by Ivory, immortality and nobility. Last of all is Yew, a tree of death and rebirth bound by iron, which kills and allows us to live. Most of those who attempt to get in this box would be stopped by one of the woods or metals. That which tries to get out, is also stopped. It was worth the time and effort to create this for my family."

Dropping the locket in, he closed the lid and nodded to Dayn, who disappeared with a small pop. "I didn't know it was your brother, who Sean was speaking of. However once we unravel that part of the books, we may be able to find his body." Carmus held up one hand. "I know some of you know that Sean was a haruspex. You may even know that he left me seven books detailing Harry's life at Hogwarts and the machinations of a certain Id man. What you don't know if I an't read all of them. I have read all that I can read and I constantly, as our timelines diverge, go back to see if any new bits have cleared up. Sean also left me notes and sometimes they don't make sense until suddenly they do. In the fourth book, Sean put a note in." He closed his eyes and tried to being the page to mind.

*Evil as he is, he fills a bowl of terrors*
Grasping clawing, til you are mad.
This ONE taken through trickery
By one called aRAB.

"I thought it meant a person from the middle east, an arab. It was written strangely, with the first letter lowercase but the rest uppercase. He capitalized one word in the bit before, so I thought it was a mistake, all of it was supposed to be capitalized, Until you called him Rab. That locket, was dangerous and he wanted it destroyed. Yet... there is a powerful ritual that I am researching, one that may satisfying the anger of the Dark with the justice of the Light and make Magick happy with humanity once more.

"The 'bowl of terrors' reminds me of a potion you were made to create for him, it was like a liquid Dementor but it was so hard to make. The ingredients were almost impossible to get, Severus."

Severus nodded. "Indeed, if you are thinking of that potion I believe you are. I was barely able to get maybe a cup. Which I advised him to use sparingly because there was no chance I could make it again. I destroyed most of the ingredients on purpose as well as altered the recipe in the book he provided so it can not be made again."

Carmus nodded, "I get that but... it was a liquid right, and not particularly volatile?"

"No, but it wouldn't be a bowl of terrors."

"Not as a liquid. Is it possible to use a mist spell on it, a semi permable mist spell. You know like the treatment of water lungs? It is blood linked so it only affects the person but not the doctors?"
Severus frowned, lowering his had, eyes flickering back and forth as he thought. "Yes, but he wouldn't make it blood linked. He knew no one else had the blood he did and if they did, he would want to recruit them to his way of thinking. So, if only one of the blood could affect it… not a good strategy. But he could have linked it to an object. That would mean only the object to touch it and only it could touch the object."

Sirius sat back. "Like a goblet and bowl set, made from the same piece of glass?"

Carmus looked at his lover who nodded. "Why?"

"It disappeared a couple of years before I left, at least a couple years. They claimed I was selling Black treasures. What if Reg took it? So let's say he did, then V- Voldemort did this mist thingy with the potion. So let's say he hid that locket in a bowl, you could only empty it by drinking this potion?"

"Indeed. Which would then make you experience terrors. An effective deterrent. It is likely in an isolated place where you can easily run off a cliff or drown yourself. So Regulus must have drunk what was in it and replace the locket with a fake then tasked Kreacher to destroy the original as well as telling him that no one else is allowed to touch it."

Carmus sighed sadly. "No house elf could destroy this piece of evil work. Not unless you either purify it or destroy it by use of basilisk venom or fiendfyre or dragon fire. Luckily, I have more resources at my disposal. If I can, I will destroy the evil without destroying the locket. After all the good Slytherin has done, it would be evil done to destroy a relic. I will find who is next in line and give it to them. However, how did Regulus know where it was?"

A low chuckled surprised them. Remus grinned. "As paranoid as the Blacks were, do you think they don't have some sort of spell to track their goods? Maybe it may be behind wards to prevent them from getting it or calling it back to them but they still likely can track it. And if you can track it… then wouldn't Regulus' body be there as well?"

Severus turned towards the other man. "I always knew you were the brightest of this bunch."

They broke the conference for dinner which was served from the buffet by the house elves who insisted on it. After dinner was over and cleared away, dessert of a chocolate and cream confection was finished, the group sat again in the large library, around the purple flames of the fireplace. The children sat on the floor, backs against chair and half asleep.

"So Harry, I have something else for you. I understand from McGill that you are living with a family that follows the Old Ways. Despite my history, there were some of the Old Ways I used to love."

Sirius sat up, reaching down to get a small canvas bag that sat hidden next to the couch that he shared with his beloved. "It's called a Memory Ritual."

He waved his wand and the table turned so that it ran parallel to the couch he was seated on. Pulling out a large low flat shallow black bowl. A jet of clear water came from his wanted and filled it. The other adults moved and shifted. One called for a house elf to bring a low bench for the children to sit on.

"This is a version of scrying with what is called a 'black mirror'. Black mirror just means instead of a normal silver back, it's dark. It can be a black crystal ball, or a mirror with it's back pained, or in this case a shallow bowl. The water in this case is the mirror.

"Now I'm sure in class they told you that running water can purify things, so too can salt water. Now in the case of running water, water absorbs the vibrations and then carries it away. In salt water, the
water absorbs but the salt purifies. In this case we don't want the water to purify, so it has to be pure water but without salt. The bowl keeps it from running. So can you guess how that works for a memory ritual?"

Draco nodded. He traded looks with 'Simon'. Harry shook his head, "Vaguely."

Narcissa looked at Dudley who sighed. "I guess the water will absorb the memory you want to share?"

Sirius laughed. "Exactly. It's not a penseive, but not everyone can afford one. The water absorbs it but it doesn't wash it away. Good thinking, Dudley! So this ritual will show us the memories the water will absorb. We usually only use three items so the water doesn't get too messed up. We have more water if we need to. So, I have three memories to share with you."

A wave of his wand and the fire dimmed. Sirius reached into the bag and pulled out a shiny badge. He dropped it into the water and placed his hand on the outer side of the bowl, focusing until the water glowed with a slight light.

"In exhibito, noctiu memoriis prolixa est."

Draco leaned to whisper in his friend's ear. "In the darkest night, memories linger on."

Sirius looked up, hands still on the bowl. "In exhibito, noctiu memoriis prolixa est. In exhibito, noctiu memoriis prolixa est."

Mist formed on the water and rose up, thinning as it did until it looked like a scene out of the paper. A voice of a young man filled the room.

"Remus, Sirius... you won't believe it. I can't believe it. What if they made a mistake?!

A younger Remus rolled over on his bed and looked up at his friend from his upside down position. "What's a mistake?" A hand dropped some pages on Remus's chest before a young man sat down. His hair was long in the back but rumpled in the front. His eyes were dark but that was all they could tell. He looked a lot like Harry but older. Especially around the nose and mouth.

Remus read the pages and sat up. "Definitely a mistake, this is my letter. There is no way they would let a horrid pompous brat like you be a Prefect!"

"Prefect!" Sirius' voice came from off screen. "That's perfect! Do you know what we can do with this badge?!! Oh yes..."

"NO! It's my sixth year, and Lily probably has the other one. I am going to show her that I can be trusted with this. That means not letting you use it. Besides... it's time to grow up Sirius. This is our next to last year and it's getting scary out there. Lily... I visited her during the summer. Remember the year before last when Severus called her a 'Mudblood'? She was so angry at him. Then this year, her family insisted that she work at the local pool. She saw this one girl that she really started to like. She was bullied by the other kids and... She would lash out, say really cruel things. Well one of the lifeguards there is studying something called psychologistry but it means understanding why people act the way they do."

Remus shrugged. "And?"

"She hated the girl until she realized that the girl was acting like that because it was the only way to hurt people. Because she had been hurt by her mother, by the other kids. She was hurting and didn't
know how to get help, so she wanted others to hurt as well. Lily said, she understood because of Snape. He didn't have a good home like I did and he didn't have friends to run to like you did. We were horrid. That's why I won't let you use this badge."

"But… so what some kid is upset."

"Sirius, she burnt down her home with her mother in it. It was the only way to stop her mother from beating her. I won't be like that girls' mother and I won't let you be either. So, if I see you messing with Snape then I'll stop you. Even if he won't appreciate it. It doesn't matter because I won't be like her mother or the other children."

The mist settled and faded.

"Your dad… it makes sense that he because an Auror. He learned that we sometimes have to do what is right, not what we enjoy. This little girl, it's what motivated your mom to become a Professor. She wanted to be a MindHealer but she didn't have the talents for it, so she thought it would be better to stop a Snape or Ruth Ann, the little girl, before it happened.

"I never apologized to you, Severus Snape but today, I do. You are a much better man than I am. You helped the son of the man whom you hated because you are more compassionate than I. Many would view it the other way around but you helped a child because he was a child. It didn't matter if he was the son of the man who tormented you. He was a child and he was hurt. Many times, during many meeting both in the Aurors and in the Order of the Phoenix, I have heard comments about how a child was hurt but it was 'Only a Dark brat' or 'Should have chosen better parents' and laughed at it. That was wrong. They may have been of the Light but they were not of the Good and what we did to you was wrong. We pranked all the 'Dark' children but we focused on you because you had no one to defend you. Being in Slytherin even the other teachers turned their eyes from you. It was wrong of them, wrong of me, and I will never forgive myself for the evil I did to you.

"Dudley, I chose this memory because it's a lesson all bullies must learn. I… I won't have you follow me into cruelty. In fact, the next memory will show you what a bully unrestrained can do. Until recently, I didn't understand but what I did ended up affect not just me but Remus, Harry, and most of Severus. What I did turned out better than one can hope for since Severus is still alive. There is no guarantee that if you hadn't been stopped that it would end worse for you.

"Harry, he is a good man and now I know why Lily wanted him to be your other godfather. You do not know the depth of my evil towards him. Not yet."

This time he dropped what looked to be a nail into the water. Holding the bowl, he repeated the incantation three more times.

The mist rose but looked different, he was lower to the ground. Suddenly a growl caused him to turn his head and suddenly a large wolfish shape was pounding on the door. The pictured jumped as Sirius' viewpoint changed. He seemed to be trying to hold back the wolf-like creature. A creak caught his attention and he turned towards the door and young Severus Snape entered. The wolf tried to get past him but Sirius hung on. Suddenly the boy flew back. The mist settled.

"I knew Snape was eavesdropping, when I was talking to Peter and let on that we were going to a secret meeting at the Shrieking Shack. Peter pretended to forget how to get there so I revealed a secret passage. And it was a full moon. Remus almost killed him. I betrayed many people that night when I tried to kill Severus. Severus and Remus the most of all. There is nothing left that I can say about that. Now, for the last memory. Something happy.

This time it was a light green piece of cloth. Sirius closed his eyes and concentrated on the bowl. No
sooner than he had finished the mist rose up again brighter than before.

Sirius was sitting next to a bed with a very sweaty and disheveled red headed woman who seemed to be asleep. In her arms, loosely held was a child swaddled in a light green blanket, his unfocused eyes were open and turned to the side where a finger traced random lines over his hand.

"Shhhh, let your mama sleep. My name is Sirius but you can call me Padfoot. You are Harry and you are my godson. I can't wait to teach you so many things, maybe you won't be as silly as I was. Go to sleep, little prince. We'll keep you safe."

The tiny mouth yawned and translucent lids fell shut as he pursed his lips.

Slowly the mist faded again.

Sirius sat back, looking tired. "Well?"

"I've never seen a picture of my mother before or my father. Thank you. I can't understand why you would try to kill anyone even someone s grumbly as Severus. But thank you for letting me know the truth. I hate it when people don't tell me the truth. It's one thing if it's dangerous to know but thank you for being honest. I wish I could tell you more about my new family but… I can't."

"I know and I won't ask you anything about it." Sirius turned towards Severus. "Like I said, I can't ask for forgiveness for what I did but I do regret it."

Severus nodded, once.

Carmus shrugged. "It will take time for him to process all this but, if you don't mind, I think this is good point to leave on."

Remus nodded. "Yes and thank you for this."

Carmus stood and moved to stand behind 'Simon' and Harry. Placing a hand on each boy, he nudged them around to stand next Severus. A few minutes of awkward goodbyes including a fierce hug from Sirius and they walked back to the Floo Room.
Contracts and Circuses

Chapter Notes

First, Happy Bastille day.
Second, this hasn't been beta'd. The last person I sent it two about two months ago, hasn't responded. I probably need the whole thing rebeta'd.
Third, this is about twenty pages.
Fourth, I really have no clue what tags should be on this fic but I tried! If you have a suggestion, let me know.

Thursday
October 10, 1991
McGillis House
Kingston upon Thames

“Thank you, Dayn.” Carmus took the glass of wine from the house elf and leaned back in his favorite chair in the library. Narcissa and Lucius shared a love seat while Severus sat in his own chair. The children had been sent to bed, even ‘Harry’. The look on his son’s face as ‘Simon’ crawled up on his lap and disappeared into him. He promised Simon that one day he would teach him to create a doppelganger. Which lead of course to the whole thing about family magick. The book he had handed his son was a good primer on family magicks. Dudley for once was silent, which worried him but perhaps we was thinking Sirius’ lesson over. “Sorry? I was thinking about Dudley. Please forgive me.”

Narcissa shook her head, “It is no matter but we were talking about marriage contracts. Once it is clear that Harry Potter is alive and well and engaged in Society, obviously many requests for contracts will come in. We were asking what method you had in mind for handling them.”

Carmus eyes widened a fraction. “Oh dear, that is true. As his magickal sponsor, it will fall on me.”

Narcissa shook her head, “It is no matter but we were talking about marriage contracts. Once it is clear that Harry Potter is alive and well and engaged in Society, obviously many requests for contracts will come in. We were asking what method you had in mind for handling them.”

Carmus eyes widened a fraction. “Oh dear, that is true. As his magickal sponsor, it will fall on me.”

Severus tilted his head. “Isn’t his family, his Magickal Guardians?”

“Yes, but they aren’t his Sponsors. The whole pairing up the Muggleborns with the Purebloods is what we mean as a Sponsor. Sometimes they are the Magickal Guardian but a Guardian is terminated upon adulthood, sponsors are not. It’s an old system, similar to fostering but since Purebloods are raised in this society, they have an understanding of the rules than a Muggleborn may not have even after fifty years. So the Sponsor may be in charge of making contracts on their behalf including marriage contracts or simply introducing them to society. It’s like godparenting without the same tie. I am Harry Potter’s Sponsor because I’m handling all matters between the Wizarding World and him, even though he lives here. So, the marriage contracts will come to me. You’ve not had a Sponsor?”

Severus shook his head.

“Yes, my father.” Lucius replied.

Severus turned towards him. “Explain.”
Lucius put his drink down and leaned forward, templing his hands. “Surely you knew, Severus. My father cared about you. He found in you a protégé of sorts. Bright, intelligent, talented and above all a desire to succeed. He may have even loved you a bit.”

Severus nodded. “I see but I don’t recall ever asking him or making him my sponsor.”

“Your father did it. Do you remember when your mother died? Carmus’ father had sent him to America and Hayes was ill. It was the summer of your fifth year…”

* * *

Severus stared down at the hole. The coffin wasn’t very large or well-made but it was at the least a coffin. Made by government workers to bury paupers in. Just as this space set aside was a pauper’s graveyard. His eyes fell to the ground, at least the grass was well tended and yet, the hole was like a void, a ragged wound torn into the side of the earth. The graveyard was quiet now that the priest had finally retreated. Why he was even there when his mother wasn’t all that religious anyways, well not that religion. Not that Snape would care.

From the moment the police told him that she had been found in an alley with bruises, he knew what had happened. Snape had come home drunk once again, wasting what little money they had for booze. He had beat her and she had run out. He probably chased her but lost her in the night, and she had slept the night in the alley but never woke again.

“Who in the hell are those ponces?”

Severus looked up; already detecting the aroma of liquor on his… he hesitated to call the man ‘father’… on the man’s breath. A man in his mid-thirties, he looked older than he was, with dark brown eyes. Bloodshot even though it wasn’t even noon. Dressed in sagging dark pants, stained white shirt, and a worn and patched jacket over it, he looked like he the drunk he was. “Likely the gravediggers to bury her. You can leave as you never wished to be here.”

“Don’t you be talking to me like that, boy. I can and will make you learn to respect me.”

Severus raised his face and stared at the man, no, at the stupid male in front of him. “You can do nothing. I am sixteen and already can sell my own potions. I have money that you do not control. My tuition is paid for the next two years, so you have nothing to threaten me with. If you are lucky, you won’t be buried next to her in three years. Do you understand me?”

“I do think you have made your point clear, young Severus.” A rich tenor answered from behind him. “So you must be Tobias Snape. You should be proud of your son; he is an upcoming star in the Wizarding World. I am Lord Abraxas Malfoy, this is my son and heir, Lucius. Unfortunately Severus’ other friends can not be here for him.”

Lucius looked around at the drab grave plot. “Yes, my father floo called Lord McGill, but unfortunately Carmus is attending a camp in the Americas and Sean… he is no better but he is no worse. We could not let you bury a witch of such stature by yourself, Severus. No matter what anyone said about her, she was clever and she raised you to be the young man that you are. And for that alone, I would honor her.”

Severus nodded. “Thank you, Lucius, Lord Malfoy.”

“So now you got them, you think you don’t need me, is that right? Bet I know what talent of that brat you enjoy, because it’s not his face or his charming personality. If you want him, then take him!
I wash my hands of him. Keep him!”

Abraxas Malfoy looked at the man. “You are distraught and do not know of what you speak. I will excuse it this time if you will leave us to mourn in peace.”

“I’m leaving, never should have married that bitch, never would have if she hadn’t been stupid enough to get pregnant!” Tobias Snape turned and walked away, muttering and fumbling in his coat for something.

Abraxas stepped forward, one hand pressing against Severus’ neck under the hair. “Severus, this is something your mother would have taught you but since it can only be done on the death of a witch or wizard, she couldn’t teach you yet. Wand out. Your job is to direct the magick, my job is to provide the power. Lucius’ job is to monitor the flow. But before we do this, let us do something about this ‘coffin’.”

He pointed his wand at the coffin and took a deep breath, a deep dark golden glow grew at the tip before slowly reaching out to the grave. It flowed like thick honey over the coffin. Slowly the glow faded and when it did, what lay inside wasn’t a simple box but a casket, made of a dark golden wood, with gold accents and a golden nameplate that said ‘Eileen Prince, Mother of Severus Snape, Cunning Witch’. Another wave of his wand and the grave filled with soil.

“Now, Severus, I want you to think about your mother, about how you felt about her.”

Severus closed his eyes and thought of his mother. Her strengths, her weaknesses. The times she had taught him and the times she had ignored him. When she had protected him and when she had put him out of harm’s way.

“Plaga una diligitur gravibus.”

This time the glow was green, a bright summery green as it shone through his eyelids.

“Enough. Look now, Severus.”

Laying on top of the grave was a grave stone. It was slate grey but not slate. On it was an image that was his mother but not. She did not look as worn and tired as usual. Below the image were four lines.

*Not the most lovely but beloved,*

*Not the smartest, but still she brightly shone*

*Not the easiest but faithful none the less*

*A Mother, a Wife, a Witch of Old lies beneath this stone.*

“It is permanent, none can dig her up, it will not crack, nor will it fade.”

Severus nodded. “Thank you.”

“If there is nothing you need from your house, then you will be coming home with us.”

Severus nodded and walked from the grave.
Lucius looked at his friend. “Father went back to Spinner’s End six months later. He asked if Mr. Snape felt the same way. He was quite rude to Father but he persisted. He finally ended up leaving the relinquishment forms. When Father came back a month later, they had not been filled out so Father had a house elf constantly bedevil him until your… parent filled them out. When he did so, Father accepted you as our Sponsored child. It’s not Godparenting like McGill said but it does overlap.

“As a Sponsor, he could make apprenticeship and even marriage contracts for you, which one can’t do as a God Parent. Godfathers and Godmother have to wait until they actually take over the child’s living arrangements to have that power. Before then, they can suggest but not actually make the decision. Both parents and God parents are sometimes considered to be too close to a child to make a deal for their best interests. However, Sponsors are only for Muggleborns or those of the lower class entering the Nobility.”

Severus nodded. “Abraxas never told me. So Sponsors are basically a Magickal godparent with extra rights to navigate the social, political, and territorial climate that a Muggleborn would find themselves in once entering the Wizarding World.”

“Indeed. And so, now it is time for me to give you something that Father Abraxas gave to me.” Narcissa said softly. A small motion and a Malfoy House Elf stood beside her. “Rally, please get my special box.”

“As Mistress wishes,” Rally replied and disappeared with a crack.

“Father Abraxas left with me some letters and papers with instructions to give them out at certain and specific times. This time, I believe is now.” Narcissa opened the book and removed two slim letters. Holding them out to the two men, “For you, dear Severus and you, Carmus.”

Severus took his letter and looked at it. It was written in Abraxas’ hand. Turning it over, he noticed the seal imprinted in the wax. Cracking it, he pulled three sheets of paper and another sealed letter from within. Carmus nodded and waited patiently, his own letter in his hand.

Severus opened the folded pages and read it slowly. After a moment, he sat back and shook his head, astonished. “I…”

Severus set the pages on the table and tapped it once with his wand. A warm tenor voice started to speak.

My Dear Severus,

If Narcissa has done what I asked and I feel sure that she has since she has ever been a good daughter, then you are receiving this then you have found out that I am your sponsor and likely the conversation has turned to marriage contracts. As your Sponsor, I am entitled, rather demanded to make the best marriage possible for you.

Before we go into that, perhaps I should tell you how much you impressed me with your talent, with your determination to fit into our society. The society your mother left behind. I understand why she did it, though I would never make that choice on my own. She had no way to know that you would be such a strong wizard. Most mixed pairs either result in a wizard of basic power in which case you could be taught at home or in a squib. Relativity few strong witches and wizards result from this. Usually if they do it is because the so called ‘Muggle’ is not truly a Muggle but the product several generations of squibs with recessive genes. To put it nicely, your father was a squib. That makes you
more like a pureblood than a half blood. And yet, this is not why I have taken you in. If you need ask why, merely look to your right.

So it seems to me that if we, the Wizarding World wish to keep such strong blood in the community then we should seek to give you the best of reasons to stay. I could not and would not drive you from us with a bad marriage. So the person has to be someone you can respect, who can understand your work, someone who would not be put off by your humor nor your mood. It would have to be someone on most exquisite potential.

As I sat in my office thinking of who it should be, an owl appeared with a directive. Not a request but a directive concerning you. I do not at the best times take directives from strangers but this was stamped with the seal of the Vale of the Penumbra. You probably recognize the name because of your friend Hayes, as a haruspex he was oathed to them so that they could help him control his visions. Those same visions that kept him from your side when your mother passed. Yet it was not from him. In it I was told that someone would approach me for your hand and that they would ask for certain things. Terms that would not be onerous but if I accepted them then I had a chance to free you from ‘the stealer of paths’. I recognize that this term is an appellation for some figure that is central to a prophecy they consider important. I was ordered to request one demand in particular if I would save you.

And I would. You, Severus Tobias Abraxas Snape, are part of this family. So I have named you, so you are. You are my sponsored child and I would save you from anyone who would dare set themselves against fate and steal your destiny. And so when this person approached me a week later, I felt find to hear his suit. I believe that you will like and love the person with whom I have oathed you to. They are strong enough to bear you even when you believe yourself to be weighted down with the earth’s weight. They will keep you safe even at the risk of your anger. They will fan the passion that you hide so well. They will make you the man I know is within you.

Of course once you are married, then the other things come into play. I took the liberty to research your grandparents. They never disowned your Mother and so you are heir of the Prince line. However to receive your title, gifts, money, and house you need to be wed. One reason we have delayed this notification.

Yes, I purposely delayed this. Right now, I am sitting in my office after having retrieved my son from the Ministry. When I asked after you, I was blocked by Dumbledore. I do not know why he is interested in you but I fear for you in his clutches. Knowing how manipulative he is, I fear that he is the one who will try to steal your path. I hope that I am wrong and will pray to the Lady that is so. Yet, I doubt it, that young woman you are so fond to hear his suit. I believe that you will like and love the person with whom I have oathed you to. They are strong enough to bear you even when you believe yourself to be weighted down with the earth’s weight. They will keep you safe even at the risk of your anger. They will fan the passion that you hide so well. They will make you the man I know is within you.

And now so at this time, when you finally are breaking the bonds of the fool, I can now reveal to you the protections that I have put into place for you. You can still claim your mother’s name. Since you are her only child. Of course if you had achieved full adulthood, then you would have less than five years to make that choice but according to the marriage contract, you do not achieve ‘full adulthood’ until you are either past your fortieth birthday or until you are married. Of course since this means that any contract that Dumbledore should try to force on you, even if you agreed to it can not be enforced unless your Sponsor who is myself or your fiancée, once he has achieved his full adulthood, approves it. Somehow I do believe that your fiancée will only have your best interest in mind.
On the next page you have a listing of all your vaults, estates, seats and gifts. Use them wisely, my dear.

With Affection,
your sponsor
Abraxas Malfoy in my own hand

Carmus frowned. “My dear, not to be unbearably nosy but I thought you were already Lord Seacrest?”

Lucius sat back and stared at his friend who grimaced.

“What do you know of the deal that Dumbledore made to get me freed?”

Carmus frowned. “Not much, father attended most of those meeting, he didn’t want me involved but if I remember right, Dumbledore vouched for you then pledged to watch over you for a certain amount of time. He claimed that you were a spy in the organization and that you only did as much as you absolutely had to get the information necessary to defeat Voldemort. Of course I later found out about you overhearing the prophecy, you told me about it. Yet whenever I asked about how you got out of serving any prison time. Last time I asked, you walked out on me. I rather not ask and have you here than ask and lose you again.”

Narcissa turned her face away allowing the emotion to be unobserved.

Severus shifted in his seat. “It was merely my pride.”

Carmus nodded and waited.

“To get me out, he did more than vouch for me. He basically ordered me to be under house arrest, by declaring me unfit to manage my own life. He got the minister to co-sign an Act of Subjugation, binding me to him until he declares that I have learned to behave in accordance with the law and his wishes. Eventually, someone asked how was I to learn that without some responsibility and so Dumbledore gave me the Lordship of Seacrest so that he can say that he is rehabilitating me. In actuality, he has no intentions of me ever being emancipated from his grip. Perhaps not even after his death because he could leave me to someone else in his will, like a robe.”

Carmus looked up, grey eyes sparking with rage. “Then I understand why Abraxas did as he did. Severus, what else did the contract with Albus demand? Why are you teaching? How are you paid? Where do you live when you are not teaching? What about the Malfoys?”

“I teach at Hogwarts because he is headmaster, thus providing me with ‘adequate supervision’ but as to how I am paid, I’m not. Supposedly all funds are deposited into a Gringott’s account from which I can withdraw no more than fifteen galleons a month without his permission and he receives a copy of my financial statement every month. He is allowed unfettered access to my rooms, my labs, my finances, my mail, and anything else he see fit. After all, how can he adequately supervise me if I am allowed to hide anything from him. When I am not teaching, I am allowed by his gracious permission to live in my old family home of Spinner’s End. As to the Malfoys’, since I was Draco’s godfather before this, he could do nothing about it but question me.” Severus voice grew more and more controlled as he spoke.

“HE dares! He dares! And Lucius, of course Severus wouldn’t let you do anything. Pride, your foolish pride! Now, of course Abraxas’ plan is a bit more clear.”

“Then please do tell me.” Severus bit out.
“Dumbledore never counted on you having a Sponsor, someone who could write a contract in the Wizarding fashion. Tell me, did Dumbledore have you sign a contract?”

“Yes…”

“It’s invalid. You can’t surrender your freedom under an Act of Subjugation because you never had it. No minor can sign a contract and have it be legal. You were not a full adult until either you reach 40 years of age, and you were not or until you got married and you are not married. So you can’t surrender what you don’t have. In fact, if I am right, then whoever they betrothed you to is your actual ‘guardian’ until you get married. And they never signed the contract.”

Light grew in the dark eyes as comprehension dawned. A face that was line with years of bitterness relaxed before hardening again. “Then who is my guardian?”

“I suggest you open that marriage contract and see.”

Severus picked up the second envelope in his lap, it was adorned with three ribbons, one was the black and silver of the Malfoys’, another was the gold and umber of the Princes and the third… was familiar. Breaking the seal, he pulled out several sheets of paper. Looking it over, he frowned.

“Severus, as personal as it is, I need to know the name of the person they have betrothed you to.”

“Do you? Need to know?”

“Of course, for they will have to be brought into our conspiracy or handled until we have destroyed Dumbledore then I will kill them. For sure they would have call to call me out for duel over my relationship with you but we can plead the lack the knowledge but it would mean that we could not be together from now on and I have no intentions of not sharing any night you give me, my beloved. So tell me the name. For no matter how much protection they have arranged, I have waited too long for you only to give you up. The box on the mantel, you know what it holds. What it has always held. What it will forever hold until you remove it. Only for you, my love. So, tell me the name of whom I shall murder.”

Severus chuckled. “Open your letter from Abraxas first. It is important you do so before you swear to murder anyone.”

Carmus sighed and with a flick of his fingers, slit the top of the envelope. Pulling out several sheets, he started to read.

_On this day, in my own hand, I write this formal contract of betrothal as Accepted Sponsor of Severus Tobias Abraxas Snape, last known Scion of the Venerable Prince Family. In accordance to the conditions later hereforth mentioned, I accept on his behalf the contract to bind Severus Tobias Abraxas Snape to Carmus Riordan Fredrich McGill…_

Carmus let the papers fall as he stood up and knelt beside his lover’s chair, taking one stained hand in his. “My father was wise, if I had known then what I know now, I would have fought for you and Dumbledore would have destroyed me and you. But now… now we have time. You are only thirty one and we have until you are forty but do me one thing, my love. Even if you won’t wear it now, take the box from the mantel.”

“With pleasure.” Severus stood up and walked over to the mantel. The small box still stood there as it always had. A polished wood box maybe two inches on each side but a dome lid. Inside was a ring, a ring that he had found many years ago but that Carmus promised that he would know the reason for one day.
Behind them Lucius cleared his throat, “Severus, one thing I do not understand. Why would Dumbledore believe that you had betrayed us?

“Because I didn’t want the Dark Lord to kill Lily. I asked him not to. She was my first friend. And when have I ever abandoned a friend?”

“Never, it is one thing that Father respects about you. Yet that was all it took to convince Dumbledore that you no longer wished to follow our Lord?”

“Your Lord.” Carmus murmured before moving to pick up the papers he had scattered unintentionally. “You were upset at her death. You went to him for answers since he promised to protect her. What happened?”

“He made me oath to protect her son. He believes that I was in love with her.”

The three other Slytherins looked at each other before small smiles broke out among them. Narcissa raised her glass to cover a chuckle.

“Strange, that he should think so considering the rumors about him.”

“Rumors, Lucius?”

“Hmmm yes, something my father mentioned. Seems that when Dumbledore was in his sixth or seventh year, a young man appeared. He was from some Eastern European country by his accent. Apparently he was sent away from Durmstrang. In any case, Dumbledore quite chased this young man about. Then about half a year after they met, he left. Supposedly they had a fight and then Dumbledore’s sister died. Since then, our dear headmaster has not been linked romantically with anyone since.”

Carmus frowned, “Now this is information that I did not have. Please, next time you speak to your father, ask him more about this. Dumbledore disappeared for a couple of years and it’s the only time I do not have him accounted for. If he was perhaps spending time with this young man, perhaps it will make sense of some of his actions.”

Lucius nodded.

“And now for a pleasant duty.” Carmus wandlessly floated a quill from the desk in the corner to his hand.

“I wouldn’t do that. No matter how much I wish you would, Carmus.” A voice came from above their heads. Severus turned and looked up at what had been an empty picture frame only moments before. “I would love for him to sign it, Severus. You… I have loved you like a son for years. Yet Malfy and myself arranged it like this to protect you. I tried to get you alone to speak of what we did but the ministry trusted Dumbledore too much. They had no intention of letting you meet with Dark or Dark-aligned persons.

“You see, as both of you are under a certain age, it behooves your elders to make the contract for you, so you can actually claim ignorance of it. However, once either of you signs, you can not. I know that Abraxas explained his handling of the contract and that any contract that Dumbledore has ever had you signed is not valid without your fiancé’s signature. Every year, Dumbledore has you sign an extension to your teaching contract, yes?”

“Indeed.”

“It is accepted because supposedly you sign it without coercion. But it is never approved because the
legal ploy Dumbledore used would have defaulted your custody and in this specific order: Abraxas, myself, then Carmus. Abraxas is no longer in country and you had no idea. So until one of them signs it, it is not valid. I would suggest, if Abraxas does not mind, that you let him be the stalking horse. Say that Lucius went to look up a contract that his father did not tell him about and it was found that Abraxas is his sponsor. Abraxas will then sue not only for ‘custody’ under the supposed Act of Subjugation, but if you do not mind, dear one, he will publically call Dumbledore out for what he has done to you. He will rail about how Sponsorship which would help Muggleborns adjust to our lifestyle has been neglected. He will get more pureblood on your side.

“Then, once he is obvious, then get married. So that even if Dumbledore dares to harm Abraxas, Severus will be safe. I believe Abraxas to be a good man and with enough foresight to see what he would one day be called to do.” Aden McGill said, before he sat at the desk in the painting.

Lucius nodded, “Your father is right. My father would find this challenge stimulating. I will write to him about this and about that young man Dumbledore was so taken with.”

Aden frowned. “I remember something about that… Dumbledore had a close relationship, though we don’t think it went as far as sex. The boy was from Durmstrang, it happened sometime around 1897 to 1900. I couldn’t access Durmstrang’s records. He did attend Hogwarts for a bit, but Dumbledore seems to have expunged all record of him. Ask Dayn to check my file for him. I do remember something, but it doesn’t seem to make sense. At first I thought he was fleeing from the beginning of Grindlewald terror but the timeline is wrong. It was just a bit of conversation, not even conversation but something Dumbledore muttered when there was talk about love. ‘Für das woh. A közjóért. Pentru o mai mare bun.’ We got it from a pensieve memory. It means for: ‘for the whole, a larger good, for the best of good’. We might say, ‘For the greater good’. It’s why we thought he was talking about someone who had fled from Grindlewald. His troops used it as a rallying cry.”

“Yet perhaps he wasn’t, McGill. Perhaps the young man he was so attracted to was part of Grindlewald’s inner circle. It is said that he was from Durmstrang. For all we know it could have been Grindlewald himself!” Lucius chuckled. “As for getting access to the Durmstrang’s student records. I might have an idea. Igor Kakaroff is the headmaster there. If he thinks that it is for the Dark Lord…”

“True. You will have to work on him, perhaps lead him to believe that there’s someone of a specific bloodline that you need to research for some plan’s sake.” Severus templed his fingers and frowned.

“Yes, but enough.” Standing Carmus reach one hand out to Severus. “Lord and Lady, while I enjoy your company, it is getting late and I’m afraid that I am in much need of rest. So if you do not mind, I must retire but you may stay as long as you want. Merely call to Dayn and she will lead you to your rooms.”

He bowed once more to Lord and Lady Malfoy as his now-fiancé placed a hand in his and they left the room.

* * *

Carmus lay back on his bed, their bed one day, and waited for Severus to join him. Severus came out of the bathroom in his summer green quilted robe, dark hair loose and free of protector so it was soft and light, it even made his sallow skin seem different.

“Beloved, this summer you are getting some sun. I do not know why you punish yourself with trapping yourself in the dungeons all summer but not this one. I want to see sun in your skin, or if I
can, just you lying in the sun with absolutely nothing between you and the air. Oh yes, I want to see that!"

Severus flushed. "Enough."

"Never, my love. My love, my betrothed, my fiancé." Carmus smiled happily.

Severus slipped out of his robe and slid into bed. Turning to face his betrothed, he smiled. "You were willing to kill whomever had my troth."

"Of course I was. For the same reason I want to destroy that fool who marked you. You don’t belong with him. You belong with me, our children, our friends, our godchildren. Why do you think I was so furious with Lucius. You are mine! As I am yours, you are mine and I have no wish to share you with that death obsessed fool!"

Severus stared at him before placing one potion stained hand on his lover’s cheek. A kiss followed, long and lingering before a whispered, "Nox."

* * *

Friday October 11, 1991 McGillis House Kingston upon Thames Breakfast

Simon groaned and put his head down on his arms. He slept, he knew he had slept so why was he so tired. A cool hand rested against his neck for a moment before a small glass bottle was placed on the table.

"Thank you, Uncle Sev."

A flick on his ear as the man walked past.

Carmus raised an eyebrow. His own eyes looking tired.

"He’s just a bit exhausted. Even though he slept, he’s a bit tired since yesterday was difficult emotionally and Magickally. You could use a dose as well."

Carmus shook his head. "I can’t. This is part of the price I pay for doing that ‘trick’. Magic demands I recover slowly and not use potions to fix myself. It will however only take a day or so before I recover, beloved."

A moue of distaste crossed the potion master’s face, as he lifted a hand to turn Carmus’ face first one way then another. "Then you are going back to bed. You will rest and recover from your little… ‘trick’."

"And what little ‘trick’ was that, my son?" A voice asked from behind the boys.

Simon turned around and noticed a painting that he hadn’t seen before. And how had he missed a new painting in the breakfast room? A frown crossed his face, they weren’t at Hogwarts. "Did you just talk?"

"Of course, my dear. The magic is in the portrait, not the building. There are many paintings that can speak. And I would love to speak to you, my dear grandson, but first I wish to know what little trick did my, shall we say, intrepid son pull this time, dear Severus?"

Simon moved closer to the painting. "You’re my grandfather?"
“Yes, that is Aden Richard McGill. Apparently he has been hiding since your father brought you home. Which is a shame since as the red sheep of the family he was sorted into Gryffindor.” Severus replied.

“Yes, a shame to his supposed bravery. And I doppel yesterday.”

“You did what?! Severus Snape, I betrothed my son to you to keep him and you safe. How could you let him Doppler!” The man in the painting roared.

“Let… Father, let? I do not need his permission to use my family Magicks! As for stopping me, how could he when you never did? I find your anger all out of proportion, especially since you were never strong enough to use our family Magicks. Severus, my dear, I shall retire now. I leave the children in your capable hands.” Carmus gritted out before leaving with a burst of speed.

Severus pinched the bridge of his nose before letting out a deep breath. “Aden.”

“This is one reason I have not been around as of late. I can never talk to him anymore.”

Simon shrugged. “Maybe you shouldn’t have yelled at him. Instead of yelling about how stupid he was, maybe you should have asked him, politely mind you, why he did it. If what I read in the book last night is right, Family magicks should be used to defend family.”

“Indeed they should, Simon.” Lucius and Narcissa Malfoy stepped into the room. “I saw Carmus heading to his room.”

Severus nodded. “He is still tired from using magick yesterday. Apparently he is not allowed relief.”

Narcissa nodded. “Yes, there are some family magicks that won’t permit it. If you do relieve it, then Magick itself backlashes you. Better to suffer now than to suffer the backlash. And you are right that family magicks should be employed to protect family. Sometimes they are extreme but necessary.”

Simon nodded. “Then perhaps Grandfather Aden should appreciate the fact that by doing that, he protected the youngest of this family. Me. Now I’m going to take a nap with father, Uncle Sev.”

“Go ahead. Take your potion first.”

Simon nodded and drank it down, leaving the bottle on the table, he followed his father.

“Aden.”

“What he did was very dangerous, Severus. Never let him do it. He could get stuck in that body forever or his magick might be stressed enough to destroy both bodies.” The painted man whispered before he left his frame.

“I see. Then perhaps tomorrow I will talk to him. Today, we will wait for Simon to wake from his nap then we will go out for the day, leave him alone to recover.”

Lucius nodded. “Good.”

***

11:15 AM

Severus opened the door to his lover’s bedroom and noticed his godson splayed out across the bed.
Carmus had rolled over towards him, one arm lying across his son’s back. Loathe to disturb them, he still moved to the other side and placed a hand on Simon’s back.

“Wake up.”

Simon blinked sleepily. “Don’t wanna.”

“Then you don’t want to come with us to the Fair in Rome?”

“Fair?” Simon lifted his head only to feel his father pull him closer.

“Yes, the Fair. If we can disentangle you from octopus Carmus.” Severus smiled.

“He is a bit clingy.” Simon said softly.

“He gets like that when he doesn’t feel well. He always picks fights then goes off to cuddle someone. But I’ll have Dayn check on him. Get up, get dressed in something comfortable and a casual robe.” Severus leaned over and stroked Carmus’ arm. As the other man turned towards him, he waved Simon off. He pulled the covers up and tucked him in. “Sleep well, love.”

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742 Evergreen Terrace
London
Noon

Dear Dr. and Dr. Granger,

My name is Robert Smithe and I am the head of the Muggle Rights and Responsibilities Office. To help our Muggleborn students better integrate into the Magickal world we have decided to take some steps that we admittedly should have done long since. Our first step is to reissue an updated list of, revised editions, and MRRO approved editions of introductory books:


What Are My Magickal Rights And Responsibilities? By C. I. Vics (12th Edition)

Why Do I Have To Keep It A Secret? By N. O. Scere (3rd Edition)


Included in here is a voucher that you can take to any of the bookstores in Diagon Alley to redeem for the books. If your books do not have the raised seal of the MRRO office, merely accept the books, keep your receipt and bring it to our office.

Next we are making appointments for each Muggleborn student, present and former with at Gringotts. There you will participate in a small blood ritual. It is designed to trace your magickal lineage. If you have a blood connection with a modern Wizarding family then the next policy will help you greatly. It may turn out that you or your child is the first magickal inheritor of a line long believed that had died out and may be able to claim an inheritance.

Next we are instituting an older and more traditional procedure. It is the procedure known as
Sponsoring was an old and noble practice by which a Muggleborn family legally contracts with a Wizarding family to provide support for their child. We in the Wizarding World have many peccadillos and laws that a Muggleborn may not understand, especially since they were not raised as a Wizard. Just as you as a Muggle understand your world better than any Wizard. It means that the person being sponsored cannot enter a Contract or any other legally binding issue without the permission of their sponsor until they reach a certain age. Which is to protect them. However, if you look in What Are My Magickal Rights And Responsibilities?, there is a chapter on Sponsorship. There are some changes however, to facilitate understanding between both worlds. The main one will be a requirement for the Wizarding family to share some holidays and break time in the Muggle world with their Muggle family, likewise the Muggle family will be contracted to spend some holiday with the Wizarding family in the Wizarding World.

Finally, we wish you to join us at Hogwarts for Halloween or as we call it, Samhain. We wish it to be a surprise for the children so, don’t let them know. There is a form to fill out providing us with information such as what you are allergic to as well as instructions on how to catch the Hogwarts Express. We even have an extra special surprise for the Muggle parents.

Sincerely,

Robert Smithe
Head of the Muggle Rights and Responsibilities Office

Dr. Granger nodded and looked at her husband. Flipping to the next page, instead of the form she was told to expect was another letter.

Dr. and Dr. Granger

As I mentioned in my main letter, we are instituting the sponsorship program to protect and support our Muggleborn students. Now, I mentioned the blood test because family means quite a bit to a Wizarding family. I don’t know yet if you know how much blood means. I capitalize it because it is its own powerful Magickal Substance. Blood is one of the greatest bonds in the Magickal world.

An example. Say that your test proves you are related to the Yaxleys. They are one of the strongest voices in excluding Muggleborns. Say for mere example you were related to them. Well their family beliefs won’t let them exclude you or your child. They would then have to change.

However, the reason I mention this is because one family in particular has asked to contract with you. The Malfoy family. Your daughter is acquaintances with the McGill heir. His father is the one who suggested the Malfoys and they have agreed to think about it. So, I have included the contract, for you to read and talk about. If you have questions, please visit our offices. We are located down the street from The Leaky Cauldron at the intersection of Brisbane and Cooldridge Road. There you will find a phone booth. Enter and dial 6-2-4-4-1-2. When it is answered tell them what department you wish to go to and they will bring you to the front desk. Otherwise you can enter Diagon Alley and at the end of the road, you will see another entrance. Merely enter and ask where to go at the front desk.

Sincerely,

Robert Smithe

Ellen Granger lay both letters and the form on the table. “Alan, bring the notepad. We need to take notes.”
2532 Cracklin Street
Islington

Craig Carrowick frowned at the bird that was standing on his table. He hadn’t gotten a letter by owl since he left the Wizarding World some fifteen years ago. Sighing, he picked up the letter from the table.

Dear Mr. Carrowick,

My name is Robert Smithe and I am the head of the Muggle Rights and Responsibilities Office. You are a graduate of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. We have recently found out that due to interference you never received the proper introductory books for Muggleborns. These books were necessary to explain Wizarding customs, your duties to the Wizarding World as well as ours towards you.

Imagine if you will, that you fund a scholarship or school program to help transfer students. You do this because you need to attract their particular talents. You have seen such programs in the Muggle world. They will provide an education in Education in return for teaching in an at-risk school or they will help someone go to Medical school in return for serving five years in underdeveloped countries. So imagine you fund such a program and when they graduate they do not fulfill their duties. Worse, while they were going to school, a school you funded and literally built, they despise your customs. They never ask after your customs but assume they are ‘primitive’. Then when they graduate they leave without a care. Can you not understand the resentment this breeds? How this resentment is passed on to new students who are learning under the same program?

This is how the purebloods feel about you and the other Muggleborns. This is due to a mistake in communication. They believed that you had read the books because you were supposed to have read them but rather than ask questions about what you didn’t understand in the books, you went on with your life. So there was the belief that you understood which is why they were offended when you left without fulfilling your duties.

This was not your fault. Albus Dumbledore replaced the mandated books with books of his own. Why? We are unsure, however we have decided that since this is not your fault, we, the Ministry, have decided to replace the books. With this letter is a voucher to buy the new updated and revised lists of books.


What Are My Magickal Rights And Responsibilities? By C. I. Vics (12th Edition)

Why Do I Have To Keep It A Secret? By N. O. Scere (3rd Edition)


As a Muggleborn graduate, you were granted a title of Small Lord or Lady. Meaning you were titled but you have no land, properties, or resources to go with your title. It entitles the first recipient of each family a seat in the Wizagamot. That seat lasts as long as your family will last. It is understood that you did not know this. Therefore we have instituted three programs to help you.

First, we are making appointments for each Muggleborn student, present and former with at Gringotts. There you will participate in a small blood ritual. It is designed to trace your magickal
lineage. If you have a blood connection with a modern Wizarding family then the next policy will help you greatly. It may turn out that you or your child is the first magickal inheritor of a line long believed that had died out and may be able to claim an inheritance.

Next we are instituting an older and more traditional procedure. It is the procedure known as Sponsoring. Sponsoring was an old and noble practice by which a Muggleborn family legally contracts with a Wizarding family to provide support for their child. We in the Wizarding World have many peccadillos and laws that a Muggleborn may not understand, especially since they were not raised as a Wizard. Just as you as a Muggle understand your world better than any Wizard. It means that the person being sponsored can not enter a Contract or any other legally binding issue without the permission of their sponsor until they reach a certain age. Which is to protect them. However, if you look in What Are My Magickal Rights And Responsibilities? there is a chapter on Sponsorship. There are some changes however, to facilitate understanding between both worlds. The main one will be a requirement for the Wizarding family to share some holidays and break time in the Muggle world with their Muggle family, likewise the Muggle family will be contracted to spend some holiday with the Wizarding family in the Wizarding World.

Lastly, we have decided to give classes about Wizarding World, Customs, Duties, and so forth. After you take the class, there will be tests similar to the NEWTs. Once you have passed it, we will reinstitute your Lord/Lady ship.

There will be an orientation that will go over all this. We will be having six information sessions, please see the form included and mark the session which you wish to attend.

Sincerely,

Robert Smith

Muggle Rights and Responsibilities Office

* * *

Italy
Rome
Candidissime Pegasus

Simon laughed as the carriage approached the ground at speed. His godbrother was enjoying it as much as he was. Too bad their godfather wasn’t. They felt the carriage pull up throwing them back against the inside of the carriage, magickal restraints keeping them from falling out. Too soon the ride was done and the two boys were falling out the carriage and stumbling over to the Malfoys.

"Lucius, that was… WICKED! Severus, can we go again?!”

Severus twitched and debated whether or not to pull his wand on his godsons.

Narcissa grinned. “Carmus expects him on in one piece tonight.”

“I’ll sew him back together.” Severus gritted out.

Lucius tried to hide a chuckle as he directed the boys towards an open air eatery. “That was inexpressibly cruel, Simon.”

Both boys started laughing as they heard their godfather listing all the useable parts of them for
potions. Severus’ eyes fell on Dudley and frowned.

The large boy shook his head. “I saw it before we got here. I wasn’t crazy enough to go on that!”

As they approached the other four who had already been seated, Severus looked at them. “And why
is the muggle the only one who has common sense?”

Lucius tried not to laugh again. “Enough, Severus.” He raised his eyebrow as his friend sat. A wave
brought over a server and they all placed their orders. Soon enough each of them had a small dish of
gelato in front of them to enjoy before their dinner.

Dudley tasted it carefully before digging into it.

“What’s your specialty, Simon? Draco, do you two know of a young girl name of
Hermione Granger?”

Simon nodded, “Yeah, she’s in my house. Really smart but a bit stiff. She is too hard.”

“The child is an insufferable know it all who destroys any chance of any other child being able to
learn anything in class.” Severus groused.

Draco shrugged. “She doesn’t see it that way.”

“And yet it is so. The child has no concept of restraint. Waving her hand in the air like it’s a banner.
Bouncing, so eager to answer the question rather than let anyone else answer.”

Simon frowned. “She’s bad, Sev but she’s just excited.”

“She is not! Do you realize that most of your class has no reason nor impetus to read their book since
they’ll just let Granger tell them the answer. And they do. Why read when she will shout out the
answer. Worse, she is often rewarded for it.”

Dudley looked at Simon and shrugged. “I don’t get it. I thought teachers liked it when students read
the lessons.”

Severus sighed. “We do, however when we call on people in class it’s to show they have read it,
allow them to make mistakes so that we can correct them. Say we are working on a Cleansing Potion
and you are required to slice Yarrow Root finely but not in a straight line cut, but in a diagonal. So I
ask what ingredients are needed and their preparation. She is waving her hand around, desperate to
answer as she believes that she is the only one capable of answering. Meanwhile ever other
Gryffindor no longer bothers to answer because they are always wrong and she is always right and
they know it. She is called on and says, ‘Sliced Yarrow Root, thinly.’ Now every single one of your
fellow housemates will remember that and slice the damn thing horizontal or vertical slices. They
may even slice it thinly. Yet, thinly isn’t finely. Finely means so thin that you can see through every
part of it.

“So then I have four useless potions because those dunderheads who know that she is always right,
now are paying attention to her and screw up their own potions. Yet for some reason, she doesn’t
seem to understand that in her efforts to show how much she knows she is damaging all the other
students; education!”

Simon stared at him, eyes wide before turning to Draco, “Why don’t you like her?”

“Mostly the same as Severus. She’s always so quick to show off; she doesn’t want to let anyone else
answer a question because if they do, she takes offense at it. She has to be the smartest, the shining
star in every class. I’m good in transfiguration, great in potions, fair in most of my other classes. There are some classes that I will shine in and some I won’t but I know I don’t have to be the best even everything. She acts like if everyone doesn’t know how brilliant she is, then it’s a crime!”

Draco answered, scraping the bottom of his bowl with his spoon.

“Oh. I didn’t think of it like that. If you want, I’ll talk to her when we get back. I don’t think she understands it that way. I think she wants to show that she has just as much right to be at Hogwarts as either of us.”

“That’s stupid. If she didn’t, she wouldn’t have gotten a letter. Either you are or you aren’t. And we are.”

“It doesn’t work that way in the Muggle school system. You can get in and then later be kicked out because you aren’t performing a level they expect of you, or get in trouble, or fail too many tests.”

“I see but this isn’t the Muggle world, Simon. What matters is magick and the strength of her magick. Unless she loses all her magick they won’t kick her out. Yes, sometimes they threaten expulsion but they rarely do it because magick untrained is magick out of control. It’s more dangerous to allow it to go wild than anything else. Your behavior or conduct on tests can’t get you kicked out. That is why admission is based on absolutes. Magickal power.” Lucius pointed out. “Well, I can see we will have much to talk about with her and her parents. Carmus has suggested that I sponsor Ms. Granger.”

Draco dropped his spoon to the table and stared at his father. “Truly?”

“Indeed. Regardless of your annoyance with her, tell me Draco, would it be beneficial to her or to us?”

Draco nodded, biting his lip as he thought.

Severus closed his eyes and tilted his head back. Eyes moved quickly under pale translucent eyelids. After a few moments, he brought his head forward and opened his eyes. A minute later a sigh issued from his blond godson.

“Her parents are doctors, truthfully they deal with teeth but they likely know other doctors as well as people in the community. They are most likely one of the pushing forces behind HAARP. Granger is powerful and will be a powerful witch, with a little training she might even be able to lead the Muggleborns of the school. We could make her a Duchess or even Princess of Gryffindor. She needs education in subtlety, manner, presentation, dress, and diplomacy. For us, it will show that the Malfoy family is current, that we are trying to heal the Rift. Even perhaps show that Dark isn’t evil in a better way than anything else. It would eviscerate the threat of Dumbledore and his fellows against us. Politically and socially, it would put us at the forefront. As to the future…” Draco held out his hands and moved them apart. “Only time will tell.”

Lucius nodded. “Severus.”

“Against my better nature, I say do it. Not to mention, that I am wondering what other prophecies Sean left him.”

“Indeed and he won’t reveal if it was. Narcissa?”

“I have always wanted a young witch to mentor.”

“Then I will meet with her parents and accept the sponsor contract.”

“Excuse, Mr. Malfoy? What is a ‘sponsor’? Dudley asked.
“Well, first tell me what you think a sponsor is?”

Dudley frowned. “Well, sometimes companies sponsor athletes to wear their clothing or shoes so they will be advertised. In school, sometimes a teacher sponsors a club, meaning they watch over the students and make arrangements only adults can make like for field trips. If you are doing like a read-a-thon or walk-a-thon then sometimes people will pay you for each book your read or mile you walk. If you wanted to get in a club, then someone can put your name forward. Like Dad wanted Mr. Fallon to do. Basically you put your name on the line vouching for that person.”

Lucius nodded and waited for the server to clear their bowls and place the plates down. “Yes, it is very similar to the last one. What a sponsor does in this case is to give the Muggleborn student a pureblood background. When we sponsor Ms. Granger, she can ask me, Narcissa, or Draco about anything in pureblood culture or customs. We are responsible for teaching her. We will help her become a member of the Wizarding World rather than her demanding it change to suit her.

“It also has legal complications such as preventing her from signing any contract without our knowledge so that we may advise her instead of her falling into a trap laid for her by virtue of her lack of knowledge about our world. Since it is a magickal contract it will enforce itself. I will have to make any contract that is best for her and her future. In return the contract will force her to at least ask questions that she needs to ask.”

“So it’s a good thing?”

“Yes. The contract has to be fair to be magickally enforced.”

* * *

McGillis House
8:15 p.m.

Carmus watched as his family, and he could even admit Lucius was part of it, stepped though the floo. Standing up, he entered the floo room and stepped up to his fiancé for hug.

“Welcome back. Dayn is wondering if you are all hungry. Severus, you have a letter from Albus. It’s been checked.”

Severus held him for a moment longer before releasing him. “He probably wants me to check in. I’ll be in the study. We went to the Candidissime Pegasus.”

Carmus watched as he left, feeling a small hand slip into his. He looked to see his son leaning against him.

“Yes?”

“Did something happen with you and Sev? He seems… different.”

Carmus nodded and carefully led the way out of the room, without letting go of his son. Leading them into a sitting room, he pulled his son into his lap and beckoned Dudley closer.

“He’s being openly affectionate. Purebloods in private act differently than in public. In our homes, with only family we are more free, we drop our masks. In fact it is considered rude to keep up your mask. If you are angry at me, show it on your face. In this home, in this place, there is only family. Only us.”
Simon nodded, “But Lucius and Narcissa isn’t family as you defined it.”

“Yes, they are. Last night we discovered something interesting. Abraxas Malfoy, Lucius’ father is Severus’ sponsor.”

Dudley jerked at that. “We talked about that earlier at the dinner.”

“Good, so I don’t have to explain what it is. However, a sponsor can write out a marriage contract for their person. In fact, they usually do. Their job is to integrate the Muggle born or Muggle raised into Wizarding society and they make the best first marriage possible. Do you understand?”

“First marriage?”

“Yes, first marriage. The first marriage is for the Wizarding World. Remember we are Lords and Ladies of the Wizarding World. Our duty to every other Witch and Wizard is to take care of them and protect them. To make sure this continues we need children of strong magickal strength to replace us. Should we do nothing and wait for a Muggleborn to show up? I do doubt that. We breed for magickal strength but only the first marriage. They are usually contracts that fulfill after a time period or after having a certain number of children.

“Sometimes, the two people fall in love. When that happens, they change the contract, have a ceremony and likely they will never divorce. Lucius did. He fell head over heels for Narcissa and so, he and she had the ceremony when Draco was two years old.

“Abraxas Malfoy has arranged a first marriage for Severus. Being Sev’s sponsor makes Sev Lucius’ foster brother, essentially. So, that makes him Sev’s family. Now comes the link to our family. When Abraxas made the contract, he contracted Severus to me. My father accepted on my behalf a betrothal contract. He is mine, that changes the Malfoy standing to our family. He’s now Sev’s brother for all intents and purposes.

“Which means when I marry Sev, I will need to find a new Godfather for you. Politically, I should ask Sirius Black because of the connection to Harry Potter, however the bonds of family and affection say that I should ask Narcissa and Lucius.”

Simon lay back and closed his eyes. “So does that mean you forgive Lucius?”

“Forge him? For what?”

“For whatever he did to make you mad. I can see it when you are around him.”

“HE was the one who introduced Severus to a madman. One as bad as Dumbledore. Both of whom ill used him. I don’t like it when people hurt the ones I love. Have I forgiven him? No, I don’t think I have but the knowledge that he is family will make sure Lucius never betrays him in that way again. So I can put my anger aside and rejoice in the combining of our families. Does that explain it better?”

Simon nodded. “Yeah, just like with Dudley.”

“Yes, and all three of you are tired. Up you get and go to bed. I’ll be in to check in with all of you.”

The three boys stood up and moved quietly to the door. Simon frowned and turned back. “Does this mean I can call him ‘Uncle’ Lucius?”

* * *
“Albus.”

“My dear boy, I was worried about you.” Albus’ face hovered in the flames.

“We returned late last night. Today I was detached to take the boys to the Candidissime Pegasus since last night was so stressful. Black acted rather sanely until the end. He decided to show Potter some memories of his. He chose three. The first was when Potter received his Head Boy badge. The second was when Black tried to murder me. The Third was just after Lily gave birth and the younger Potter was sleeping in his mother’s arms.

“The meal was fine. He has redone his brother’s old room for Harry. Bought Harry as well as Draco and Simon new brooms. The boys seemed to have fun. Rather than exacerbate Black’s insanity, we kept the conversation away from the ministry, you, the Dursleys or anything else and merely spoke about family news.” Severus reported succinctly.

“I see… what spell did he use to show the memories?” Albus questioned gently.

“Lingering Memory.”

Albus frowned. “That’s borderline dark.”

“It uses no blood, nor any other body fluid.”

“No, but it does involve giving into emotions, it is unlike a pensieve in which a copy of a memory is made. It is rather that he must put himself back into the mindset at which he remembers, otherwise the memory be changed. For example, if Sirius felt remorse of what he did to you, it will shade the memory to be less brutal than it was.”

“I see.” You think I do not know that it does not, you color blind fool.

“Indeed. How did young Potter respond to the memories?”

“He was found it fascinating to see his father act like a teenager. He was furious at Sirius for what he did to me. Claimed that he was little better than the Dursley brat. That’s when he showed him the last memory of him sleeping in his mother’s arms. Lily… she was exhausted but she wasn’t willing to let Harry go.”

“Yes, it is the power of a Mother’s Love. And Harry?”

Severus shook his head. “He… it didn’t disturb him so much as shock him. When we returned McGill sent him to bed immediately to let him ‘process’. Then this morning, he sent me with him and the others to the Candidissime Pegasus to distract him. Tomorrow, McGill is going to speak with him and has his therapist on call before he returns him to his new family.”

“And you know nothing about this new family?”

“I know everything about them but the oath I took when I first treated him. Until McGill gives me permission, I can’t speak of anything I do with him. He already gave me permission to report to you tonight.” Severus pointed out, eyebrow rising.

“I see. However Harry is well, yes?”

“More than. He is growing, at least a couple of inches and he’s put on weight. Weight he needs.”

“Thank you, Severus. Enjoy the rest of your night.”
Carmus entered his study after settling the boys in, he still had quite a few bags under his eyes but he looked more rested than he was previously. Retrieving a letter from his desk. Taking the letter, he walked over to the sofa where Severus sat and sat next to him, leaning against him slightly. “Lucius, Narcissa. Do you remember what you asked of me in return for joining the Alliance?”

Severus turned towards him. “He sent me this letter with two requests. Well one request, one contract. I am in favor of the contract. The problem was with your other request. Severus, did you know that Lucius wishes more children? McGills are found far and wide, more so than you think. Some that you may never consider to be a McGill is a part of this family. So I sent the question to those who those who might be able to help us, I received almost an immediate response. They have noticed this problem before I did. Apparently many with Dark Marks face the same problem as you. I can not promise you that this is the sole reason for your inability to have another child but it is a best guess. I am assuming that you have done the traditional investigation. Therefore my only conclusion can be that the Dark Mark prevents you from getting Narcissa pregnant without the permission of Voldemort.”

Narcissa’s hand trembled as she lowered her head.

“There are other ways, and it is possible get around the restriction but it will involve a bit of magic and muggle technology. To discuss this, I may have to be slightly crude, forgive me in advance? Muggles have this thing called in-vitro fertilization. Basically they take the sperm from the man, the egg from the woman and mix it in ta muggle lab. Once they see conception happen, they implant the now fertilized egg into a woman, who then is pregnant. Now just because conception happens doesn’t mean it will implant in the uterus. So usually they inject anywhere from two to eight, in the hopes that just one takes root.

“I’ve gotten our experts well versed on them muggle side but the magic side is a bit finicky. However, they estimate that given three to six years, they should have it perfected enough to use on humans. We might even be able to perfect gender selection. There is one risk, which I must mention.”

Lucius nodded, taking his wife’s hand. “What risk?”

“We don’t know what effect is on the fertilization of the egg outside the body. It may affect the child’s magick, they may be born with no magick what so ever considering that magick is so inextricably linked with nature and life. One thing we are exploring is seeing if the sperm killing magic is only at ejaculation, if so then we need only collect the sperm before ejaculation. If not then we may have to use a different method. Since it is interference in a natural process…”

“We will accept that risk.” Lucius turned towards Narcissa.

Carmus nodded. “Very well.”
Finding the Missing

Yes, I am slow. I have this story ready, I actually am almost finished with chapter 22. I have a beta now, so please heap cookies, love, and other affection including the folding green type on Meri!

So now, on with the story.

CHAPTER TWENTY ONE: Finding the Missing

Monday
October 13th, 1991
7:20 a.m.

Severus strode around the room, his robe billowing. “If you have done everything properly, your potion should be the yellow of a lemon. If it is too red, then you must carefully add one ingredient to return it to yellow. Who can tell me which ingredient?”

Simon felt Hermione quiver as she moved to check her notes. He knew she was ready to answer. Whispering a charm to keep the spoon stirring for a few more seconds, he moved to cover her notes. “Not this time. Hermione, you need to let others answer even if they are wrong. How else will they learn? Professor Snape may be the cruelest of them, but every teacher has a problem with only one person ever answering. How else are they to know how much the others know? Not to mention, do you enjoy rubbing the fact that you learn faster in the faces of our classmates? If they come to you, help them but stop this. You have nothing to prove, you aren’t at Hogwarts because you’re smart, you’re here because you have strong magick and that- can’t be shown through answer.”

“-oints to Slytherin. And if our potion is too orange, what ingredient should you add?” Severus stared at the know it all. It seemed like Simon may be getting through that thick, thick hair. “Well, didn’t any of you read?!?”

The Longbottom boy whimpered then raised his trembling hand. “Do you know, Longbottom?”

“Yes, sir. It’s…um… sea water. The s-s-salt and water d-dilute it until i-it’s yellow.”

“I do believe that is the first time that you’ve gotten something right, Longbottom.” Severus bit out. “Has anyone written it down?! If your potion is not red, yellow, or orange then banish it because you have absolutely no hope of fixing it and have likely created a poison that will kill you. You will receive a zero for the day.”

As he approached the front of the room, Simon leaned over. “See, he’s not nearly as bad when someone else answers.”

Severus saw a perplexed look cross the witch’s face and nodded to his godson. Perhaps it takes a Gryffindor to get through to a Gryffindor.

Callum Ianto Vics sat outside the office of his old classmate Smithe thinking about the article that was in the Prophet. Merlin and Morgana knew that thing was a rag, but for the first time in too long it looked like Muggleborns would finally and properly accept their place in Magickal Britain.
What Are My Magickal Rights And Responsibilities? By C. I. Vics 13th Edition. It was a slim book, not more than five hundred thin pages. It laid out the basics of the Wizarding world using analogues from the Muggle world. Thirty-five years of struggling to get this published, even after the Ministry had ‘approved’ it for the Muggleborn orientation packet. The Ministry paid so little that there were hardly any royalties and yet, this time Smithe asked him for the new version before he even had to press it forward.

The door opened and Smithe came out. “Sorry about that, Vics. Come on in, I have some wonderful news for you, my friend.”

Vics entered his friend’s office. It had been many years since he was last here, as most times they stopped him soon after the wand registration desk. Sitting in one of the comfortable chairs before Smithe’s desk, he waited.

“You’ve seen the articles in The Daily Prophet, yes?”

“Seen, yes. Believed… not so sure.”

“Oh, my friend, my dear snaky friend, it is true. All of it and more to come. Callum, have you seen this… emblem before?”

Smithe leaned over the desk and placed down a small piece of paper. On it was sketched an emblem that showed two crossed wands, one of dark brown wood and one of light white wood on a varying blue with green and gold stars.

Vics lifted it up and examined it. “It’s an old symbol, I’ve seen it marked on some old parchments, two staffs rather than the more tapered wands crossed on a field of stars. But never in this detail nor in color. Why?”

“This is the emblem of the Alliance of Shadows. I’m sure that when McGill named his alliance, he thought no one recognized the name or the intent, but some of the older families still remember that time long ago. That emblem is almost four thousand years old. They were here before the Ministry and they ruled well. Some still believe they rule from the shadows. In either case, I think it’s rather interesting that there is now another Alliance… or is it? There is no one I trust more to find out than you.”

Vics nodded. “It is interesting. Send me what you have and I’ll look into it.”

“Thank you. Now let’s talk about something very interesting. It seems that the Hogwarts Association of Alumni, Relatives and Parents would like you to give some talks about the subjects in your books. I have a list of orientation meetings and was thinking of hiring you as a tutor for those who sign up for the Wizarding Culture Class.”

Vics barely let his mouth turn up but he was pleased. So many years and finally, FINALLY they were doing what he has asked for.

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October 15th
11:19 a.m.
Muggle Rights and Responsibilities Office

Robert Smithe looked through the many responses that he had received. Pulling out a lilac sheet of paper with a deep plum stripe, he wrote a quick note to the Minister and set it afloat.
Two dark heads popped up outside his door. Gareth Morgan let his co-worker Lucia Pollock go in first. “Yes, sir?”

“Lucia, I need you and Gareth to go through these replies with me. We are getting responses from graduated Muggleborns and family of the currently in school Muggleborns. I think we may need to move the information sessions. You won’t believe the response.”

Robert pointed to a stack in a box on his desk. “These here, are just the graduated Muggleborns. If you wouldn’t mind handling them, Lucia. Also, I need you to copy their name and contact information for HAARP. They will be giving you their list as well. We need to see if they have people we don’t and vice versa. What an absolute mess Dumbledore has left us! The ones for the November 11th, 16th, and 17th put those to the right, the ones who signed up for the 19th, 23rd, or 24th leave it right here, but if they chose the 27th, 30th or the 1st of December put it to the left. We received many more replies than we expected. It’s amazing, if only one tenth of these people, just one out every TEN come back to the wizarding world, we’ll have an influx of new blood equal to one quarter of the strongest wizards we have now. What the hell was Dumbledore doing?! He was risking everyone and for what?”

Lucia raised her head from the sorting, pushing a black curl from her face. “Sir, do you think it’s really true, everything they said he was doing? I mean, it’s hard to believe. Lying to the muggleborns, leaving Harry Potter to abusive muggles.” Her blue eyes cut to the left, “teaching us to hate the Slytherins?”

Smithe stopped for a moment. “Yes, he did do all that. I know it without a doubt. Part of my surety is from those who are fighting him. I’ve seen it. Other things are those I’ve noticed.” He sighed and sat back. “You know this office is often overlooked. Fourteen years ago, I was approached by a pureblood with an offer. He offered to purchase at his own cost four hundred books on pureblood manners, history, and culture if I would approve them to be included in the muggleborn list. I told him that I could not do so unless I reviewed the book first. He understood and he sent me the book. It was incredibly well written. So much so that I wanted to update all the books.

“Dumbledore approached me, asking me to turn it down because he feared that the pureblood was trying to, as he put it, ‘influence the incoming children towards the Dark’. I told him that I had reviewed the book and there was nothing wrong with them, it was remarkably fair handed and barely mentioned Light or Dark, just customs.

“Back then we had almost two dozen full time staffers. Three days after Dumbledore met with me, they had all been reassigned to more vital duties as ‘the war required sacrifices from us.’” Smithe performed the air quotes. “The pureblood in question suddenly found himself being turned away and called a ‘Slytherin’ which is no insult! Soon enough he found it hard to get speaking engagements or another publisher for his books. However, that at least I could fix.” Smithe smiled like a shark. “The Ministry has ordered five thousand of his books to provide to everyone on the list.”

Gareth laughed. “Oh, how he must love that!”

“Yes, it’s the least I could do for him. Dumbledore really should have known better.”

“Sir?”

“I guess I am too forgettable. Not really noticeable but I don’t really care about that. Maybe it is even a good thing. He asked me if I was class of 1950. I said yes, in actuality, I was class of 1947 and he was my transfiguration professor. He mistook me for my brother who was class of 1950 and
Ravenclaw. I, my dears, was a Slytherin and proud of it! One should know better than to step on a
snake or the friend of a snake. We often make noise about being a snake, but in reality, Slytherin is a
hydra. You can not cut one of us without the rest of us noticing. You may not see our attack but it
will come.” Smithe leaned back

Lucia shook her head and sighed. Not for the first time she was glad that she had attended school in
Italy. A wave of her wand duplicated the HAARP membership list, handing one to Gareth, she
shrugged. “Let’s get started!”

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The Golden Dove
Second Floor, Room 3
12:45 p.m.

Albertus Pengel frowned at the list of addresses. Deputy Headmistress McGonagall had given him
this list, yet... it seemed something was missing. Moving to the list of house assignments for the past
fifty years. Two hours later he leaned back and frowned. According to this, there should be eighteen
muggleborns in this year but there were only seven. That’s a difference of eleven. Not so many but
more than enough. Carefully noting the names and locations of the obliviations, he duplicated the list
and wrote a quick note to McGill. There was always a possibility that these children were some of
those rescued by him. Maybe they weren’t missing? A snap of his fingers and a house elf appeared.
He handed the note to the creature along with giving it instructions before going back to the list.

He looked up as the door opened and another man entered. He was about five feet eleven inches tall
with thin, flat, black hair pulled back in a short tail. His pale blue eyes shone with laughter as he
pulled at the black robe he was wearing.

“Albertus, really?” One black brow lifted. “You objected to my own ceremonial robes but you make
me wear this?!”

Albertus sighed. “Those robes were offensive. These are true wizarding robes.”

“Offensive? Really? Because they were cotton?”

“No because they looked awful. They had no style, Moonflower.”

Moonflower laughed. “Really? Albertus?”

Albertus sighed and raised his dusky head from the list. “You call yourself Moon Flower.”

“It’s significant to me. And it’s a coven name, and you know if we weren’t friends I wouldn’t let you
call me that.” Moonflower pointed out, one stubby finger pointed at his friend.

Albertus sighed, “Yes, well in the wizarding world we don’t really call many men by flower names.
I had you registered as Cereus. It’s the Latin form for your name. So I take it by your being here that
you have agreed to help me later today?”

Moonflower nodded. “Yes. And I do know the genus of my coven name. Basically you want me
there to explain to the poor mugglish folk what Samhain means to the Wizarding world in a way that
doesn’t get them ready to re-enact the witch hunts of centuries past, pull their kids out of school, or
claim that you are being demonic, correct?”

Albertus sighed again. “Yes.”
Moonflower nodded. “Fine, I’ll meet you at the hall at 6 p.m. and Al?”

“Yes, Moon?”

“Why me?”

“Because of all the crazy people who think magick exists, you wanted to know.”

“Thanks… I’ll try not to make it a repeat of that time.” Moon replied as he left the door way and rushed down the hall.

“Wait… what time? Moon!?”

Kingston upon the Thame
s The McGill’s Office

Carmus took the letter from the elf and read over it quickly. Frowning, he rubbed his head as he tried to think of who he could send this off to. Angela was already overextended trying to find out what had happened to Grindlewald and Dumbledore’s child. And it would be best if the Ministry discovered this but he couldn’t send it to the MRRO, it wasn’t their bailiwick. Disappearances would be part of the Auror department.

“Gilly.”

An elf dressed in the general livery of the McGill line popped in.

“Gilly. I recognize one name on this list, check the others. If we know what has happened to them, add the information, withholding of course what we need to. Once done, I want you to take this list to Auror… Speakney. Tell them, they are missing. Obliviators were involved in previous incidents but the children did not attend Hogwarts.

Ministry of Magic
Auror Department
1:35 P.M.

Gilly walked down the central aisle of the Auror bullpen, head up as he knew his master would appreciate. Turning the corner, he saw the nameplate of Auror Speakney and walked towards it. Inside the cubicle was a desk covered with open boxes. Behind those boxes sat a woman with short dark hair.

“Hello, elf. Your name?”

“I be Gilly. My master be The McGill.”

Speakney nodded. “I see and what business has your master to do with me?”

“My master be wanting me to show you information about missing children.”

Speakney sat back, “Then yes, you have come to the right place. I am in charge of Underage Crimes. Tell me what you know.

Twenty minutes later, Speakney sat back with a moue of distaste. “I swear, this crap never stops.
First all this about Dumbledore and the ministry and now they’ve lost Children! Children, for Merlin’s sake!” Speakney sat back. “Gilly, even though I am not part of your master’s coalition and I would never ask you to betray him, answer me this… all these plots, they involve children. Magickal children, do they not?

Gilly nodded.

“Then let him know that our office will always be willing to listen. Also, he’s not the only one starting to put things together.”

“Gilly be glad to tell Master that. Gilly…” The elf paused then smiled. “Gilly also knows where Master’s policeman friend is. Muggle policeman.”

Speakney laughed. “Good, first though we need to see the Obliviators to get the information. While I do that, why don’t you get some healers, because if what I think has happened is what happened then we might need them.”

“Gilly will.” The elf turned and disappeared.

Wiley Peak

Narcissa Malfoy sat in an ornate office, with her host Lord Wilfred Wily and their companion Na-Lady Sarah Flanders. Even though the day was beautiful, the curtains had been drawn closed and about the room sat gold candlesticks with thick pale creamy candles. On the desk lay a creamy length of parchment and hovering over that parchment was a spell form with glowing lines twisting and tangling together. Tea had been taken and removed, now they were going over a programme designed to destroy the binding placed on the Dursley child. Before them on the table floating in dim light, a spell form hovered.

“I do understand, however, I have to say that I have in no time or memory seen such a thing in Dark Magic. This is too orderly for that. That is solely the realm of Light Magick. Our magick doesn’t lend itself to being constrained like so. This looks like a tangled ball, yet it is not because if you started at one point anywhere and follow it, it leads you back upon itself. If it was a tangle, especially if it was Dark, there would be frayed ends. It would be less neat because it would have been made of emotions which are by definition chaotic.”

Sarah nodded. “As disgusting as this thing is, it truly does look like Light Magick. Remember Dumbledore has evil plans but he’s ultimately a Light Lord, he plans and plans and plans. He places his pawns in their assigned boxes and spaces and detests when they have the temerity and audacity to move on their own. That’s what he tried with the Potter child. He decided to make the child too scared to think of defiance because he hates it.

“However, Lady Malfoy, I think Lord Wiley does have one good point. The origin of the spell might have been Dark. If he took a Dark spell and ‘cleansed’ it. Made it clinical and precise, he would think of it as ‘reclaiming’ magick. He would then have no problem using it because now in his eyes at least, it’s Light Magick.

Narcissa nodded. “And yet, he’s still a fool. The reason that most Dark binding spells aren’t perfect and without frayed ends is because those ends are what allows the magick to siphon off, so there is no build up and it won’t kill. Only fatal bindings would kill and this…”
She waved a delicate hand to the spell form floating in front of them. “I have searched the Black Libraries and the Malfoy Libraries and there are only five Dark binding spells. Each one has a variant that is fatal and what one that is not fatal. Every book that I have searched, if there are more than ten spell then they are variants of these five original spells. Each of these five spells is organized around the Dark aspects of an element. The five fatal are the Dark Fire that Consumes. Dark Air that Chokes. Dark Spirit that Smothers. Dark Water that drowns. Dark Earth that Entombs. It is the destructive aspect of the Dark that binds fatally. Likewise the five nonfatal are organized around the five creative forces of dark magick: Dark Fire to Transform. Dark Air to Fly. Dark Spirit to Surmount. Dark Water to Sail. Dark Earth to Delve. Have you found differently in the Light, Lord Wiley?

Wiley shook his head. “Like the Dark, we have ten. Five fatal, five non-fatal but in most books and histories they do not even mention the five fatal ones.” He reached over and opened a book, tapping it once and a smaller spell form appeared above it. “This one is most like the one placed on the child but it is…. not, if you see what I mean.”

Na-Lady Sarah nodded. “I do. The lines are thicker and they twist. Is it possible, not just likely but possible that it’s a mix of both. The wildness of the Dark tamed by the structure of the Light and if so, then there is something missing that we aren’t seeing because Dark and Light don’t mix without a binding agent so to speak.”

Wiley nodded, frowning as he did so. “True. It would have to be neutral magick. No other way. Even in the coterie, you needed a Neutral who could manipulate both. And that’s why the coteries fell apart. The magick learned by the children is mostly Neutral with heavy emphasis on Light. They never learn how to handle Dark so they can’t balance them in a coterie. He may be the Light Lord but he is…”

“Evil.” Sarah said softly.

A soft pop was heard before an elf moved to whisper to its master. “Bring him in. Ladies, a McGill elf is waiting to speak with us. Let us hear what Lord McGill wishes to deliver to us.”

They waited as the elf approached, bowing to each of them. “My name be Gilly. I be Master’s elf concerning relocation. Master received notice from Mr. Pengel that eleven children who had used underage magic did not get their Hogwarts letters. Master sends me to Auror Speakney who sent Gilly to find a healer. Master trusts you so Gilly came to you.”

The three of them looked at each other. “Eleven. Children. Hogwarts letters are done by magick. The only way it wouldn’t sense them is if they were dead, outside our area, or their magick died. Pray it’s either of the two former.” Wiley said reverently.

Sarah shook her head. “Or if it was sealed. Dumbledore is… influential. He could have convinced some Obliviators that the spell wasn’t designed to harm. They would have trusted him.”

Narcissa sighed in resignation. “Before his period of madness, Our Lord wanted a new Ministry Department in which magickal children would be identified at birth and the parents prepared and watched to prevent harm and later to bring them into the world informed. It is why many of us followed him. He wasn’t always mad. He truly cared about children and our future. What Dark wizard or witch did not care for our children? After all, did you not believe the same of Dumbledore?

“That however is not important at the moment. The Auror needs a healer and if there are eleven children, then they will need all the help they can get. May I suggest that we attend to the Auror?”

Wiley nodded, “If you ladies will call for your robes? Enny, my healer’s robe.”
Soon all three were attired in the lightweight dark blue robes with a starlight rim. After a few minutes of discussion they convinced Gilly to change his emblem on his livery from the McGill heraldry to the sign of the Alliance as a way to confuse the issue. Lord Wiley led them to the floo room and one after another they floo’d to the Ministry.

The entry hall was not exactly busy but it was rare to see three Healers enter. With the confidence of their station, all three moved to wait by the exit for the Auror.

With a quiet pop, Gilly appeared and waited with them.

Narcissa listened to the comments about them without seeming to focus on any one thing. She could hear the comments about why they were there.

“I would swear that is Narcissa Malfoy but what is she doing here?”

“The tall red headed fellow is Lord Wiley while the other woman looks to be a Flanders. What business do they have together?”

“I don’t know but whatever it is, I don’t want to be involved in it.”

“Well it can’t be Dark, if Wiley is involved.”

The movement of the elf caught her attention. “The Auror coming down the stairs, Ladies, Lord. That be Auror Speakney.”

Narcissa nodded and they waited for Speakney to finish coming down. Together they approached her.

“Auror Speakney. You sent an elf to find a Healer. The elf approached us on your behalf. We would be pleased to help you, especially if what we all fear is true actually is true.”

The Auror nodded. “Thank you, Healers. Right now, I have retrieved the information for all the most current cases and plan to approach a muggle policeman to help me locate each child. Once I do, I will need them assessed and given a report.”

Wiley nodded. “And who is this policeman?”

“He be Inspector Alistair Lockingen and his partner Inspector Gabriel Horn.
Malfoys at their Finest

Chapter Notes

Okay, I have a new beta, folks. Say hello to Drarrysev! She really helped me quite a bit on this chapter.
I would say this is a Samhain gift to you but we aren't right there in time or story but getting close to our first confrontation with Voldemort!
So hmmm Happy Devil's Night!

CHAPTER TWENTY TWO: Malfoys at their Finest

Wednesday October 16, 1991

Ophiuchus D’Or

3 pm

Lucius Malfoy watched the silvery form of a small hunting bird, a white-tailed kite, enter the private room in the back of the famous Ophiuchus D’Or. Recognizing the patronus for whose it was, he waited as it landed heavily but gracefully on the table beside him. It lifted its hooked beak and whispered its message to him.

Lucius, I need to enter the muggle world with Na-Lady Flanders and Lord Wily. Apparently the registration at Hogwarts is light by no few children. When we find them, they may need homes.

Lucius let a frown cross his lips for a second before indicating he had no return message and let the patronus dissipate. As the clock struck three, a red mist rose around the perimeter of the room before seeping into its walls. Standing up, he walked to the center of the room.

“Welcome to all of you, Knights of Walpurgis.”

Each wizard, each witch raised their wand up contributing magic to a shape that was glowing over them, a tree in full bloom with a snake twisting among its branches.

Lucius relaxed as it fell to mist and sank over the crowd. “Knights. Almost four decades ago, we were offered a chance to Ally with the Dark Lord. We chose seventeen families to work with him. To this date, his madness has caused the extinction of four families and a retreat of another three to the Continent. This cannot be allowed to continue. It was a mistake for Knight Commander Yaxley to allow this. At the time, it seemed wise. I cast no blame on him; merely recognize in hindsight that it was a mistake. Today, I bring news of a new alliance and hope that this one will prove more fruitful to us.

“Many of you here know the name of McGill. Yet who among us know who and what McGill is?”

An older man with dull gray hair stood up.

“Commander, I am Knight Andreas Ablach. I knew a McGill well. Not this young man nor his father, but his great grandfather and grandfather. I went to Hogwarts back when they were teaching Nature of Magick at the school. McGills are not Dark, they are not Light, and they most certainly not
Neutral not unless you think of neutral as anything not Dark or Light. They are Shadow Wizards. They will use Dark, Light, Neutral, or anything else of magic to get what they need done. The question is, my Commander, what does he need done?"

Murmurs ran through the group before they settled down. Lucius Malfoy nodded. “Thank you for that information. Carmus McGill the current head of the family has invited me and many other Dark families to join him in his new found Alliance. The Alliance of Shadows as he calls it. In light of the news that he is a Shadow Wizard, it take on more significance, however his professed mission is to retain Wizarding traditions while bringing Muggleborns into our culture rather than the other way around. He has in fact managed to get the teachers to celebrate the eight feasts at Hogwarts, with some necessary adjustments for time. This Samhain will be held on October 31st at Hogwarts. The children will participate in a ritual before dinner, a remembrance ritual which I have been asked to conduct.”

A soft gasp was drawn from the crowd.

“Indeed, in four months of overt work, McGill has done what we have not been able to do with four decades of covert work.”

A young man stood, “Knight Adam Davis. I would like to know more about what is a Shadow Wizard. As you know, it is getting harder and harder to get reliable books on the history of magick and even information about the history of Light magick. Even the old books of our families have been subjected to raids and seizures. So forgive my lack of knowledge. What is a Shadow Wizard?”

Ablach stood. “A Shadow Wizard uses all sorts of magick, Light, Dark, or Neutral. They don’t care about the difference. We see Magick as a blessing, a sentient force that has blessed us. Light wizards see it as a tool. Most Neutrals see it as a mix of both, but Shadow wizards don’t. They just see Magick. There is a reason there is no Nature of Magick chair at Hogwarts anymore, because when they were there, they taught Magick could be understood. They experimented with Magick and had the students experiment with it. They had the students dissecting Magick which offended many of the Dark and manipulating it which scared the Light.”

Several people nodded. Ablach stood tall. “I took one of the last classes in Nature of Magick and am considered to be stronger than most here which isn’t true; rather I use my magick in better ways. Some of it can be taught but mostly it must be experiences. I remember when we were first learned to see magickal auras. I asked what color mine was and he would tell me. He said that while he might see it as purple, another will see it as fuchsia, and another will see it as puce. Apparently our associations with color change our perceptions. That’s just a bit of the “what”, the how… that is significant. Yet, I can’t seem to remember our lessons I just know that they changed how we knew our magick.”

Davis bowed towards Ablach. “Thank you, Senior Knight Ablach. Knight Commander, pardon my harshness but I believe our elders were fools to react superstitiously towards the McGill’s teachings. If understanding our magick brings us closer to it and allows our magick more freedom then is that not the essential nature of the Dark? As Knight Sergeant, I place my company’s votes in favor of at least speaking with McGill, if not actively allying with him.”

Several murmurs of agreement followed.

Lucius nodded. “Then I shall approach the McGill with…”

A loud peal rang through the room, startling the people within.

From the ceiling a large ruby drop formed slowly and lowered itself, stretching like a piece of taffy.
Until the bottom of the drop split and allowed a silver form to fall to four feet. The bristly boar’s head lifted and a voice came from its open mouth. “Knight Commander Malfoy, Magick has requested I come; may I ask you for what am I summoned?”

Lucius tilted his head forward, eyes flickering with emotions and thoughts. He knew he could not allow the other Knights to see his weakness or doubt. Raising his head, he faced the red covered door. “Indeed, Magick has answered our need. Shall we admit the McGill as our guest?”

Blue lights glowed on the tip of so many wands, the air seemed purple.

“So mote it be.” Lucius walked over to the door and placed one hand upon the center, slowly the red barrier curled and flowed backwards until it framed the door itself. As he stepped back, the door opened as if pushed by an unseen hand. Before the McGill came an undulation of power. It pressed against them, covering them, they breathed into the lungs. Such power, such exquisite pure power. Lucius could feel it lifting him, filling him, calling to him. With a shudder, Lucius fought against the power. He was a Malfoy, he was the Knight Commander of the Knights of Walpurgis. He knew who he was and in that moment brought himself back to himself. With a low growl, he pushed the foreign magick away and let his own aura unfurl. Behind him, he felt several others also fight off the magick and let their power clash with the McGill’s. Malfoy straightened his shoulders and with one tilted pale eyebrow stared at the McGill.

Carmus laughed, pulling his power back quickly. Around them there were gasps and whimpers as people stopped getting drunk off his magick. “Well, I could expect no less from the Knight Commander, could I?”

Lucius stared at him with his own piercing grey eyes. Carmus looked as he always did though he was dressed in a fine dark green diamond pattern over-robe, with a yellow under-robe covered in dark gold Celtic designs, over a black high collared shirt. He looked as he always did, a stocky young man of five foot nine with dark brown hair that had a couple touches of red, dark brown eyes, and a slight smile.

“I had to test you, to see if any of you are worthy of an alliance. Please do understand, our alliance, if we choose to have one, will be based on truth. I do not believe in your pureblood mania. Blood means nothing, Magick, the power of Magick means all. You look down on those you call creatures but they are still children of Magick. If I ally with you, if The McGill allies with you, you will have to give up this senseless war against the other children of Magick, you will have to realize that you must not look down on them, they are part of Magick, just as you are. If you refuse to do so, then I must refuse to do so. With that basic understanding, ask your questions of me.”

Lucius tilted his head in recognition. “Understood, I do believe that the questions my knights have should be addressed at a later time based on what you tell us now. I do understand that to be The McGill is hard to explain in the short time we have but surely you can manage to explain some of it.

Carmus nodded. Moving towards a table set at the front of the room, he sat down on the table and an image of himself appeared twice as large behind him. “Yes, okay. Story time, this is the story about how my ancestral clan of McGillis became who we are, the Servants of Magick. About four thousand years ago…”

As the tale wound down, Carmus stared at the gathered Knights. Many seemed confused and shocked. Lucius stared at him, mind swirling behind those gray eyes. Standing he walked over to Carmus and leaned down, his voice low. “So, your plan is to give magick to all humans, isn’t it?”

“No. It is to spread the understanding to all humans, lest Magick decides to remove Magick once
more. Humans are worthy of Magick. All humans. We do not prey on the meathach. I will not work with those who do.”

Brown eyes met gray in a domination battle. Silently Lucius stepped back. Inclining his head in acknowledgement. “It is so appropriate that their name includes ‘meat’.”

“It means ‘deserving of care’ not ‘to be eaten’. They do not have our skills so we should take care of them. Now, considering how advanced they are compared to us, perhaps we are meathach.”

Pale nostrils flared in shock. “And yet you still take care of them.”

“Not merely them, we are Wizards.” Carmus replied.

Malfoy nodded, and then bowed low, his eyes falling to the floor. Beyond them the room quieted. Carmus looked up to see each person bowing, silently, eyes down.

“Why?”

“Because we understand your sacrifice.” Came the voice of Ablach.

Carmus nodded. “I thank you but please we must discuss what, if any alliance we shall have.”

Lucius stepped forward. “You and yours are the servant of Magick themselves, my Lord. We are the Knight of Walpurgis. You know why we honor that night above all others, we serve Magick or so we state. How can we not ally ourselves with the one family who speaks to Magick themselves? We will serve Magick.”

Carmus nodded and stared at the group. “Some of you are linked to Voldemort. I refuse to call him the Dark Lord for he does not deserve to be your Lord. Not yet, because I fear letting him know that you are no longer loyal to him, so I sometimes must excuse you from some work.

“Now, I have some information and then a question for you: First, those of you with the Mark, it prevents you from getting your wives and mates pregnant. I have many members of my family working on removing this restriction. Second, I request marked volunteers who will allow my people to study your Mark. Those of you who are willing, who are marked, please tell me who you are. Later, if you still wish to be allies, then we can figure out how to work together.”

Carmus held up his hand, “I keep saying ‘if’ for a reason. You are Dark. Your emotions, both in and out of your control, are your primary motivation. I appreciate and value the Dark. Even the Dark knows that sometimes you need to think things through and not merely react. So I will retire now and let you discuss this but I will leave you with this one last thought.”

Carmus stood up and looked at them slowly. “I appreciate each and every one of you. You are Dark, you are beautiful, and Magick loves you. So as she does, so do I. I hope we can work together. Even if we don’t work together, as long as you remain Dark; not evil, not cruel, but Dark, then she will never abandon you and the McGills will always be open to you.”

Carmus bowed slowly before he turned and headed for the doorway. The red drew itself up to let him pass.

Tuesday, October 15, 1991

3:35 pm
A buzzing phone caused Lockingen to look up from the report he was trying to type, badly. Picking up the phone, he listened for a moment to the desk sergeant on the line. Frowning, he stood up and stepped away from the computer only to step back. If he remembered correctly, Carmus always complained that the frequency of magick conflicted with that of electricity. Saving his report on his external hard drive, he unplugged it before stowing it on the lower cabinet. Grabbing a couple of extra chairs, he frowned. With what he figured out about these guests, he made the decision to go up front and greet them himself. Exiting the door that led to the main offices, he easily picked them out. Four people stood there; three of them were in dark blue quality silk shirts with silver stripes on the cuffs and hems. The man wore dark blue trousers, that impossibly seems even more luxurious than his shirt, while the two women wore full length dark blue skirts, each one hemmed in silver. Together they seemed to be in a uniform, yet no one he knew wore such quality, not even the generals. With them was another woman, whom seemed to stand with a military bearing. He automatically catalogued her, 5’ 7”, wide shoulders, short cropped tight curled black hair; she was wearing a long, tan, leather trench coat. She wore it buttoned closed, standing as if she expected to be attacked at any moment.

“Landy, have you called Horne? Please have him meet me in Conference Room 3.”

Landy, who was on the phone, nodded and waved at him.

“Welcome, my name is Alexander Lockingen, and, by your appearance, I’m guessing you are familiar with Carmus McGill?”

The leather clad woman stepped forward, hand out. “I am Auror Jana Speakney. I am your counterpart in McGill’s… other realm. May we speak? It does involve children.”

“It would have to be children. Come, considering certain ‘factors’, I’d rather not take you into a room full of computers. Please, follow me.” He led them down the hall to Conference Room 3 and opened the door.

A man, presumably Horne, sat in a chair staring up at the ceiling, as they entered, he stood, “Welcome to our lovely little station. So what seems to be the problem?”

Narcissa Malfoy smiled. “The problem, sir?”

“Madame, people do not come to the police unless they have a problem. I am Gabriel Horne, and I’m assuming that this problem is magical in nature; otherwise you wouldn’t come to me. Until recently, I was the only liaison here, now we have Lockingen. Please, if you ever encounter any trouble in the Muggle world, have them send for us. We will be happy to help you out.”

Narcissa Malfoy nodded her head.

Auror Speakney stepped forward. “Thank you, the woman with whom you were just speaking is Lady Narcissa Malfoy. The gentleman on my left is Lord Wilfred Wiley and on my right is Na-Lady Sarah Flanders, Heir to her family. I am Auror Jana Speakney, and, as I stated to your partner, I would be your counterpart in the Wizarding World. Never hesitate to call on me at need.”

A shimmer and there stood a being about three feet high with large pointed ears and limpid eyes. “I be Gilly, Lord McGill’s house-elf that helps with this project. Gilly will be listening, if you call Gilly, then Gilly will come.”

Horne stared at the ‘house-elf’ then back at his partner. “Ah…”
Lockingen stared at them as well. “Please be seated. All of you?”

The four wizards took seats on one side of the conference table. Gilly looked up at them, eyes wide. “Gilly not sit with wizards.”

Horne frowned. “Gilly will this time. If Gilly has information then you will be at the table, like any other guest in this station, is that clear?”

Gilly nodded, ears flapping. “Yes, Master Horne.”

Lockingen frowned. “Gilly we aren’t Master, even if Mr. is short for Master, call us Detective if you need to call us anything. That title, we have earned.”

“Yes, Detectives.” Gilly moved to the other side of the table and sat on a chair.

Lockingen frowned again and retrieved three large books from a cabinet before turning to Gilly. “Sit on these, so we can see you. Now that we are all seated, what is the problem?”

The Auror nodded. “You were both involved in the Harry Potter case; as a result, we have opened an investigation looking into the disposition of Muggleborn wizards and witches. His case should never have gone unnoticed for so long. It brought to our attention the fact that many of the Hogwarts classes are smaller than expected. Does that mean that there are fewer Muggleborns or is it that they are choosing to go somewhere else? After comparing the Oblivators records with the incoming Hogwarts class lists it was discovered that several children were missing.

“Knowing that Dudley Dursley’s magick was sealed, we fear that it has happened to others. The seal placed on the Dursley child is killing him. The Lord and Ladies are investigating a way to safely remove that seal.”

“What are Obliviators?”

Lord Wiley leaned forward, “When a child shows accidental magick, it can be scary, disruptive, and even dangerous. We send special people who are trained in removing memories.”

Lockingen looked puzzled. “Okay, so you remove the memory from these people, the parents and the child, and then what?”

Lord Wiley shook his head. “Then nothing. They are allowed to continue with their life as normal. It is best for them to forget.”

Lockingen stared at them, turning he looked at Horne, who looked as if he could hardly believe this. “You are telling me that you steal our memories of magic and it’s for the best? So when do we poor Muggles finally learn of its existence?”

“At eleven. The children receive a letter from Hogwarts, through which a professor arranges a home visit, and explains magic.”

“So let me get this straight, this child could be performing ‘accidental’ magic for YEARS, up to a decade, and your solution is to rip out our memories and then, after years of messing with our minds, drop the news that magic is real on us? So if a kid realizes something is wrong, they think they are crazy and if parents realizes something is wrong, they think the kid is possessed, or evil, or… And you wonder how you lost track of Potter? How you lost so many children? Did it never occur to you that maybe, just maybe, some of us would like to know what is happening with our children?!” He put his head into his hands.
Horne stared at them. “Really? And you think this is right? What if we don’t help you find these missing children, will you take our memories?”

Na-Lady Flanders turned her head.

Horne slammed his hand on the table. “Do. No. Look. Away. If we do not help you, will you take our memories?”

Speakney shook her head. “No. We will not.”

“Good, we’ll help you but for the sake of the children. Not for you. It does explain some things I have seen in my life. I know of a man who killed all three of his children. He claimed that they were casting spells on him. Stealing his life, his memories. If I give you his name, can you tell me if you stole his memories, and how many times you did it?”

Speakney lowered her eyes. Pulling out a small book, she opened it. “Yes. What was his name?”

“Bertram Roberts.”

She pulled out a quill and wrote in the book. A second later, more writing appeared and she closed her eyes. “Five times.”

“His oldest daughter was nine.”

Lockingen raised his head up. “It’s a relief that I am not crazy. Write my name in that book.”

Speakney wrote it carefully. The other writing appeared again. “Eight times!”

“Tell me, does repeated memory theft have negative side effects, because I can’t believe they are good.”

“Yes, it can. It depends on how much memory is affected.”

“You do realize that fear of this exact abuse is why some Muggles, as you call us, don’t like you. Give us the names, birthdates if you have them, parents’ names, last known address and we will search the database for them. However, I want your word, that none of you will approach them without us.”

Lady Malfoy nodded. “Acceptable. Understand, if you will, that the Wizarding world is very... traditional. Change, while inexorable, is extremely slow in our world. There are many who do not even know that men have walked on the moon, much less traveled into space. To them it is as inconceivable as you find magic. We do not take your memories out of a sense of superiority but rather fear. There are so many of you but few of us. It is not right, but people who allow fear to control them make stupid choices. Right now, right this minute, a revolution is happening. The main proponent for allowing things to remain the same is being brought low. We, right now, have a chance to change the policies of the past eight hundred years. This is our chance to change how my people perceive those who do not have magic.

“What we do now will form the new policy, if we win. Help us. Help us learn to come into this time period. Help us learn to correct the damage we have done to you. Anger is deserved but, as we of the dark realize, while emotions are justified, they need to be handled. Anger, even justified anger, will not help this not happen again. Only new choices, new polices, new ideas will. Will you help us?”

Lockingen stared at them, eyes cold. “Can you repair my memories?”
The Auror shook her head. “We could try, but the chances of it helping you are low while it is known to break a mind. If you wish it, I will release the records of each of your obliviations as well as make a note that you are never to be oblivated again, unless it is at your request. Also, I would like the team to examine your child. It may be that what happened to the Dursley child was done to your child and the sooner the magick is released not only the less pain there is involved but the less danger there is.”

“My wife and I are separated. Our son is… troubled. He’s adopted. We couldn’t have children and we wanted children. About three years ago, pressures started and we separated approximately half a year ago. Is it possible that these obliviations contributed to that?”

Lady Flanders sat forward. “My name is Sarah Flanders. I am trained in mental healing. Yes and no. The problem is if you and your wife talked something through but then was made to forget it as a side effect or you remember something that was erased from her, it could cause problems. Not only that but it has a side effect of persistence. The mind doesn’t like to be messed with so when we do, it started hardening. It tries to hold on to what it was harder and harder. To put it poetically, it hardens your heart. So while you may have been inclined to forgive someone, you won’t. Being magickal protects us from this, somewhat, but causes other problems. Some people become so loose and odd as to become deranged, others become paranoid, but muggles mainly hunker down and become resistant. If you wish it, I will go with you to your wife and child. I will examine them and I will do what we can for them. Auror Speakney, will you authorize an exception to the Statute of Secrecy?”

“Ladies, Lord. I am authorized to grant to each of you the power to make such exceptions. If you believe it is necessary, then so be it.”

“Thank you. It is not much, Detective Lockingen but it is all I can offer you.”

Lockingen nods. “Very well, let us now address your list of students that you say are missing. Give us the information on them, birthdates if you have them, parents’ names, last known address and we will search the database for them.”

“First name?”

“Abigail Harlow, aged 12, born on August 17, 1979. Parents Lawrence and Chanira Harlow. At the time, she lived in Northampshire.”

Before them a screen came alive. First the marriage database to see if the parents were still married. A blue box appeared over some numbers and letters. “Just in case you don’t know what those are, it’s their National Insurance Number. From that we can track where the parents work, if they work. From there I can get the National Health numbers. Find their local GP and from there I can find their most current address. Different screens jumped forward and back, until finally a picture of a young girl, around 12 or thirteen appeared on the screen.

“She is in second form at Northampton High School. (M14 7DE ). It’s a good school. She has a younger sister named Willa who is in the same school and brother, Joshua, who is an associated school. So how do you want to go about it?”

The Auror turned to the others and nodded. “We will be guided by the two of you. It is obvious that in the attempt to isolate our realm from the non-magical realm we have made several grave missteps. So please, tell us how you wish to do this.”

Horne shrugged. “It’s almost four, even if she has afternoon activities; it’ll take us a bit to get there, so we’ll miss her at the school. So we’ll go to their home, and it’s not far from the school. I rather approach them at the school so they don’t think we’re cornering them but I rather they find out
“Abba, can you get that?” Chanira called.

Abigail rolled her eyes before getting up to answer the door. Two men stood just outside holding up warrant cards. Behind them three women and a man stood, all dressed in dark blue and silver clothes, almost like a uniform. Looking at the cards, she frowned. “Ahh... is something wrong?”

“No, miss. I presume that you are Ms. Abigail Harlow?”

“Yes.”

“We need to speak to your entire family. I am Detective Inspector Lockingen and this is my partner Detective Inspector Horne. We are actually from Surrey but there has been an issue and your family may be involved. Behind me is a Special Forces officer Speakney and Specialists Malfoy, Wiley and Flanders. If you wish, you may call for confirmation.”

“Abba, who is it?”

“Police, mum.”

Abigail felt her mother come up behind her.

“Ma’am. As I was telling your daughter, I am Detective Inspector Lockingen and this is my partner Detective Inspector Horne from Surrey. We have a case that your family may be involved in. I am here with Special Forces officer Speakney and three specialists. Is your husband and younger children at home?” He smiled, holding out his warrant card for her inspection.

Chanira nodded. “Yes, we were planning to eat early. Please come in.”

Abigail watched as they entered. One of the female specialists looked at her as if she wanted to see what was inside of her. Shaking her heard. She entered the family room and waited as her mum got the rest of the family together. After introductions, the SF officer smiled at her gently.

“Truly, it is nothing bad... just unexpected.” Standing up, she moved to greet Mr. Harlow. “Sir, thank you for your time. I am Officer Jana Speakney and we have reached out to local police force for some help. On July 9th of 1982, when your eldest daughter was four years old, an alarm was triggered in our offices. Your daughter was performing accidental magick. I believe a family friend was approaching your younger daughter with malicious intent and although Abigail did not know what he intended to do but in her fear, she threw him into a wall. This was done in front of you and several others. Obliviators were sent out. They removed the memory from that man and later supplied local police with evidence to place him into custody. This was not the last time, her magick came out forcefully but the last report we have is when she was six, two years later.

“We have recently discovered that several of our Obliviators were suborned into not just removing the memories but in sealing the child’s magick. Unfortunately the seal they use... is damaging to the child. The fact that neither of your younger children have shown any magickal talent leads us to believe that they sealed both of your younger children at birth or soon after.”
Her dad stood up with a furious look on his face. “Are you mad? What insanity are you babbling about? Magick? And the police honestly believed you. Let me see your warrant cards!”

The woman pulled out a slim dark stick and suddenly there was a loud bang and red light.

“Sir, please calm yourself. As for seeing the officer’s warrant cards, of course you may and you may even call their division to check on them but first let us prove to you magick does exist?”

Abigail watched as he father shook his head as if to stop the ringing in his ears. Her mother reached forward to wrap her hand around her husband’s fist. “I’m sorry but you must understand that this is too ridiculous to believe.”

The blond female specialist leaned forward, one leg crossed over the other and smiled. Her long blond hair was pulled back in chignon. “Mr. Harlow please be seated. We are, after all, civilized beings. Gilly.”

A pop and suddenly a small large eared creature was standing next to the lady. Abagail had never seen such a creature. Less than three feet tall with large ears and eyes. It was dressed in a tunic with a coat of arms on it.

“Lady Malfoy be calling for Gilly?”

“Yes, may we please have a tea service? Perhaps some small sandwiches for the children.”

“What in god’s name is that... thing?!”

“Mr. Harlow, that is a house elf. Many families in the Wizarding World have them. They are beings of magick who serve families in return for shelter and magick. A bonded house elf has greater access to their magick than an unbound one. House elves also desire territory, magickally rich territory. They can soak up energy from those places that are magickally rich and become stronger. This particular house elf belongs to a family by the name of McGill and they have allowed him to be on call for us. Now please, sit down and let us have tea properly.”

The house elf appeared with another pop and two large silver trays behind them. Abigail moved closer. It smiled at her and a cup of tea moved from the tray to hover in front of her hand.

“Oh. Ummm thank you?”

“Elder Mistress Harlow is such a polite child. Elder Mistress Harlow has questions that you would ask of Gilly?”

Abigail noticed that everyone was looking at her. A cool touch of her arm caused her to look down. “Ask; Elder Mistress will not learn if she never asks. Gilly not able to be offended.”

Abigail smiled. “Okay. Mrs... Malfoy?”

“Yes, she be Lady Malfoy.”

“Oh. Lady Malfoy said that you serve families in return for magick?”

“Yes, house elves used to live wild. We had clans and territory but humans, non magickal humans started to spread and take over places. We were guardians of places. As humans learned to channel magick, they enrich their homes. It was more magick than just tending magickal places. Humans concentrate and use magic. When they do, some magick seeps into the land and air where they are. We can use that magick.
“If there is no house elf then the magick goes wild, and many houses become dangerous because of wild magick. Even Dark human magick is not as bad as wild as neglected magick.”

Willa nodded, “Like a swimming pool. If you don’t take care of it and just let it sit, it turns foul.”

“Yes, Young Mistress Harlow. Just like that. House elves care for magick in natural places as well as home. Being bonded to a family allows us to not just use the magick in the ground once it’s absorbed but also the free floating magick that surrounded the area. That magick is flavored by the family and only those considered family can access it. So for a house elf to take care of house gives it more magick and to be bonded to family means even more magick.” Gilly nodded, ears flapping.

Joshua came up and frowned, “But if you are bonded to a family, what’s to keep them from hurting you?”

Speakney frowned. “Nothing. In fact so many house elves believe in whatever their masters’ say that they willingly subject themselves to their master’s abuse. One family has the habit of demanding a house elf be born when a child is. That house elf belongs to the person and at their death, the house elf is beheaded. Most families treat them as little more than slaves or dogs. However, they are magickal beings and sentient ones at that. Over the past few years several ideas and bills have been floated about house elves. The store where they are bought is subject to new regulations that prevent them from living in horrendous conditions until they are bought. They also are preventing force breeding.” Taking a deep breath, “There is much in the Wizarding world that seems more fit for three centuries past than they do for the modern era but we are working on it. This includes our relations with non-Wizarding folk, Muggles as they are known in our world.”

“Muggles?” Chanira Harlow frowned. “Alright, you said something about our memories being taken away?”

“Yes, Mrs. Harlow. As mentioned, I am Lady Narcissa Malfoy, please call me Narcissa. The man to my left is Lord Wiley and the lady to my right is Na-Lady Flanders. We are Healers. We represent the three divisions of Light, Dark, and Neutral. While removing your memories seems to be barbaric and abusive, please remember that when these procedures were instituted it was not uncommon for parents to denounce their children who were magickal either in an attempt to cure them or be rid of them. Those children suffered torture, molestation, and brutal deaths. Often being drawn and quartered or burned alive. No few children instead were sold to be used for their magickal power, forced by their owners to exhaust themselves performing healing or other magickal tasks all unaware that magick is merely the use of energy. These children were beaten and often starved thereby unable to build their magickal energy. When they failed, they were murdered as casually as one would dispose of a broken legged horse. Some were even bred to ensure a crop of magickal slaves. So while to you it seems cruel, we had a vested interest in no one remembering.

“At eleven the child was approached and if they were in danger or wanted to, left this world for ours. Later it was deemed cruel to remove the children but allowing them to stay and reveal magick to those who didn’t understand or feared it placed themselves and our world in danger. So, we took your memories in self-defense. Times have changed but not that much. Lord McGill spoke a girl whose parents were sure her magick was her being possessed by the devil and tried to exorcise her. They badly hurt her and he had to rescue her. Even the Potter case, the Durselys fearing magick thought to abuse it out of Young Lord Potter. I know the case has been in the papers.”

Abigail watched as her mother sat back stunned.

“I understand but there has to be a better way. According to you, you’ve taken a part of me and my children at least twice.”
“Yes,” Speakney replied. “Yes, we have and as I have said we are trying to find other ways but... it will be hard. We live in fear of such things happening again. Do you realize our most fearsome spell is a spell that kills one person at a time and it takes quite a bit of power? You have guns that can kill hundreds in a few minutes.”

Lawrence Harlow sat back down, head down. “So what now?”

“The Obliviators were a rogue group, performing unauthorized spells. We wish to check you for those spells and remove them from you. It should be done by a Healer, which is why I have the Ladies Malfoy and Flanders and Lord Wiley.”

Abigail stood up. “You said at 11 you gave the children the choice, right? I’m thirteen and I want to know.”

“Abba!” Chanira exclaimed.

Lord Wiley stood. “Very well, child. It should not hurt but if it does, let me know.” He drew from his pocket a thick squat honey colored wand and pointed it at her. “Magicae ostende ligat.”

It felt cool like as if her entire body was covered in menthol. An umber light flowed up from her trainers and over body. As it reached the base of her neck a buzzing feeling, like the way a phone vibrates in your pocket was felt. It wasn’t painful, just annoying. It grew stronger as if it was vibrating her entire head.

“Enough. She has been tampered with. We must assess the entire family and prescribe a methodology by which they will be free to access their magick. If they wish to seal it later, so be it. At least then it will be done properly.”

Lawrence looked at his daughter in amazement. “What if we don’t? What if we don’t want you to give her magick?”

Lady Flanders pulled a moue of distaste, brushing her hair back. “We will not give her magick, she has it. It was born in her. What we will give her is a way to understand and control her innate magick. Both you and your wife must have some touch of it. Perhaps not enough to register as in need of training but you both have to have the potentiality or she can’t. It’s genetic not environmental. As for what happens if she doesn’t. It’s easy, she dies. Witches and Wizards who exercise their magick do not run to fat. They can’t. Magick uses energy. Magick must obey physical laws. Fat is stored energy. Magick uses fat up. It is why during the school year, the students are fed large meals. So, if your child is blocked from magick but her body still demands the amount of food necessary to do magick, what happens?”

Abigail swallowed noisily. “I get too heavy; diabetes and heart problems?”

Lady Flanders smiled at her. “Excellent deduction. Unfortunately, you forget that this seal is a lid on your magick. You are now the swimming pool. If we do not remove the lid, what happens?”

John stared at his sister. “Her magick turns on her. It can’t get out so it goes wild.”

Lord Wiley nodded. “Indeed. It will either break the bindings or it will consume her. The person who did the sealing did not know or did not care that one does not seal children. Their power is still developing and there is no way to predict how strong a child will be. She and all of you must learn to use your power so that it does not use you. Once you learn how, once you are trained, then you may go to a proper Healer to seal your power and it will be channeled properly so your magick doesn’t feedback on you and try to kill you. Of course if you don’t, then you condemn your entire family to
death. As a Lord of the Light, I cannot but despise you for your cowardice in facing reality.”

Narcissa smiled slightly. “As a Lady of the Dark, I understand your fears but counsel you to harness your fear; do not let it control you.”

Lady Flanders stood, bowed slightly. “As a Lady of Neutrality, I say step between courage and fear. It is understandable that you fear what you do not understand but you cannot understand without learning. Learn and then you will know what to properly fear.”

Chanira stared at them. “I am... so... this is so much.”

Lockingen took her hand. “Believe me, I know. You should have seen me when I first found out.”

Joshua frowned. “Is this whole Light/Dark/Neutral thing like the Force?”

Locke chuckled. “No. Or maybe yes. From what I understand, it’s like this The Light believes in maintaining Order, things have their place and time. They are surface dwellers and as long as they can see it, they’ll handle it. They are also supposedly experts in bending light or illusion. The Dark believes all life is in Chaos, emotions are strength and power but they have to be careful not to get lost in it. They are supposedly experts in real change. The Neutrals tend to borrow from both as they will and try not to be too one or the other.”

Lord Wiley inclined his head. “Succinct if glib. In reality, only about 45% of the Wizarding World incline towards one or the other, the rest remain Neutral.”

“And this is a choice?”

Lady Flanders frowned. “Yes, and no. Yes in that you must choose how you use your magick and no in the sense that you are born with an inclination towards certain magick.” She looked around the room. “Do any of you draw or paint? Some people have innate talent towards drawing people while others may do better at landscapes. Does that mean they can’t choose what to depict, of course they can. They can choose medium, subjects, even materials but they cannot choose their innate talent. Whether you are inclined towards Light, Dark, or Neutral only you can choose how to use your magick.”

Lord Wiley nodded. “True, and currently we are working to change the titles of the factions back to the old system. Too many believe Light means good and Dark, evil. Both types of magic can be used for good and evil. Long ago, they were called Umha (bronze), Airgead (silver), and Ór (gold). Which can be more simply stated as Bronze, Silver, and Gold. Bronze, especially when it is tarnished green, is the color of plants, or life, and represents life unrestrained. Perfect for those who believe that life is about living and feeling and bury their selves in that feeling. While Gold describes the sun and the light it gives. It represents the tendency to be overt in their dealings and immutable about everything. However, just as the sun burns, so too can determination to proceed regardless of consequences. Remember well the lesson of Icarus. And finally, there is Silver.), born from the ground; the Green ground and with the shine of the light, the Gold. It balances between the Green and the Gold. We have forgotten it’s about balance. Dark and Light, both, cling too much to the belief that there is a firm boundary between the two and allow not mixing. That it is must be one, or the other. Our community, in recoiling from the aftermath of the war, has labeled the Dark, the Bronze, evil for the actions of a few. Green, Silver, Gold… whichever you are, you are welcome. And if you wish it, my family will sponsor yours in our world.”

Lady Flanders stared in shock, before gently smiling. A change had come that was a long time in waiting.
Tuesday October 15, 1991

Headmaster Dumbledore’s Office

6:45 PM

Minerva McGonagall stood outside the stone gargoyle that led to the chambers of the Headmaster, she rested one hand on the cool smooth stone and said, “Let me by, Dimia, thank you.”

The gargoyle turned and the stairs appeared. Gently lifting her robe only a couple of centimeters, she headed up the stairs, letting the robe fall as she went. One sharp knock was all that she gave before she entered. She stopped about five feet in front of the Headmaster’s desk, “You requested a meeting, Headmaster?”

Albus Dumbledore stood as she approached and smiled, his blue eyes twinkling, “Yes, Minerva, please sit. I was wondering about the celebration for Halloween. Naturally, we are having the feast, but considering that you did a wonderful job at Mabon, I was hoping you would share what you plan to do for Halloween.”

McGonagall nodded once, “Very well, Headmaster. For Samhain, we will be coordinating our lessons to revolve around the holiday. I will show them how to use transfiguration to change things into decoration, Filius has some holiday charms, NEWT students will prepare the Great Hall for the feast. Years one through three will do simple remembrance and renewal rituals. Years four and five will do one a bit more complex and years six and seven will do a full remembrance ritual. The simple rituals will be held by each house, in our own common rooms before the feast, and at the feast we will have a moment of silence. That will be all. As you can see, all very simple.

“The other rituals, shall be in the Great Hall, after the young ones are in the common rooms. After all they can be complex and the more experienced eyes, the better. We want them to appreciate and understand what this day means in Wizarding Culture, while the feast and candy will honor the Muggle Halloween.”

Dumbledore nodded, “Indeed. Thank you for sharing. Minerva?”

“Yes, Headmaster?”

“Truly… I…. Can there be no forgiveness for me? I swear to you that I had no reason to believe that they would not care for him like they did their own son.”

McGonagall stared at him, inwardly vacillating between rage and shock at his audacity. “Headmaster, I watched them all day, I told you myself that they were horrible people. When did you start doubting my judgment of people? And perhaps you could be forgiven for placing him there but you cannot be forgiven for never checking up on him. It was a shocking dereliction of duty, for you to place a child then ignore him for almost ten years. You are entrusted with our children, our future but if you cannot be bothered to keep track of one wee bairn, how can we trust you to keep track of every child in Hogwarts: Slytherin, Ravenclaw, Hufflepuff and Gryffindor? No, that can’nae be forgiven. That, Headmaster, is utterly unforgiveable. Now I need to get back to work.” With barely a bowed head of nominal respect, she strode from the room.

Wednesday October 16, 1991

6:50 am

Front Entrance Hall
Lucius Malfoy looked at the gray stones of Hogwarts. Even though, as a governor of the school, he had an open invitation to visit, there was something special about coming here at this time. So early in the morning, before the students were up and about, even Peeves was missing. The sharp echo of his cane striking the ground seemed to pierce stillness. A shadow came from an adjacent corridor. Lucius turned and bowed a true bow of respect.

“Deputy Headmistress.”

“Lord Malfoy. Welcome to Hogwarts, please come with me to my office. I wish to go over your presentation for this Samhain.” She turned and gestured to the corridor that she came from. As they walked, Lucius noticed some of the portraits waking up.

“You know, Lord Malfoy, I do believe this is the first time you have been to my office without you being in trouble.”

Lucius raised one eyebrow, “Indeed. This is a much more pleasant reason to be going there.; Neither being in trouble nor my son being in trouble.”

“As if you and your son both aren’t intelligent enough to avoid getting caught?”

Lucius smiled, “To be caught, one must first do the deed.”

Minerva shook her head, “Now, about Samhain?”

Lucius nodded and opened a portfolio that he was carrying. Pulling out one booklet he handed it to her saying, “Lord McGill has a Muggle consultant who is going to help us by presenting this to the families in preparation for Samhain. Over sixty-five percent of the parents of the Muggle-Born students have agreed to be present at the festivities. Each Muggle-Born child will have at least one parent or guardian on hand. We will be having a meeting this weekend where we will review the various ideas for the rituals.”

“Yes, I have met his consultant. Actually, I believe he is a good friend of Albertus Pengel. He is called Cereus. He is waiting with the others in the meeting room.” McGonagall stopped before a door. Lucius stepped forward and opened the door, bowing her through it. She gave him a nod of respect before entering the room.

Stopping in front of a table where five others were currently sitting, she said, “Lord Malfoy, you are known to Masters Flitwick and Snape, as well as Mistress Sprout. Be you now known to Lord Essus, who is our Light Advisor as you are our Dark Advisor, and Cereus, our Muggle Advisor.”

Lord Malfoy bowed, “I am glad to meet new allies.”

“Even Muggles, Malfoy?” Cereus asked, lightly, eyes traveling around the room.

Lucius paused, “Yes. Lately, I have had to revise my opinion of Muggles and while I would never wish to become a Muggle, as it would require me to be that which I am not, their society, and way of life have become quite the fascination with me. The lies we were told were easy to believe because we had no information, well accurate information.”

“Good... now that’s a healthy attitude. Anyways, most of you know each other. My birth name is Gavin Rollins, my Wiccan coven name is Moonflower, and my Wizarding World name is Cereus. I am 43 years old. Have one child and my best friend is a Wizard. That’s the only reason I’m doing this. So what is the ‘this’ that I am doing?
“My job is to be a translator, help you explain what you are doing so it doesn’t offend anyone’s religious sensibilities or beliefs. While it is impossible to be perfect, let’s aim for it, shall we? So the first holiday up is Samhain; the beginning and the end of the year and time of reflection. That would put it solely within your camp, Mr. Malfoy.”

“Indeed. Now, Hogwarts contains seven years of students and what is suitable for a first year may be boring and tedious to a seventh year. Therefore I believe we should have three levels of celebrations: We will start with a simple, or more basic, observance of this holiday. When the first through third years go to bed at nine, we will lead the fourth through seventh years through a second, more in depth, ceremony. When the fourth and fifth year students go back to their common rooms at ten, then we will have the final, most profound, level through midnight. This schedule allows us to tailor the ceremony to the age and magic level of the students.

Malfoy snapped his fingers and folders appeared before each person, “If you will please review my schedule of events I believe you will find it not only speaks to the cyclical nature of the holiday but will provide a well-rounded Samhain experience.”

Samhain: The End & Beginning

7:00 AM – A Time of Reflection
Common Room House meetings encouraging wizard-born students to share their previous Samhain celebrations as well as allowing those with less experience of this holiday ask questions of their Heads of House.

8:30 AM to 11:00 AM Myths and Legends
Bards recite tales of the holiday while the sixth and seventh years students act them out.

11:00 AM to 12:00 PM Outdoor Reflection (Present)
Students are encouraged to spend personal, quiet time outside while observing the physical signs of the changing seasons.

12:00 PM to 1:00 PM Lunch
Light lunch to place them in a receptive frame of mind.

3:30 PM to 4:30 PM Individual Meditation:
Each student will have monitored meditation for one hour. Each house decides how to meditate. Some suggested meditations follow:

Gryffindor – Fire – Candle Meditation
Slytherin – Water – Dark Lake/Scrying bowls.
Ravenclaw – Air – Incense
Hufflepuff – Earth – Stone – Seed Meditation

4:30 to 6:30 Indoor Reflection (Past)
Interhouse gathering in side halls. Sixth and seventh year students will decorate each side hall and be on hand to talk about traditions, meditations, their House Founder, House traditions, and answer questions about culture. First through fourth year students will proceed through the halls visiting,
mingling, and talking. Ghosts are welcome and encouraged to interact with the students.

6:30 PM to 7:00 PM Relaxation and Personal Reflection
7:00 PM Halloween Feast
7:00 PM Welcome by Headmaster
7:10 PM Regarding Samhain by Lucius Malfoy
7:15 PM First Remembrance Ritual (Guided).
7:25 PM Moment of Remembrance for Lost Loved Ones
7:30 PM Feast Begins
8:45 PM First through Third Year students dismissed to Houses.
9:00 PM Second Remembrance Ritual
The candles of the hall will be lowered to eye height. Meditation on the end and beginning, sowing and harvest, and life and death.
9:45 PM Fourth and Fifth Years dismissed to Houses.
10:00 PM Parents dismissed if they wish to be. Third Level Guided Ritual.

Suggested Ritual: Lovat’s Guided Ghost Convergence Ritual.

Moonchild looked at the schedule and suggested meditations. “This shouldn’t be a problem as long as we stress the meditations are not worship but rather exercises to clear minds and allow the children to feel the magick that is ambient at these times. Words can have a significant effect. Magick is obviously real to them but when introducing these holidays, we make it about learning the culture, not changing religions. By the way, and this question will get asked, what religion are you and what religion are these holidays for?”

Lord Malfoy looked at the Moonflower, a pensive look on his face, “The Wizarding world doesn’t have a religion, per se. These holidays are celebrated by Wizards all over the world. They are often called by different names, and may include different rituals, but they all carry the same purpose behind them. In Western Europe, we tend to the use the modern Celtic names and associations, however, it is more about the ebb and flow of Magick.

“Magick is alive, Moonflower. It isn’t just real; it’s alive in a way Muggles can’t really understand. Many Muggles speak of a soul, if such a thing exists, so then Magick is the soul of existence. It suffuses every animal, every plant, every thing. Magick has whims and tempers. As a Dark Wizard, I connect to Magick on a visceral level, While Light Wizards use very strict rituals. Imagine that you were to meet a brand new alien race. Dark Wizards would attempt to reach them on emotional levels, while Light Wizards would go the route of formality and rigid interactions. Both are freeing in their constraints. A Dark Wizard can match them on emotion but we know that what we feel and what we say are two different things. Imagine if you responded to their feelings rather than their words. That is Dark.

“Dark is Dark. Whether they practice in Egypt or Sweden. Whether here in England or in the United States, Dark is Dark. The rituals, and our Dark rituals can be freeform, are our way of speaking to Magick, but is it a religion? It’s a faith, but it’s not as organized as most formal religions.”
Moonflower frowned as he tugged one lock of his hair. “I see... I... I can work with that. Those who will still object will do so no matter what but when we frame their participation as developing their magickal gift; it becomes obvious that no matter what religion they are, to truly experience this world they need to understand the forces underlying it. I can work with that. Thank you.

“One more question. This last ritual. No offense but it sounds like Necromancy which has a bad connotation in Muggle culture.”

Lucius stiffened.

Lord Essus nodded. “Well that’s because, technically, it is but... when Muggles think of Necromancy they think of Command Necromancy. Basically forcing the dead to obey the living and torturing their souls if they don’t obey. When you speak to one of the ghosts here, you are, in fact, doing Necromancy because you are speaking to the dead. What this ritual does is commune with those who have gone before but you aren’t demanding their obedience only requesting they listen. It isn’t evil necromancy, if that makes sense to you.”

Cereus nodded. “Yes and there is a better way to explain it to them so they don’t freak out. I’ll work on it. So what else do we need to talk about?”

“Actually, Cereus, I think it’s time you met one of our resident ghost.” McGonagall stood as a gray shape slowly faded through the door. “May I introduce you to ....”

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Kingston upon the Thames

10:45 AM

The pool of the Slytherin green wax grew slowly. Gently placing the ring into the wax, he allowed a spark of magick to flow and pulled it back. The shimmer of a real seal always made him smile. Such a small magick but he had always found it fun. Checking the time, he stood. He still had almost an hour before he had to present himself to Her Majesty, and he had plenty of time to review Dudley’s proposed treatment as well as the report on the three families contacted. In one case the child had died in a car accident but had one sibling who had survived and would need to undergo release.

Damn Dumbledore’s interference. What did he get from this?

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1:15 pm

Klein Business Park

Lucius Malfoy watched the flow of traffic on the street. For all that he considered Muggles to be the inferior of the species; he had to admit that there were so very many of them. From his spot along the wall, he could see no less than two hundred Muggles, which was more than two thirds of the population of Hogwarts.

The noise brought about by the Muggle conveyances they called autos made him want to wince, not to mention the language of these primitives. In ten minutes, he had heard more foul language than he had in all his years at Hogwarts. And yet... as disgusting as they were, there were some wondrous things. He had recently walked past a shop that showed, among other things, a camera that took live images and displayed them like a talking mirror.

Sniffing delicately, he checked the address once more and moved towards his destination. As he turned off the main street and into a quiet professional area, he wondered at the difference a few
blocks could make. Soon he came to the building that matched the address he had been given. Opening the door, he stepped into a lobby that smell of greenery. The floor was not stone though it looked like it was and was highly polished. To his left was a monolith that proclaimed itself a directory. Inset in it was another television screen. Lucius approached it and frowned. He saw no manner of getting it to respond.

"May I help you?" A young woman asked him softly.

Lucius turned to her.

"Perhaps, I am looking for a particular location in this building."

She nodded, her short black hair swaying softly. "Well, this is our touch screen directory. Please touch where it says 'Find.'"

Lucius looked at her before turning back and carefully lifted one hand, with his forefinger extended and touched the green area of the screen. Immediately it changed. Now the screen showed 'A-Z' and a white square with a black Q.

"You can either search through the A-Z log or you can type the name in the white box and it will find it for you. Once you do, you may enter the elevator there to go to any floor between here and ten. All other floors are locked for privacy and I will have call up to unlock them for you." She told him softly.

"Thank you." Lucius turned back to the screen and touched the white rectangle. A line flashed in it as he typed a name. Assuming he was meant to touch the Q. He did so. In less than a second, the name returned with a room number listed on it. Nodding to the young woman, he headed over to the... elevator. It had one round button with an arrow pointing up. Pressing it, he noticed a display with a red numbers decreasing until it showed G and the doors opened. Determinedly entering, he looked to the left and realized that the first number must be the floor number. Pressing 6, he saw the door close and with a jerk the ... elevator rose. As it rose, numbers on the inside counted upwards, chiming as it passed each floor. As it chimed six, the door opened and Lucius stepped out. No matter what, he was not going to go through that again, he would apparate home!

Looking for signs, he soon came to the door listed in the directory. Carefully, he opened the door and entered a room. There were several chairs around the wall, a small area with brightly colored toys and a desk that had what looked like bendable colored rods on it. Across the room was a door and a small window beside it with two panes of clouded glass. One side slid opened as he approached. An older woman with a dark hair sat behind it, her hair pulled back in bun. "Yes, do you have an appointment?"

"No, but if you would please inform the Drs. Granger, that Lord Malfoy is here to see them, it would be appreciated."

The woman looked him up and down, eyes shrewd, “Please have a seat and when they have a moment, I will try to deliver your message."

Lucius pulled back his shoulders and placed the snake head of his cane on counter top, preventing her from closing the window. “Madam, my business with them is neither your concern nor does it need your approval. You will go and tell them that Lord Malfoy is here to see them and you will do it now, lest you discover exactly what I do to rude, insignificant servants, who intrude into the life of their betters. Is that clear… madam?
The woman stood, nostrils flaring. Behind her Dr. Ellen Granger walked past. Lifting her head from
the chart, she backed up when she noticed who was at the window. “Mr. Malfoy. Laura, this Mr.
Malfoy, he is a governor at my daughter’s school. They are doing an exchange program and he is
here to discuss it. Please let him in, and when you see the other Dr. Granger, send him in. Thank
you.”

Laura nodded and pressed the button to release the door. Lord Malfoy strode through the door, head
high. Dr. Granger pointed the way towards her office. “Let me give Laura these charts to file. I will
join you in a minute. Laura, can we change Mr. Angelli’s appointment to the 18th?”

Laura nodded, taking the charts. Dr. Granger waited until Lord Malfoy entered the office. “I do
apologize for his manner Laura, next time just let him pass through. It’s not worth the stresses it
places on you. Not to mention, our families will be linked for at least seven if not more years.”

“I understand. The things we do for our children.”

“Truly. Now when Alan’s done, send him in?” Ellen left Laura with the charts and entered into the
room, closing the door slightly before taking a seat behind the desk. “Please, sit. Mr. Malfoy, no
offense but please don’t antagonize my office manager. An office lives and dies on their office
manager. I would rather not lose her. So Mr. Malfoy, what is it that you need to talk to me about?”

“It is about sponsorship for your daughter. As you know our society is rather complex. It has often
closed itself to those who do not understand it. About fourteen hundred years ago, one of our
legislators had an idea. Sponsorship, it is much like an apprenticeship, in that a family in the society
sponsors an entering family. You have received information about this, have you not?”

“Yes, we have.” Alan Granger entered, closing the door behind him. Smiling, he moved around and
pulled a chair from the wall, taking a seat. “Yet, the information seems to indicate a greater level than
simply our families spending time with each other.”

Lord Malfoy nodded. “Yes, there is a contract. The contract gives me rights to her in the Wizarding
world. On her behalf, I can negotiate and accept betrothal and apprenticeship contracts. Most of the
contracts will be merely modified Magickal Guardianship contracts which are more limited. For
example, I could negotiate a contract on her behalf but not accept it. However it provides less
protection for her. As the child the Malfoy family is Sponsoring, she is considered a member of the
family not merely attached to the family. It is similar to being a wards vs adoption, although magickal
adoption is quite different but to simplify it for you. The bonds between our families will be stronger.
I have the draft of the contract here for you. In return, it can model for your reciprocal contract with
Draco, I am assuming you have a lawyer in retainer? If they do not do family contracts then I can
give you a list of those who do, even some MRRO approved ones.”

The Grangers looked at each other before the male Granger reached out for the contract. “Lord
Malfoy, I understand that this sponsoring of Hermione is a special honor. However, we are muggles
as you say. We haven’t had betrothals in well over a century and I don’t know if I am comfortable
allowing anyone to betroth my daughter.”

Malfoy nodded. “I can appreciate that, however you must realize that in our children’s year there are
only thirty three students. On average, we have between thirty and forty students per year, which
means for all seven years, we have less than three hundred elite. That’s what Hogwarts is for, to train
the powerful among us to serve the Wizarding World. This is because the amount of children born to
pureblood families has been decreasing. Most pureblood families only have one or two children and
since we have little to no source of free blood, we can’t even have children much outside of our own
lines. We dare not because we don’t know what Muggleborns to trust! You mix your lines with
anything which means we don’t know what your blood will bring, that is if you even respect our
traditions and so our pool of children has decreased. Your daughter and her year mates are the rulers of the Wizarding World if they will step up to it. Part of it, no matter how you may dislike it, is having magickal children. Every pureblood learns and accepts this. Our first marriage much like many other things is given to the Wizarding World, we pair off depending on physical and magickal suitability. After you have and raise the contracted children, then we marry for love. A couple can change a contract from suitability to love if they so wish. Having the Malfoy family bargaining on her behalf gives her a good chance to make a first marriage that she will enjoy and will last. Like myself and Narcissa.”

“So you two made the shift from suitability to love?” the female Dr. Granger asked.

“Indeed. Not so for my father, but he believes that he will yet find someone. As he is not even close to his first century, he has plenty of time. Unfortunately, I must now go but I shall leave you with this contract. You two will be joining us for the Samhain festivities?”

Dr. Alan Granger nodded. “Indeed. In fact we received the suggested schedule. Supposedly some expert is going to talk to us at the next meeting about it.”

“Yes,” Lucius stood up. “I must depart now, please do not take it amiss if I choose not to dare that metal box again. I will merely apparate from this office. In the spirit of sharing, let me offer this traditional farewell: May your roads lead you to your blessing.

Buckingham Palace

A Meeting Room

2 pm

Queen Elizabeth, the second of the name, stood and looked out the window of the meeting room. She stood tall, seeming much taller than her five foot four inch frame stated. Her silver hair was perfectly coiffed. Her red and gold suit fitted her perfectly. Her husband, Phillip, was rubbing his face in disbelief while her son and heir, Charles, along with her daughter in law, Diana, sat watching from almost four thousand miles away, in Pakistan.

“So in essence, Lord McGill, you are telling Us that a section of Our kingdom has been repeatedly and high handedly abusing another section of Our kingdom. That they have declared a civil war and hidden the exact scope of danger to Our citizens. Then, to top it off, they are participating in the systemic discrimination, and segregation, of ‘Muggleborns’. When We were told about the Ministry of Magick and the agreements made it was understood We were to be kept informed. Now We learn that a Ministry, of Our Government, has lied. Repeatedly.

“Lord McGill, We will be addressing the Wizengamot and would ask a favor of you. Not merely as a loyal subject of the Crown, but as a Gentleman and Peer of the Realm, We would ask you to serve. We need guidance in the Wizarding World. We know too little and that is unacceptable. We have need of no less than five trustworthy advisors.”

Carmus stood and bowed slowly. “Yes, Your Majesty. First, I recommend an author. He was blacklisted because he wanted to research and explain pureblood customs to Muggleborns. His name is Callum Ianto Vics. Next is a man named Robert Smithe, he is the head of the Muggle Rights and Responsibilities Office. His is a small department, but I am sure he has someone that he can either loan or recommend to you. Are you averse to non-human advisors, Your Majesty?”

“They are citizens of the United Kingdom just as much as humans are. Perhaps the Wizarding World
has forgotten that but We shall not!”

“Of course, pray forgive me. Then I suggest your next advisor should be the Windsor Head House Elf. To call them, merely ask for the Head Elf. They will appear and give you their name. My next suggestion is to contact Gringotts Bank. As the Queen, you have an account there and a dedicated bank advisor. People disrespect goblins all the time, and they have a huge chip on their shoulders for it. Some of it is justified but some is not. As for your last advisor… I would suggest that you seek them from outside the British Isles. We have been too insular. A British wizard or witch but one educated away from Hogwarts.”

“Head Elf!” She announced.

A soft pop and a house elf stood before her, bowing lowly. It was clad in only a royal blue tunic. On the front and back was a quartered field. Upper left on a red field three lions clawing, on the upper right on a yellow field with red border one red lion standing. On the lower left a harp of gold on edged blue field and on the right three fleur de lis in gold also in and edged field. Sitting in the center, a circlet of golden roses with a golden E crowned. On the left side in red was written “Della” and on the right in white a small castle.

“Your Majesty. I be Della. Head of Royal House Elves. I serve here at Buckingham. What be your wish?”

“Hello Della. I am sorry that I have never had the pleasure of your acquaintance but lately I have learned much has been hidden from me. What I need most is information about the history of the Wizarding Society and an advisor who is totally loyal to me alone. Can you do that?”

The elf nodded. “If Your Majesty wishes it. I will hand Head Elf duties to my successor.”

“Please do, Della and take a seat.”

Della nodded and popped away for a moment. She reappeared looking as she had when she left save that instead of the white castle at her right shoulder it was now a golden crown surmounting two crossed wands. “Della is ready to serve.”

Carmus nodded as the elf moved over and climbed into a seat.

“Well that is one down. I will of course see about your other suggestions, Lord McGill. Though I am surprised you did not offer.” The Queen approached the head of the table to sit down once more.

“My Queen, I have enough to do with fixing what Dumbledore broke. I am ever loyal to you but I have a higher loyalty. One my family swore to so many years ago. We swore to Magick Herself that Humans were worthy and if they were not then we would help make them so. I help maintain the balance, all McGills do. Balance will help everyone. You as Queen have a vested interest in Balance. Not just Order or Chaos or Rules or Rebellion. You understand that there must be balance between all of it. The Wizarding Sector is way off balance.”

“Indeed I do. Very well. Now, Our Diana is very much into children’s causes and has been distressed by the fact that there are no Royal Orphanages or even an Orphanage or Foster system in the Wizarding Sector. Perhaps Master Vics and her may come up with a system?”

“I would think that…”
Chapter 23: Busy as a Bee

Thursday October 17, 1991

Grimmauld Place
7:39 AM

Remus waited in the Floo room for McGill. A burst of green flame and the man stepped from the fireplace, a subtle twitch made the soot disappear. McGill stood in calf colored pants, with a sky blue tunic over a black under tunic and covered with a darker blue robe.

“Remus. Thank you for meeting me today.”

Remus nodded as he led them from the Floo room and towards a sitting room, “Well, to tell the truth, your message intrigued me. I’m afraid that while I am happy about Sirius being declared free and his recovery, it has left me with too much free time on my hand.”

“You mean you are bored, terribly horribly bored.” Sirius replied from a seat in the room. He was seated, dressed in casual clothes and staring out a window.

Remus grinned, “Yes.”

“No reason you shouldn't be but there is no reason for that to remain so. You two should get out a bit more, you are not required to spend time here, you know. I do admit that I am pleased that you have redone most of the house. It makes it more welcoming. What did you do with most of the artifacts here?”

Remus frowned. “Sirius wanted to throw them away but I convinced him not to. There is no reason to throw away his heritage. Not all his family was evil, most were Dark but not evil and one day he will want some mementos.”
“Good both for him and us. If you don't mind, sometime after Yule I would like to have a team assess them. What can be cleansed, let it be so. What has to be destroyed, well… we will find out.”

Sirius frowned, pulling loose strands of his hair back and nodding. “Sure. I'm not even sure how to go about that. You know I was an Auror, it was all chasing people and fighting a war. I didn't even do the paperwork. I never paid attention to the tutors my parents hired. I know most of the courtesies but most of the estate planning, I don't even know if I have any other properties left except here.”

Carmus frowned. “Do you know the name of the goblin in charge of the Black accounts?”

“No.”

“Then that will be today's excursion, once I secure Remus' help.”

Remus started, “My help?”

Carmus leaned back, crossing one leg over the other. “Yes. You are brilliant, very intelligent. In fact, I need you to get a certification for teaching. We need a new History of Magic teacher. The revised curriculum that I with several others will be more intensive than the current one. First year will start with Ancient Magickal History, covering Atlantis, Mu, Ancient Greece and Egypt as well as Meso and South American and Aborigine culture. Several of the lessons will be co-taught with the Nature of Magic teacher as one should not only know the underlying principles of Magic but how they were developed. I can hire you as long as you are in a program to earn a teaching certification. The Nature of Magick teacher is named Neil Carruthers, and he owes me a favor. I will give you his information so that you two can get together. However, the help I need right now concerns Harry.”

Sirius whipped his head around. “Harry? Is he alright? He isn't hurt is he?

“No, he's fine. Remember when I mentioned that Sean left me several items to help him? One set of those is a series of seven books. In these books are described Harry's… adventures at Hogwarts. Some of those books are obscured by magick. Hidden until due time or until they are no longer valid. They are books of prophecy which means, you can't read them properly until it is time for the prophecy to be enacted. Yet different things are hidden from different people. I want you to read and take notes on what you read. I want you to discover what may be hidden from me. Who better?”

Sirius turned to look at Remus, eyes wide.

“Of course, I will, Padfoot! So when do I start?”

“Tomorrow. Come over around nine in the morning, they are located in my reinforced library, now how about you get changed Sirius, formal attire and we will go to Gringotts.”

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Outside Gringotts Bank
Diagon Alley
8:20 A.M.

Sirius fidgeted slightly. Remus took his hand and squeezed. “It's alright, Sirius, remember they were
wrong. You were innocent. Hold your head high, you are Lord Black and you survived.”

Sirius took a deep breath and stepped forward, entering the grand doors of the bank. Carmus stood half a step behind him as it was Sirius’ entrance, not his. Subtly cueing him, they walked across the lobby and to the private offices. Carmus stepped forward towards the Goblin seated at the window. “Goblin Krashuk, Lord Black wishes to meet with his account manager. Please inform the appropriate goblin.”

The goblin stared at him before reaching for a phone. A short conversation in Gobbledygook and the door next to them opened. “Enter and wait for Manager Hirlat.”

“Thanks be to you and may your power of gold grow greater.”

The goblin gave a short nod and the three entered the doorway. The three walked down the hall until they came to a door with a golden name plate that said ‘Hirlat’, sitting in the chair provided they waited. A few minutes later the door swung open and the three men entered. A goblin sat behind a large heavy dark oak desk. “Gentlemen, be welcome.”

McGill bowed his head slightly and the other two followed. “Manager Hirlat, as you know Lord Black has been indisposed as of late and in no fit state to resume managing his estate. Recently, we have noted that he does not even have much of the education that most Lords would in his place. Therefore, we would like to do two things primarily. First, Lord Black needs an in-depth listing of his portfolio. Next, we would like to hire a tutor to help Lord Black. While normally we would not hesitate to ask you for such help, we are aware of the fact that Lord Black is missing several fundamental teachings regarding estate management and would rather not waste your time teaching the basics.”

Hirlat frowned, a rather gruesome sight on a goblin, and held forward a file. “Already provided, as well as a schedule of fees for services. As for a tutor, your best bet is Abraham Ablach. Is that your wish, Lord Black?”

Sirius looked at Hirlat, grey eyes distant. “It is my need, Manager Hirlat. Whatever you must do to achieve this goal, you have my request.”

Hirlat nodded. “I see.”

Carmus shifted his weight closer, “Manager Hirlat, one more request, on behalf of Lord Black. The Goblin Nation is well known for its various Masteries. Is there any healing help that they may give Lord Black? I do not mean mere physical healing, for the Dementors tormented mind and soul as well.”

“That, Lord McGill... I will have to speak to the Elders about.”

Sirius sat straighter and inclined his head. “With the gratitude of the Black Family, please ask.”

As they left the bank, Sirius watched the people around them. Several of them looked at them in askance, some even flinched from Remus. The prejudice was alarming. A thought formed, he would have to check with Remus.
Moonflower stretched languidly as Albertus repeated once again that no, there wasn't going to be any sacrifices or satanic rituals because they didn't believe in that sort of stuff anyways. Standing up, he walked up behind his friend and gently nudged him out of the way.

“Hey, Cereus here, ma'am... you aren't getting it. You believe in God and Satan because you are a Christian, yeah?” He waited as she nodded, hands fold. “They aren't, never have been. They don't have a concept of an embodiment of evil and nothing you say will make them agree to have one. Their religion is more like Wicca but even then, they don't actually have any God or Goddess. They sometimes personalize Magick with a capital M and call it 'her' but that's because they believe, and in truth, know that Magick nurtures them like a mother does her child. That's it. There is no one guiding force in their belief unless you wish to think of it as Nature. That's it.

“Now, this is what I got from when I was speaking with Lord Malfoy during the planning session for the Samhain. Their rituals are based off magickal needs. That means rituals can and will change based off what the participants need. And since they are magickal people, their needs and their thoughts are very different than ours.” He leaned forward. “Perfect example. I recently learned a bit about Wizarding sexuality. For example; no Witch or Wizard is to have sex before seventeen. It's not a suggestion, they don't teach abstinence, and they do teach the children why they are not allowed to have sex. If they willingly have sex before seventeen there is a good chance that their magickal core will destabilize, it can affect their ability to have children, and might even bond them for life to their partner. Now, with all the dangers of underage sex explained to them, they are still teenagers. We teach our children of the consequences of getting pregnant and STDs, right? But teenagers are teens and they will ignore us and there will be teen pregnancies, right?

“How many teen pregnancies do you think happen among the Wizarding teens? Not just the teens at Hogwarts but all Wizarding teens in Magickal Britain?”

Several people stared at him, shocked at the change in topic. Samhain to teen pregnancy?!

The woman that Albertus was talking to tilted her head in thought. “Ten or fifteen a year?”

Albertus shook his head, appalled. “None, not in the past eighty or so years, I've been alive. Our magick is vital to us; to risk it... is unthinkable. And really, he should say underage pregnancy, because after seventeen, it's acceptable. Most first marriages are sealed before they turn eighteen and first children can come any time after the wedding, from a week to a decade.”

Cereus laughed. “Thanks, so the question so many of you are asking is what does this have to do with Halloween or Samhain as they call it and the religion in the Wizarding world... it really doesn't. What the point to my tangent is to show you how different they are. They tell their children this information and show them how it can hurt them magickally. Magick makes a difference. Your children are magickal. There is nothing you can do about it. It is intrinsic to them. It is part of them that they can't ignore or hide from unless you want their magick to harm them. Pregnancy can change a life; it can even kill you. Aberrant magick can destroy your entire home or family, they understand the significance of this. That is why they obey this stricture. They aren't just told it can harm their magickal core, they are taught to understand their magickal core and understand how it can unbalance it and what magickal imbalance can do. And it is nothing we can truly understand. We can't because most of us can't physically destroy a flat by having sex. We can't kill someone just because we got laid. We CANT. They can. This Magick is not the parlor tricks we see on the telly. It
can kill, destroy, heal, save. It is the manipulation of the atomic forces of the planet through will and intent. This is why your children have to be trained. Because ignoring it doesn't solve it. Not In My Back Yard, doesn't work when it comes to Magick. This is a fundamental difference and therefore it causes them to see this world differently. It is inborn in them.

“So too is their faith, not religion, because the Wizarding world doesn't have an actual religion, they have faith and they have rites but the rites of the Dark are not the same as the rites of the Light or Neutrals and even two Dark families may not have the same rites. These rites change based on the family, the need, the magick at the time. Samhain is a major celebration and the rites they want to perform are in recognition of this time and its purpose but it is not a religious rite, it is a magickal rite. A rite to use magick to understand nature. So, no... no Satanism, no evil, no devil worshiping. Necromancy on the other hand...” Cereus smiled. “Strangely, we will be talking to the dead and likely they will be talking back to us. There are ghosts, real ghosts, wandering the halls of Hogwarts! And we will be doing a rite in which we send message on beyond the veil of death which is thin at this point in time. Now whether or not they respond back, that's a whole 'nother thing.”

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Hogwarts
Fifth floor teacher's lounge
11:30 PM

Albus Percival Wulfric Brian Dumbledore sat at the head of the table, smiling benignly at his teachers. He knew by Severus' expression that his eyes were especially twinkly today. He listened as his teachers talked about their bright stars and strugglers in class before talk turned to Samhain. Keeping silent, he listened as Minerva explained the basic set up, a lot of good Light rituals. Meditation, scrying though a bit of scrying could lead to more but he sat up abruptly when he heard Minerva mention Lovat.

“Excuse me, my dear, but can you explain a bit more about the ritual you wish the sixth and seventh years to do?” He asked kindly.

Minerva sighed, “It is Lovat's Guided Ghost Convergence Ritual. It is found in the eighth volume of Lovat's Spiritual Directory. The ritual is designed to allow communication in a more direct method through the veil through the use of a ghost who is ready to move on. For the purpose of this Ritual, we shall be using Binns. That infernal... man has destroyed all love of Magickal History in our students for the past forty years. His one remaining family member has asked us to move him on and will attend the Ritual as well. Of course, this does mean that we will need a new History teacher for the rest of this year. I would prefer of course to use Remus Lupin but that may not be possible at the moment, since he is in the middle of helping Sirius recover. Therefore, we will have a rotating list of professors from some of the Wizarding Universities.”

Flitwick nodded. “A rather smashing plan and not only that but they can talk to the older years about opportunities. What about next year?”

Sinistra leaned back and smiled. “Well, Minerva, there has been news on that account. Mainly, according to the new catalog, Lupin will be history teacher in a newly restructured program. I attended the last HAARP meeting and just the outline of the new classes was fascinating. They also
decided that History of Magick should co-teach with Nature of Magick at least once a month, I think that accommodate Lupin's needs as well as one class every other week being taught by a visiting professor who will be a specialist in whatever culture they are talking about at the time. Just from the framework I saw, I wish we had these classes when I came here."

"Indeed. I dinna know this was decided last meeting because I didn't get to go but there was a question about Nature of Magick classes for adults. Did they decide?"

Sinistra shook her head. "No, he can't but he did give out a book list, everything from year 1 to year 7, no surprise that most of those books were written by McGills. I've already sent the list to Pince to order. Did you get it, Minerva?"

"Yes, and not only that but there will be four copies in the library as well as one copy in the staff room, and one each in the Houses."

Albus frowned. He didn't remember getting any book orders and all books went through him so that he could make sure that they weren't filled with dark and or dangerous spells. He looked at Minvera and flinched. The hard look she was giving him... he hadn't seen such a look directed at him in a long time. Gently he slipped into her mind to discover what was the issue, only to be confronted by a wall. It was tall. It was red as blood and slick as ice. Frowning, he mentally stepped back to see a raised brow on his deputy's face and several other teachers looking at him.

"You dinna expect me to leave my mind unprotected once I was told that ye were a Legimens did ye, Albus?" Her brogue came through strongly. "In fact, every teacher here has been told, but I do believe this is the first time ye've been caught. It is verra obvious that your reason for being Headmaster is not for the betterment of our children. You are excused from any further staff meetings and I will be reportin' this to the Board of Governors."

"Now, Minerva, I understand that you upset from these accusations but let us not become prey to them ourselves. To imagine that I would violate your mind as such?" He put his sadness and a measure of reproving into his voice.

McGonagall laughed bitterly. "I could feel you in my mind, Albus."

Albus stood up, shaking his head and folding his hands over his stomach. "I shall leave if it will comfort you," He put as much 'injured grandfather' aspect in it as he could, "I only ask that you not believe all that those who dislike me say."

As he left the staff room, his mind whirled at a mile a minute. What had happened? Who had been told? Just the teachers of other people? Schooling his face, he reached into his robes for a lemon drop and headed up to his office. Something was going on and he had to find out what. He barely paused as he swept by the gargoyle and headed up the winding stairs to his office. Seated at his desk, he looked over at the fireplace and upon the fireplace were some silver and glass instruments. They varied in size and shape but not so much in function. The function being to monitor certain people. One had stopped working, Harry Potter's, it looked much like a glass dome over a four ringed gyroscope with a timepiece at the center. The time had stopped on the early morning hours of about four months ago. The time that his... the boy who lived took a potion designed to deny his heritage and destiny. And now this. The name was familiar especially since this was at least the fourth letter received from the Hoher-Prinzi family. They wanted what they always wanted, Severus to do a potion for them. Despite the constant refusals, they always came back with another offer.

Albus smiled as he recalled some of the offers he had received as Severus' Custos. And yet, for some reason, something he could not recall, he knew that putting these two in contact would be a bad idea yet to refuse the family of Hoher-Prinzi was foolish. He couldn't declare Severus to be incapable of
brewing such a potion yet he also could not allow Severus to brew the potion. A highly advanced genealogical potion that does not require blood but does require some genetic component while seemed to get around the 'Dark Magic Restrictions' he implemented, it would cause too many problems. The standard Goblin test went back four generations, and he had already been position for almost that long. If they used this test, a test that could potentially go back some ten or more generations, then everything he had planned for the good of the Wizarding World would not come to pass. It was harsh but one must prune and shape a tree to get it grown properly. No, this world must forget its blood pride in order to truly achieve Unity.

Yet defying the Höher-Prinzi, the Ruler-Mages of Europe would be... devastating. Too much notice and their representative in the International Confederation of Wizards would take notice of Britain before he got it under control. He needed to reform the base of the society first, so that it would be easier to lead them in the proper way.

His eyes darted to one old silver instrument that clacked with the regularity of a heartbeat. Each ball was a different color. The colors told him much about the health of the person it monitored. The red one throbbed in time to the clack of the balls. His heart was strong and it needed to remain so despite the deprivation to which Albus had sentenced him. Soon, well if he could manage to get his hands on that child, soon, he would be able to release him and their new society, their unified society would begin. First... Voldemort had to be completely destroyed, and then once Muggles lashed back it would be time to unify under him. Of course, he would need help and then... then his beloved would be free. Another twenty years. So long but the end was near.

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Friday October 18, 1991

Harlow House
19 Edwardian Close, Wooten
Northampton, NN4 6LX
8:50 AM

Trissie straightened her uniform and popped into the kitchen of the Harlow House. Smiling, she looked around the kitchen, it was a Muggle kitchen and therefore fascinating to her as she hadn't seen one before. Wiggling long fingers, a stiff cream colored five and half by eight-inch card floated to hover in the center of the kitchen. On the card in metallic bronze script over a quartered shield was written:

You and your family are cordially invited
   to celebrate Samhain
at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry
   on Thursday October 31, 1991

Transportation will be provided.
Turning around, she moved towards the refrigerator and examined it. Her supervisor told her about Muggle Kitchens and how magick didn't always work right. She listened as it hummed a slight flat note and frowned. Snapping her fingers, the note rose to a proper pitch and the refrigerator was now sparkling, not a single smudge on its silver exterior. Please, Trissie wiggled her finger and a soft sheen showed just above the metal. Nodding, she turned to rest of the kitchen. Opening one door, she saw dirty dishes. And that was unacceptable. A little magick and all those dishes floated out of the machine and into the sink, where she found soap and a funny looking brush and towels. Five minutes later, she had several dishes scrubbing, while she explored under sinks to find cleaning products and a mop was whisking around the bottom story of the house.

Forty-five minutes late, satisfied. Trissie nodded and popped out.

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Alistair Lockingen hummed a slight tune as he entered the ground floor lobby and headed up the two flights to the second floor. Shifting the bags to his left arm, he slipped his key into the lock and opened the door. And stopped. In the middle of the sitting room stood a house elf. They turned and with a snap of fingers, the grocery bags popped out of his hands and into the kitchen. Stunned, Alistair closed the door and stepped forward.

“Hello Inspector Lockingen, my name be Trissie. My supervisor be Gilly whom be known to you.”

Alistair nodded. “Yes, please take a seat.”

Trissie nodded, well informed by Gilly, though tears bloomed in her eyes. Her eyes danced around the room, long fingers twisting together. “Thanks you. I come with invitations for you and Inspector Horn to be spending Samhain with us. It be a traditional celebration. My master did say that you may be bringing your former wife and child if you wish.”

Alistair nodded. “Thank you. I think I probably should. Even if I don't know anyone there.”

“But you shall! Mistress Malfoy will be there as her son is at school. Master will be there with his son and there be several Muggle families coming as well. If you come, they will be taking you on the Hogwarts Express so you can soak up magick and see Hogwarts! There is to be many talks and displays to explain Magick to you if you come.”

Alistair smiled. “Then it sounds like a good deal, however before I do this I need to explain Magick to my ex-wife and son. Is it possible that you can help me with it?”

“Oh no, Trissie can't. I be house elf and you need Wizard to explain. Perhaps Madam Auror Speakney? Trissie be assigned to you, Inspector Horn, Harlow family, and Charter family. Trissie will listen for your call.”


“Trissie will be contact with Magickal World, if you allow it then Trissie will do laundry, cook, clean apartment and office. Trissie can carry messages, get books, and help transport you.”

“Ah... well you don't have to clean for me.”

“But Trissie should. Trissie be house elf... house elf takes care of house.”
Alistair nodded, relaxing as he sat back. “That's why you keep pulling and twisting your fingers. You want to clean up but I haven't given you permission yet.”

Trissie nodded, ears drooping, “Sorry to be impertinent.”

“It's okay. This is information I need to know. How else would I learn this? You can clean and cook as well. Most of the stuff I have is easy to make since I'm not exactly a good cook. If you can improve my diet, I will appreciate it. If I leave you Muggle money for shopping, is that okay?”

Trissie smiled broadly, “Yes, sir!”

“Good, and I'll talk to Gabriel and maybe even my ex-wife. She often mentions being too busy for some things.”

“Oh Inspector, Trissie is so happy!” She jumped up, tears flowing freely.

Alistair stared at her before kneeling down. “Please stop crying, they'll think I did something to you if you don't.”

Trissie shook her head. “I will, Inspector should rest while I prepare for lunch then go see Auror Speakney.”

“Alright. I am going to call Inspector Horn and see if he will have lunch with us; if Auror Speakney has not yet eaten, please ask her to join us as well?”

“Trissie shall!”

Alistair watched as the little being checked the groceries and the refrigerator before things started to float around. The house elf used magick so carelessly, as if it was a given and in her case it was but to see it. That was something else. Turning, he went to his bedroom to call Gabriel.

An hour later, Gabriel was ringing the doorbell. Alistair opened the door and silently pointed to the table upon which rested a still steaming loaf of bread, a large serving bowl of stew, a bowl of salad layered in bright colors, two tarts, a sweating pitcher of ice water and another of what looked like beer, a platter with a pyramid of sandwiches, and finally an icy bowl of sorbet. “She did all that. I tell you, you and I will be the best fed guys in the nick. The Auror is already here and she said she'd be glad to talk to Margaret and Louis about magick this Sunday. Want to come?”

Gabriel grinned. “Always. I'm your bagman, ain't I?”

“Not for the past couple years.”

Gabriel stared at him, “Always. Anyhow, so Trissie, right?”

“Yes, and she will be happy if you can ask for something, let her clean your flat for you, and thanking them get them all teary.” Alistair closed the door and led his partner in.
A man, dressed in a black robe, holding a large leather file entered the room. He sat down before the Headmaster's desk and opened the file, before placing glasses on his face. "Headmaster Dumbledore, I am your appointed Barrister Alexander Clyde. I am approved to work in both Muggle and Magickal sectors. I was selected since I have the most experience in both. I have also been approved to act as solicitor if you need to know. Right now, I am here to discuss the Dursley trial, at which you will appear on the thirtieth of October. I must inform you that considering some of what Mrs. Dursley has claimed, you may face separate charges.

"In specific, what I am referring to is the fact that you told Ms. Dursley as young woman that there was no place for her in the Wizarding World, which is not fact and in fact since more than 85% of the Wizarding World scores well below Magister Level on the scale. In fact, considering that most people scoring on the Magister Level don't even make it to Hogwarts. You only take those who score Upper level on the Magister division. There was a place for her, here. Especially with her younger sister being Magister potential or higher. If Petunia Dursley married a Wizarding person, she would have had children with even stronger magick. The fact that you did this not only to young Ms. Dursely but other siblings of other students shows a lack of care for the Magickal world of Britain. Not only that but since there was no oath given or accepted, what kept Ms. Dursley as she was embittered by your refusal from breaking the Statute of Secrecy? There are those who claim you could not predict what would happen and others who claim you knew exactly what would happen. Considering other evidence... you may be brought to trial for these incidences.

"Another charge is that you told Mrs. Dursely that you would ensure her child would grow up to be a Muggle by sealing his magick. Do you have a license as Mage Level Ward Maker?" He asked, staring at Dumbledore.

Dumbledore stood, hand extended to greet his Barrister awkwardly before letting it fall. "Ummm, no. I have received numerous awards but I have never sought nor attained any degrees in Ward-making, Ward Maintenance, nor Ward-breaking. However, may I ask why? I am trying to understand why I would be accused of crimes."

"Because it is illegal, no matter what your titles are or who you are to place a modified magick sealing spell on a baby. Unless and until, it has been approved by a council made up on nine qualified judges who shall be divide into three from each faction; Gold, Silver, Green. Since you did not enter such a petition, you or whomever you had do it, did so illegally. Not only that but it resulted in a dangerous situation as these things if not done properly. When done improperly, such a sealing can and does result in death before they are forty, usually before they are thirty. Therefore, it falls under a charge of Attempted Murder. As such, the renewed Ministry of Magick will be searching out any siblings of other students who have passed on early and request exhumation to examine the remain to see what traces remain. Such a binding has a tendency to sink into the bones and blood, Dumbledore. It lingers, well after death. Worse, it passes on from parent to child. The children of an improperly sealed person will also be sealed and it will kill them as well. It can pass two or three generations before breaking down. If your traces are found on the remains and if they have had any child who is also sealed or who has died as a result of the sealing, then you can be charged with Murder for them as well. Is this clear to you?"
Albus sat back, blue eyes widened slightly. “I... I am shocked. And you? Do you believe that I could
do such a thing?”

Clyde looked at him. “I am going to be truthful with you because that's the only way this will work.
Yes. I believe you did everything they said. I believe you did it because you honestly believe that
you know what is right for everyone. However, you are wrong. You may have learned from your
mistakes but those were your mistakes, you cannot assume that other people placed in similar
circumstances will all react as you did. In your arrogance, you have decided since you could look
back and see what you should have done you can guide others in the proper manner but you are
wrong. Instead it gets messier and messier, bigger and bigger until it will become so overwhelming. I
do not doubt that it started from the best of intentions but it has ended in death, misery, and torture.
Yet, my job is to poke enough holes in the prosecution's argument that they will not convict you.
And that is the job, I will do to the best of my ability.”

“I see.” Dumbledore frowned slightly.

“You are thinking about replacing me but it would be a mistake. If you do so, then the question will
become 'why'. You can say 'differences of opinion' but what they will hear is 'even his lawyer
thought him guilty, why should we believe him?' On the upside, for you at least, is that some people
find the charges unbelievable. On the downside, as more and more of your manipulations are
revealed, you will have less support. So right now, we need to stop the revelations. Is there going to
be anyone else to support these claims?”

Dumbledore sat back and for the first time wondered where it had all gone wrong.

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Hogwarts
5th year Gryffindor/Ravenclaw Class
Charms

“And now for one last thing before we leave, because Samhain is less than two weeks away, we will
be discussing a charm that you will be using for the celebrations. This charm falls under the banner
of Necromancy. Now, while Necromancy is a Dark Art, it is not an Evil Art. Necromancy means to
speak with the Dead. Therefore, you are practicing Necromancy every time you speak with one of
our ghosts or a painting. This is called Passive Necromancy. It requires no casting, no expenditure of
magick from you, just ordinary interaction.

“Necromancy is an ancient and sometimes vilified art. There two main camps of Active
Necromancy. Demand and Request. And that's exactly the difference Demand Necromancy is when
a person demands something of the spirit. And here is something very important. Necromancy deals
with spirits... not just the dead. All spirits, however most times people focus only on the spirits of
dead humans. It is actually used to help with the spirit of a living person as well. Demand
Necromancy can compel a spirit to inhabit a dead body and create an Inferi but it can also compel a
spirit to leave the body of someone it has possessed unwillingly. Two side, two different things, and
yet in many places people ignore exorcism as necromancy and label only the making of Inferi as
necromancy but they in truth both are.
“Now Request Necromancy is what we will be doing. It is as the same says, a request. We will ask the spirit to do our bidding, not force it. On the night of our celebration, we will be having a ghost pass on. Before it goes forth, we will attach to it requests, wishes, prayers, and other such. By magickally attaching these things to the spirit, we reinvigorate the spirit and bring it to its best point rather than allow it to stay in the rut that it currently exists in. Just in case any of you do not know, the spirit in question is Mr. Cuthbert Binns. A dedicated teacher who died some decades ago and never moved on. Many of you know only his spirit, you never experienced Master Binns in his prime so you don't know how he was. I have chosen a memory to display of a lesson that I once had with Master Binns in my fifth year at Hogwarts.” Filius Flitwick waved his wand and floated a large flat bottomed stone basin to his desk. A few whispered words and darkness fell, the basin glowed a soft silver. A tap and suddenly on the far wall appeared the History of Magic classroom. At the front was a middle aged man in black robes and wide smiled.

“Come in, come in. Today we are going to start with the Witch Hunts of the 18th century!”

The lesson was dynamic and fun. After forty minutes the memory ended. Flitwick stood still before allowing the lights to come back up. “That is the Cuthbert Binns we will bring back before sending him on through the veil. Now each of you have on your desk an example of how to make and attach a request to a spirit being. Go over it. Learn it, and by the 30th I wish to review all requests.

“Class dismissed.”

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Saturday October 19, 1991

Abraham Ablach smiled as he entered his grandfather's manor. Although he was ready to accept the most recent commission, he still wanted his father's, mother's and grandfather's input. Heading towards their shared office, he grinned at the thought. Usually he worked with young adults, this time was different. Between the damage given to Lord Black by the Dementors and his previous insistence in refusing to learn, it would be a commitment of years, maybe even a decade. Not to mention, he would likely also be training Lord Black fiancée, Remus Lupin. To make such commitment was a huge responsibility, he wouldn't be able to detach and leave them with the Elder members or a council to help guide him. It could actually be the end of his business completely. Yet to get his hands on the Black Estate, to manage it and help it grow, to one day see it retake its splendor among the Ancient and Noble houses... it would be worth it.

“Father, Grandfather. Blessed Morn. Where is Grandmother?” Abraham stepped in, bowing the bow of kinsmen to the two men.

Andreas Ablach looked up at him with a wry smile. “Feeling particularly bratty today, dear son of my son?”

Laughing Abraham moved to sit on the plush chaise on one side of the office. “A bit of high spirits. You'll never guess what commission, I just got offered?”

Shaking his head at the antics of his father and his son, Alexander Ablach, turned back to the study of his contract. “The Potter child?”
“Nope.”

Alexander stared at him. “Well it would have to be someone who is either new to their lordship or a newly found child. There haven't been so many recently. The McGill child, I heard that his mother kept him from the wizarding world for protection.”

“No, in fact, due to the number of newly informed Muggleborns, there is this push down in the Ministry to call them instead 'First Generation Returned'. Less negative connotation to help calm the reactionaries.”

Alexander nodded. “A good move. Dumbledore certainly poisoned the Muggleborn well, didn't he? And it would have been perfect.”

“Perfect and fatal. As you know, I have been watching and I recently saw the results of study that will be printed in both Quibbler and Prophet as well as several medical journals. It was studied both overseas and here. As you know most of the Ancient and/or Noble Houses are inter-related. No one knew to what degree. Most Muggle school children know the effects of inbreeding but it was believed that since Magick was so powerful that it prevented said effects among Magickals. It does... to a point. Britain passed that point about a hundred and fifteen years ago.

“This is the reason most can't carry more than two or three children. The magick is too weak to hold back the defects. Imagine another hundred years... who would be left?” Alexander pointed out sadly.

Andreas looked at his son and grandson with fear and sadness in his eyes. “Dear Lord and Lady, and for what reason?”

Alexander sighed. “I have no clue. Dumbledore is reactionary very much so. Even his 'premeditated' ideas are reactions to what he experienced. For example, did you know that his father died in Azkaban?”

Abraham sat up quickly from his reclining position on the couch, “Truly?”

“Yes, Father asked me to research his parents.” Alexander pulled out two files. Father dead in Azkaban. Yet, the interesting thing is the mother. Kendra Dumbledore is also dead, Muggleborn witch. Born Kendra Elaine Adamantine on May 2, 1851 and died June 25, 1899. She was only forty-eight years old, so rather young. Attended Hogwarts from 1863 to 1870, Ravenclaw. Smart with Charms and Theory. High with Potions and Spellwriting, but only passable in Transfiguration, Defense, and Herbology. She had a good choice of career in the Flount Coterie as a Binder but left about six years after her third child. Her children were Albus, born 1881; Aberforth, born 1884 and Ariana, born 1885. Normal family, all born in Mould-on-the-Wold. In late 1891 when Ariana was 6; Albus, 10 and Aberforth, 7; their father attacked four muggle boys. From the arrest report, he called them and this is a direct quote “Vile, vicious little dirty brats who laid hands on a blessed witch”. Considering that there are only three females who were close to him and of those three only two in the village, it would mean his wife or his daughter.

Now according to the McKendricks, whose child Elise would play with Ariana, they were good folk. Kendra was a bit reserved but loving to her children. Ariana and Elise delighted in the accidental magick they each did. Now this is where it gets interesting. First, Kendra cuts off all contact with her coterie. No matter what problems she faces, she should have sought help from them. Foolish woman. Ended up moving from Mould-on-the-Wold to Godric's Hollow. Whereupon the two boys resume life but the young girl stays mostly in the house. Many people didn't know they had three children. Those who did, believed that the girl was sickly and that's why she wasn't outside much. So if the child was attacked, it could be that her magick attacked her, it could have turned against her but I doubt that it turned on her. It is more likely that Ariana clamped down on her
magick, which as we know is dangerous. Magick must move, if it is inhibited.... Kendra Dumbledore died in 1899 under mysterious circumstances. I posit that it was her child who inadvertently killed her through uncontrolled magick.”

Abraham shook his head. “Poor foolish woman. The child needed to be in Mungo's. They could have had a Healer help her to control her magick. If this is so, then Dumbledore should have stepped up. When did the poor child die?”

“1899, she would have been fourteen or fifteen. She died in late July... ummm the 28th to be exact. So Albus was 18, Aberforth 16, and Ariana, 15. She died right before Dumbledore returned to Hogwarts and in fact, both boys were delayed in returning to school. Afterwards they were not close. In fact, Aberforth only graduated school because Albus forced him to. He now owns the Hog's Head Pub. He does not like his brother.”

Abraham nodded. “I see. Have you given this information to anyone?”

Alexander shook his head. “No, but Father has suggested giving it to the McGill. With other information, it may be possible for the McGill and his new alliance to perhaps destroy Dumbledore.”

Abraham frowned. “Yes, but how to do so without meeting with him. Owl post is too chancy and meeting with him well.... Dumbledore would find out. I however have a solution, remember when I asked you to guess who I was going to contract with? It's a commission recommended to me by the Goblins. Apparently Sirius Black needs educating in his duties, and he was accompanied by the Lucan Lupin, whom is wishes to be make Consort and the McGill.”

Andreas sighed. “I believe it's time for a family meeting. I believe we should offer this information to Lucius Malfoy who has been chosen as contact to the McGill from the Knights. Not only that, but Alexander, this is an opportunity to bring the Black family back from the Consuming Darkness to the Enfolding Darkness. Teach Sirius Black to shine like a star and his consort to find freedom in his fur. This family will support you.”

Abraham bowed his head. “Thank you, Patriarch. I was leaning towards this but I realized this won't be a few years' commitment, I would essentially become their Seneschal. That will invariably form a lasting bond between our families. I would never commit to such a thing without talking to you first.”

“No, you wouldn't, you are a good child of the family. However, this is a chance to change the culture of the British Wizarding World like no other. Over the next septad of years, change drastically; either Voldemort will win, Dumbledore will win, or this third side will win. Of them all, only the Alliance respects all of the Dark. As Patriarch, I will approach Malfoy and if he will not help us then I will approach the McGill himself. Prepare your lessons.”

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From a house, three Perlins took off. One headed towards Wiltshire, one to London and the third circled the house once and headed towards a wooded area, waiting for further instruction.

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Na-Lady Sarah Flanders led the way through The Leaky Cauldron. She knew that that Harlow family was not impressed though they would be. As they entered the walled courtyard, she smiled. “The muggle repelling charm keeps people from noticing the Cauldron, considering that this building has been here since the last 900's, it's a significant and important part of our culture. It has always been a pub, inn, or tavern. Which makes sense, the traffic often kept Muggles from noticing who came and went. However, now that we have the charm on the Pub, we still haven't moved it because to set up another access would be a hardship.” She pulled out a thin whippy willow wand and pointed the bin. “Three up, two over.” She tapped the brick FOUR times and slowly the opening formed. Now, they looked impressed. Smiling, she bowed and swept one hand towards the opening. “Welcome to Diagon Alley.”

The Harlow family stared in amazement an arch formed and they could see a street with many people and so many not-people to their eyes hurried into shops. Abigail took her father's hand and squeezed tight. Her younger siblings pressed close to their mother. Na-Lady Flanders smiled softly. “You will come to no harm here. First things first. I have chosen this opening because I wanted you to get the scale of things. We are going to walk the length of the Alley. At one end is Gringotts', it's our bank. It is run by Goblins and I ask that you be polite and respectful to them. I am ashamed to say, many Witches and Wizards look down upon those who are non-human. This is nothing less than base prejudice. Many of them are equal in intelligence and magickal power to us and some even more so. When you think of it, of all the magickal people in the realm, less than ten percent qualify for Hogwart. No other species has that low a percentage, of course most other species don't have as much control over the world in general. So, there are some tradeoffs. Under the new educational guidelines, the mandatory classes will be Potions, Transfiguration, Charms, Wizard Studies since you are Returnees, Flying for one term with Basic Customs for the other two terms, Nature of Magick, History of Magick, Astronomy, and Herbology. These are your Core Classes. With these and the mixture of these lessons, you can choose many careers from them. In your third year you usually chose two to five electives, these are designed to help you settle on a career and in your Sixth year, you will cut whatever is not necessary for your career. Now some Core classes are only up to Fifth year because once you are beyond that, they need to be more specialized and you will get the information in your actual Career Classes. However, there are Three Core Classes that are mandatory for all seven years. Nature of Maigck, History of Magick, and Wizarding/Muggle Studies. The board has decided that no matter what path you take in life, you need to know what Magick is, what our history is, and how to get along. And I find I do not mind it at all.”

Lawrence Harlow smiles. “Quite a revolution, then?”

Na-Lady Flanders smiled and nodded at an acquaintance as they strolled down the cobblestones, the slight click of her heel against paving rang within her. “Yes, in some ways and a welcome devolution in others. For example, one of the things they are going to spend time on in class is the elements and I don't mean the scientific ones. For example, say I want to clear water to drink but I am hiking and the only stream is cloudy. I, as an adult, know that I need to use a rune to help me. More likely a bind rune, which is two or more runes written together but you children won't. They will learn the spell ‘aguamenti’ and think that will suffice. What if you don't have your wand or are not in a place to use it? What if we instead taught you about water, the element and how many things it influences. Would you be more likely to use a rune to draw water from a cactus than walk by it? It's part of the whole Nature of Magick. This used to be taught by the grandparents and elders but few today teach the old lore. We want to move forward but realize we need a firm grounding in the
past to do so. Your children, do you not teach them your history so they may measure their accomplishments by them?"

Chanira smiled softly. “My Grandmother, she never went to school. When I graduated high school, she sat down to tell me about her village, her family, how despite the fact that others spoke ill of them, she got my mother educated, even going so far as to send her to boarding school. She never expected my mother to show up at nineteen with passports and visas for the family. Yet that's what my mother did. My grandmother would say 'how long down the road honor travels'. Now my child will not only be educated in Magick as well. I wish she could have seen this.”

“You are attending the Samhain celebrations, yes?”

Chanira nodded as she watched a seller describing uses of dragon's blood. “Yes. We've attended the HAARP meeting recently and it sounds interesting.”

“Yes, a traditional sort of celebration. There will be a portion in which we will recall and remember our beloved dead. Since the veil between worlds is thin now and we will be in one of the most magickal places in the United Kingdom, it not only possible but probable that you can garner her attention. Do not be surprised if you feel her presence or touch. At the very end of the ceremony, Lord Malfoy will send all the shades back beyond the veil. Since we will be doing a spirit convergence ritual, you will have an opportunity to 'attach' messages for the beloved dead. It is very safe. Lord Malfoy is one of the strongest of the Green. He is a Master of the Deep Magick and his family has been leaders among those of families who practice. He knows it can be seductive and powerful, but he has withstood it for decades. He mastered the magick rather than let it master him. I am associates with his wife, Lady Narcissa. Yes, she came with us. In fact, I know that she would have loved to have Sponsored you but her family has already agreed to Sponsor the family of one of their son's classmates. She would never take on too many responsibilities. She believes that she give each her utmost and would never give you less than your due. I do not have any children in Hogwarts right now, but if we suit each other well, I would be honored to step up as your Sponsor.”

Lawrence smiled softly. “Thank you.”

“Wonderful,” Na-Lady Flanders turned slowly, making sure the others followed. “Now, we are going into Gringotts first, so that you can exchange some money, then we'll go get some books before heading to St. Mungos.” She led the way up marble stairs and through a set of burnished bronze door before stopping before two large silver doors with a plaque besides them. “I need each of you to read the words written here, out loud.”

The Harlow family looked at each other before shrugging and turning to read them aloud.

Enter, stranger, but take heed

Of what awaits the sin of greed
For those who take, but do not earn,
Must pay most dearly in their turn.
So if you seek beneath our floors
A treasure that was never yours,
Thief, you have been warned, beware
Of finding more than treasure there.
“The Goblins take their word seriously. Be polite, be respectful, and do not lie. Now, welcomes to Gringott's Bank.” She pushed open the silver door and let them have the second shock of the day. The hall was vast and cool. The floor were works of art themselves. Quietly, they crossed the floor to a lone teller set off to the side. Na-Lady Flanders approached and give a small bow of the head.

“Ser Goblin. I am here with the Harlow family. We are here to exchange money.”

“Na-Lady Flanders, I am Steelbow. Will they also be taking inheritance tests?”

“I am unsure. If they are bound, would it not interfere?”

“If it was a Ministry-grade test, yes. The price will be five knuts per person.” Steelbow pulled out a ledger.

“What if I want to add a check spell test to each?”

Steelbow grinned. “Based on the information recently revealed about the breadth of illegal sealing that been going on, all inheritance tests now include such spells. You would be amazed at what we have found.”

“Somehow, I doubt it. A disgrace to our world.” She reached in and pulled out a sickle and five knuts. “Very well, and let's start an account for the family.” Standing up, she turned to the people behind her. “Accounts in the Wizarding world are bit different than in the Muggle world. Basically, each family has an account, everything is placed into the Family Vault. And only authorized users have a key. That key is spelled to respond only to authorized users. The family head can limit the amount taken out by children though most families give their children a trust vault, it is refilled periodically from the main vault, but it is not a separate account. Now, Goblin Steelbow here, shall exchange your money. Right now, the rate is...?”

The Goblin stared at them. “Right now, a Galleon is £4.97. And how much did you bring, Mr. Harlow.”

Lawrence stepped forward. “In cash, I have twenty-five hundred pounds, but as you are a bank, I do want to know if perhaps you can accept a teller check or use a bankcard?”

Steelbow nodded. “Indeed. While we prefer cash, we will take a teller check. We are working on integrating into the bankcard system and while we do not currently accept nor use them, we hope to change that by end of this year. There are three denominations of Wizarding money. Galleons which are gold which is equal to 17 silver Sickles. Each Sickle is worth 29 bronze Knuts. Your cash equals five hundred and three Galleons and two Knuts. How much is the teller check?”

“Five thousand, six hundred and thirty pounds.”

“So that is eleven hundred thirty-two Galleons, forty-seven Sickles and three Knuts. Altogether, it is sixteen hundred and three Galleons, forty-seven Sickles, and five Knuts. There is a yearly fee, which will come out to one galleon, five sickles. This fee includes two gold keys for the adults, and four silver keys for other family members. At the shops, you can pay for thing by impressing your key on the charge slip. That will tell it what vault to withdraw from. So, shall we make your deposit?”
Healer Broughton frowned as he read over another file.

“Kyle, what's wrong?” Healer Antilles asked. “Is that a Blue File?”

“Yeah. Goblins are sending another family. They are called the Harlows. Apparently they are related to the Fireste family. But they also have some of the most tangled up suppression spells on them. It's fraying on the Mother which is all well and good except she will have explosive, dangerous, and possibly catastrophic accidental outbursts while for the Father, it's eating him away. He has cancer and it's aggressive. Magick hates to be suppressed. What's worse is they aren't the only ones. I have six more Blue Files. And I don't have the number of trained people to handle all this. The Administrator doesn't want to go outside the hospital but I had to recommend that we seek help from France, Austria, and Egypt. The spells are barely even taught here anymore! Damn them!”

Healer Antilles moved to hug his friend. “Come now, you can't let it overwhelm you. You are brilliant at fixing spell damage.”

“Yes, accidental spell damage. This is pernicious and malicious. And most of what is taught in the medical academies... it doesn't over this.” Broughton sighed as he leaned on his friend. “Did you read the article which showed that the Hogwarts curriculum is so very far behind the other magickal schools of the world? Well it's even worse for us. The students are so underprepared that the medical school has reformed its curriculum which means ... 'obsolete' procedures were dropped. They were no longer necessary information.”

Antilles frowned then nodded. “I remember. Every decade or so they go through the files and anything not encountered in the past three decades, is considered obsolete.”

“Yeah which means we don't have enough healers. In the entire United Kingdom, there are only five Healers who have the power, magickal knowledge, and strength to break these bindings. Of those, only three of the five have the technical knowledge and we three only have that because we have made it a hobby of researching old techniques and comparing them to today's. I have SIX Blue Files. Healer Tighe Anderson has ten and retired Healer Farrah Singh has six. That's twenty-three Blue Files. Twenty-three families that have been bound. Of them no less than thirty-two members of those families have died of 'cancer', another seventeen are sick with it. Of the seventeen, five are terminal right now. We can do nothing for them. Not one Blessed thing. How are we to keep them from hating us? This betrayal is beyond forgiving. And more families are found every day!”

Antilles held him tighter. “I... I didn't know it was so bad. All we can do is tell them that an underground rogue group attacked them. When we found out, we sought them to help them. In a way, I think those who did it, they thought it wasn't evil because some of them surely had permission, like the Dursley mother. She allowed Dumbledore to bind her son, but Malfoy, Wiley, and Flanders are working on it. No one told her the consequences but if Dumbledore didn't do it, say he handed it off, he would have told them that she wanted it and when they asked her she would have agreed. So much evil done by.”

“That's even worse, yes. How many healers were subverted, how many violated their oaths, albeit unwittingly. How many followed him thinking they were following a force for good?”
“Then they deserve to be stripped of their Healer qualifications. No, hear me out! We Healers know that Deep Magick is necessary for healing, that these arbitrary divisions of Dark and Light are false. We are supposed to think things through for the best quality of care for our patients. Any healer who didn’t confirm the process, any healer who bound a child without coming back to check on them, any healer who didn’t examine the spell thoroughly before using it, deserves absolutely stripped of their rank. This is the core of medical ethics and they violated it. We shall now. Now, I know I am not a spell damage specialist but what can I do to help?”

Broughton smiled. “Want to learn how to do an analysis spell?”

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The Apartment of Alistair Lockingen

3:00 PM

“Margaret, Louis, please come in.

“Alistair.” Margaret replied coolly

“Dad.” Louis smiled up at him.

Locke stood up and smiled at them. “Margaret. Long time. I'm here because I'm involved in this and well... it's big. By the way, this is Auror Speakney, she's here to show you some things.”

Alistair approached, placing one hand on his son's shoulder. “I don't know if you remember that some odd things used to happen when you were smaller but they did and there was a reason. Madam Speakney is here to provide the proof you and your mother needs. But first let's get you some tea. Trissie!”

Trissie popped in, placing the tea set down. Five sturdy, but ornate cups rested on the platter. Another platter appeared with small sandwiches and cakes. “This be Inspector's ex-wife and precious son?”

“Yes, and thank you Trissie.”

“Inspector so kind. Trissie will be back.” She stated before popping out.

“Tea?”

Margaret stared at the tea and sandwiches before sitting down. “Much to discuss, I assume.”

“Yes.” Madam Speakney replied, “We, the magickal population have much to apologize for. Understand, we only did what we did because we are so few against you who are so many and we feared for our safety. It has caused many problems for you and others. We did not understand the depth of our violation of you but we have been awoken to it and we will try to remedy it as much as possible. On August 11, 1983 an outburst of magick was detected. Aurors, wizarding police, were sent and found it belonged to five-year-old boy who had in a fit of temper turned his bed into sandbox. The bed was returned to its proper state and the memories of the man, woman, and child
were removed. This was the first of eight times that their memories were removed.

Louis frowned. “Eight times, you messed with my head eight times?”

“Yes. Uncontrolled magick by a child can often be... terrifying to adults around them. Children have been killed by their parents under the idea that the child is possessed or evil. It was deemed to be better than everyone forgets and when the child turned eleven years old then we would invite them to Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. There they would be taught how to control their magick.”

Margaret frowned, her lips thinning. “My child was never invited to such a school.”

Speakney took a deep breath, “No. He wasn't but he should have been. Recently we have discovered that someone using our records went around and ‘sealed’ many of the children. To seal them, means to basically bind their magick. It is used as a punishment for horrible crimes so you can understand why we find this appalling. Worse, whomever did it, was not someone who was trained to do so. The seals are improper; they will cause the magick to feed on the body in which it is sealed. It presents as cancer usually bone or blood. Therefore, we are using our records to track down the students who should have been invited but were not and test them for such bindings. As long any illness is not at its end stage we can cure it. I have been taught to perform the spell. Please stand?”

“No, you have done enough to our family. Louis, we are going.”

“No, you are not.” Alistair stood up. “I am not going to let him die because you are pissed at me. I don't care how furious you are. My son isn't going to die when it can be prevented!”

Louis stared at them, he knew these arguments would take a while, then slipped around. “Can you do it?”

Speakney nodded. She pulled out her wand and pointed it at him. “Magicae ostende ligat.” A warm honey light that started at his feet, traveled up over his legs and continued until he was completely covered. His parents stared, his father's eyes teared.

“Can you break it?”

“No. But you know as well as I do that the healers are working on it. Perhaps you should call his school and tell them that he'll be out next week. We can take him to St. Mungo's. It's better to do this in a controlled environment, also we should do a blood line test. It could tell us what family he is from and whether he has any siblings. If he is from another family, we can arrange for them to be sponsors.”

Margaret pursed her lips.

“Please understand Madam…”

“Miss Venona.

“Please understand Ms. Venona. He was born with magick, some person decided to bind his birthright and did it improperly. If once he is trained he still wants it done, we can do it properly so that it won't kill him or any children he has. Right now, we are finding children of bound individuals who are plagued with various cancers and diseases because they would have been magick if the binding hadn't been passed down through blood. It will kill him. As a parent who I can see that loves their child, how can you not do what's best for him? I am an Auror, I can not allow such a thing to happen. I am deeply sorry for how we treated you before but now, it is imperative of us to correct the mistakes and harms of our criminals upon you.”
Gabriel sighed and moved over to the young man. “Hey, on the upside, you're a wizard, a real wizard!”

Louis laughed. “Uncle Gabe!”

“Kid, I can't wait until you see the goblins and dragons, and centaurs... hell I can't wait to see them. How about we let your parents fight and we talk to Auror Speakney.”

“So, you can fix my magick?”

“Yes, we can. In fact, we might fix it in time to celebrate Yule, I think you would like it.”

Tuesday October 22, 1991
Magische Bundesland Österreichs
Palast der Glas-Lilie
Eastern Family Room

Weide Rene Hoher-Prinzi stared at the sun coming up over the gentle hills. Breakfast in the Eastern Room was always a delight. He turned as he heard his brother enter, the poor man was half asleep and shuffling to the table. “Zeder, you stayed up way too late.”

Zeder grunted as he looked for a glass of juice. He hated coffee in the morning, finding the decanter, he pull out the top and took four great swallows before opening his eyes. “Yes, yes, bad habit. I had to stay up, did you read the report from the English?”

“I read the brief, they believe it is the work of people unknown. That it has been done to children. I find it interesting, especially since we got a missive a couple of months ago about missing and sealed children during the last world war. Do you believe there is a connection?”

Zeder frowned, “No and yes. I looked at the records of some sealed children from that time period. The structure is similar. It's coarser than what's being used today. Miss... ahhhh help me with the name.”

“Sofia Angelique Sestras.”

“Yes, Madam Sestras. When she came, she explained that these children were sealed to protect them and get them through customs which has been turning back any magickal child. We helped her track down those children and their families. Four of them were unsealed and two passed on the sealing to their children. We are tracking them down and clearing them up. But we have practiced and studied sealing much more recently than the Brits.” Zeder sat up, taking a plate and starting to fill it. “As the Healers from St. Mungo's said, it's the frayed ends that make me wonder. So much so that I decided to research sealing from over three thousand years ago. We have one the premier magickal libraries right here. And I found it. The spell he or they used. It isn't Light exactly but it's not Dark, nor Neutral. It's 'tamed' for lack of a better word. It was forced into a feedback configuration but it was
never intended for permanent sealing. It's a variant of the Schöne Immer Schlafen or Beauty Ever Sleeping.”

“A Sleeping Beauty Spell? Seriously?” Wiede frowned at the foolishness. That spell type has long since been banned for their instability.

“Yes, brother. The ends were supposed to reach out and place those connected to the target in a sleeping stasis, but instead by 'tucking' in the strands, they fed it back into the target, causing stasis in the target's body. Rather unevenly though. So part would go through stasis but when a thread shorted or frayed, it would start up again and this is the dangerous part. It would try to catch up to the other parts of the body which means the cells in that part would rapidly multiply.”

“Cancer.”

“Yes, and not just that but imagine one chamber of the heart going into stasis and the other three work overtime? Or one bicep and the body tries to compensate by filling in the detectable gap?” Zeder shook his head as he munch through another piece of toast.

“Cancer again or heart failure or... this is barbaric!”

“Yes, I plan to report to the Queen herself. Apparently the current Magickal government tried to shut out the Muggle Government despite the fact that their Queen is head of both governments.”

“I see. I will be going with you, that will make this a state visit. I am bringing along Lille, Bach, and Erle. Eiche will be your guard. We will likely be there until past Yule, probably until Imbolc. Since Yule is a Dark holiday, I think I know with whom we shall stay. I am also taking Eisenhut since they are a potions master. I want to find our cousin but Dumbledore has been sly about denying me access to Master Snape. I have researched the problem and it seems that he stands as Regens Custodiam which makes no sense as Snape is obviously a man of means and quality. There is much going on there. In fact, during the Potter trial which is still on-going, it turns out that supposedly Dumbledore offered and did seal Dudley Dursely. Since he is sealed, it was obviously done. The only questions are: did Dumbledore do so or did he get another to do so? And did he make the offer without being aware that he can not make such and offer even if he is Chief Mugwump?” Wiede sighed, “The British make too much of him, he is not the first nor the last champion to defeat their opponent. They are falling as some few have, to unity rather than trinity.”

Zeder smiled softly, “Usually unity is good thing.”

“Not when it polarizes and disenfranchises the majority of the population. They are leaning towards the so called 'Light' faction, which we know as Sonnenschein. You know as well as I do, that a healthy society has all three. But their leaders, their police, their teachers all skew towards 'Sonnenschein' and they are taught that Wiese is evil. The Nebel is cowardly. Why do you think they did not recognize the spell? The spells were removed from the medical colleges. They are slowly but surely purging their society of all but 'Light'.

Zeder shook his head. “Too much light can burn a person.” He frowned. “There has been a decrease in magickal strength lately in Britain, very few exceptional wizards or witches. Perhaps it's Brain Drain?”

“Likely. Why stay where you are undereducated or told that if you try to educate yourself then you are evil. And almost all of this can be traced back to one person... Dumbledore.”
Windsor Castle
Queen's Office
11:13 AM

A falcon soared in and glided to an almost silent stop on a perch some fifteen feet away. An elf popped in with a bowl of water and platter of meat bites. Offering them to the bird, she quickly took the message. A glance at the seal and she moved to place it on the Queen’s desk.

“Thank you, Ressie.”

The elf gasped before curtsying and popped out with tears in her eyes.

Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, picked up the scroll and read through it quickly. A state visit from the Magickal German King, for lack of a better word. He was planning to stay with a prominent Dark family since they were staying through Yule and perhaps until Imbolc, a quick glance at the calendar revealed Yule as the twenty second this year while Imbolc would be the fifth of February. Therefore, if they arrive on the eighth of November... ninety days. Somehow that wasn’t a surprise.

Sighing, she rand for the Keeper of her Calendar. When he entered, she turned to him. “I’m afraid we will have some unfortunate changes to the Calendar for myself, Philip, Diana, Charles, and the boys. We will be needed in the Magickal London for the 24th but I do not know how that can be. It will be the first major magickal holiday that I will be able to attend since I have addressed that segment of my people. To miss it would be to dismiss them. Before it was accepted because we were to be at one remove but the failure of that... Minister means I need to be directly involved.”

The falcon cried.

“Ah... Ressie.”

The elf popped in, curtseying once more. “Yes, Your Majesty?”

“I am unsure about the etiquette but do we allow the falcon to stay or must we return it.”

Ressie nodded. “It is awaiting a reply. If you have none, you tell it and it will leave. Otherwise you can house him in the Royal Mews until you need it. When you need him, you think of the bird or you call and elf to get the bird. You place the scroll in the tube on his back and he returns.”

“Thank you, then please house the bird in the Royal Mews.... also, perhaps you can help me. You know more about the Wizarding world than I at this moment. We are not wizards as you know, however I wish to respect the Traditional Celebration of the Holiday of Yule and it coincides this year with Christmas Eve on the regular calendar. Since it does not indicate that they are using the Astrological Yule date. Yet We have duties that day and wonder if you can help me with knowledge of magickal travel. I will have to move quickly and securely with my guards and my family.”

Ressie nodded, “Wouldn't it be easier for Your Majesty to just use a time turner? We elves can pop you to a secure location at the Ministry then you can spend the entire day in magickal London before spending the day in muggle London?”

Elizabeth started, turning her head slowly. “Time Turner?”
“Yes, small necklace that can help you go back in time. Not more than a day though. The Ministry of Magick controls them. They are from the Department of Mysteries.”

“What does that department do?”

“I see. Investigate Magick.”

“I see.. and how would arrange to get or purchase a time turner.”

Ressie shook her head. “Can not be bought but you are the Queen, then Ministry obeys you. Ask them?”

“I see. Very well, can you arrange an owl for me to pen a request. Andrew,” she turned to the young man waiting, “We may have to add some pages to the Calendar. One for magickal days and one for our usual calendar. Please see to it and I will give you the information as soon as possible.”

“Thank you, Ressie, could you perhaps ask Della to come when available? We need to make plans for the Christmas Holiday.”

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Malfoy Manor
Wiltshire
Lucius Malfoy's Office
11:44 AM

A large silver tipped Perlin Falcon arced his way gracefully into the office of Lord Lucius Abraxas Malfoy. Looking up from the letter he had received from Brother Ablach. Such information was valuable indeed. It was in the Malfoy nature to keep such information close until the proper time to use it. Yet if he didn't reveal it to McGill... it could be used as justification as a breach of the alliance. While revealing it may in fact lead to stepping a little closer to power in the alliance. A loud cry from the falcon once again captured his attention. With a start he held out his hand for scroll and examined the seal. It was silvery white with castle in a field of lilies. He allowed himself a moment to mentally search the lesser known heraldries of the United Kingdom before standing up to locate a book on European Crest. Settling down into his comfortable chair, he searched for device then color. Upon locating it, he double checked the seal and looked for any other defining marks. There around the castle lay a tri-peaked crown almost as if it provided the moat for the castle.

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Wednesday October 23, 1991
8:00 AM
Kingston-Upon-Thames
Lucius Malfoy stepped from the flames and with a quick twitch, quickly dispelled the lingering soot from his clothes. Surprised he blinked slowly as he realized that instead of the formal receiving room, he had been allowed to floo to McGill's... no, he was family now, Carmus' study.

"Lucius."

"Carmus."

"Please sit, Dayn has gone to get up some light food but from the tone of your missive, it seems like it was important."

Lucius moved to sit a small table under the window, across from the man who would be essentially his brother in law soon enough. "Yes. In light of our newly revealed connection, I realized that I could not withhold this information. You will eventually essentially marry my brother plus this information could help the Alliance in its attempts to denounce Dumbledore."

"You truly despise him, why? I mean I know for my part, it's because he's a threat to the balance but you... you are a Dark leader, why do you hate him?"

Lucius stared at the table as food appeared, slowly he picked up his knife and fork and filled him plate with bacon, potatoes, ham and sighed. "Because he tells my son that he should be ashamed for his heritage, that his beliefs are wrong and primitive, that everyone else should look down on him for them. He is a proud young man, sometimes arrogant but he will get over that. Especially at this age, they take things to heart and I do not want him to be filled with self-loathing. It took me years to shrug off his poison, some of my fellows never did. And those in other houses who took everything he said to their core are miserable or fanatics. He destroyed my generation and any chance we had of becoming great together or so I thought. This Alliance offers a chance to change that. As such I can not find it within myself to let this pass."

Carmus seemed to relax, a smile appearing on his face. "Thank you. For trying. If this Alliance fails I do not believe it will because of the Dark. Many of them look to your behavior to determine how they should act. Thank you for your faith, I do hope we prove worthy of it."

A faint pink wash colored that handsome pale face before he nodded and started to eat. Across from him, Carmus read copies of both letters. Lucius found himself watching the changes on his companion's face. Truly the masks were down, if he showed so much emotion. After three quarters of an hour of picking at his food and reading, he stood.

"Please remain seated. I need to speak with my father's portrait." He stood and walked over to the portrait and knocked on the frame. Within a minute, the painted figure of his father stood in the frame. Silently he held up the pages of the letter, the soft rustling of parchment as he changed pages was the only sound in the room. Finally, he lowered his hands and looked at his father. Aden McGill frowned.

"I actually have been visiting other portraits of my acquaintances in order to track down more information. There isn't much about the young man that Albus was fascinated with but there are two things that may help you. First, you need to find a class photo from the year Albus would have met this young man, there may be a name attached to him but the second piece is more important. The
young man lived with Ms. Bathilda Bagshot and was according to her, her nephew. Now the Bagshots don't have any European connection, being mostly English and Irish however, she was not born Bagshot. She married into the family. Her last name before that was Adler, which is German for Eagle, there are many Adlers in the muggle world but only few among the Wizarding Population.”

“Thank you, father. I will have Angelique see about assigning someone to track down the Adlers.”

“Of course. I will also try. Be well.” Aden moved from his portrait swiftly.

Carmus walked over to the table and took his seat once more. “Well... plenty of information. Now, about the Hoher-Prinzi, would it put you out to offer them space in the Manor?”

Lucius smiled. “Indeed not. It would be an honor in fact but I was wondering perhaps considering your stature as the head of the Alliance if you would prefer they stay with you?”

“No. They want to stay with the Dark during a Dark holiday. It's better they stay with you. Last time I was in Dumbledore's office I noticed a letter from Rene Wiede Hoher-Prinzi, the current head of the family. He was asking Dumbledore for access to Snape or to see the yearbook of the graduating class. It didn't occur to him that we don't really have yearbooks but the class photo would work, except Dumbledore seems to be putting them off. Apparently, they are looking for a lost relation and they want Snape's help of a different kind of lineage potion. They have a recipe. Severus has the skills.”

“And they plan to stay until Imbolc.”

“Yes, you are planning a Yule ball, correct?”

“Of course, and by then my father will be back, he will wrest control of Severus from Dumbledore and of course by Yule, Severus will be installed in the Manor, in his rooms, and Dumbledore can't say anything.”

“Good. Lucius... I am trusting you with one of the most important people in my life. Do not violate that trust.”

“If I had known he would be a failure, I would have kept Severus from him. I had faith in his policies.”

“They are good policies but how he went about them... enough. We can't let this fester but let us be done with it.” Carmus took a deep breath, “He loves you and I will accept that. Have you written to your father?”

“Yes, I was able to get a copy of the Ministry's agreement and the Custodis Regent contract. I sent both to my father with a letter. I expect a reply within a couple days. Right now, Father is in a manor on the outskirts of Valletta. Ever since he had Dragonpox, we have kept him in warm climates. Luckily, he has completely recovered but he was enjoying the area, so he stayed. Now... I fear his disappointment in how I allowed my brother to be taken from me.”

“Do not, according to the letter, even he could not stop it then. We are stronger now and we will end his false dominion over him.”

“Yes, we shall.”
Dear Father,

It is with great regret that I admit that I have not be able to wrest Severus from the clutches of that pernicious Dumbledore, however we now have hope. You betrothed Severus to Carmus in a bid to protect him, a fact which I discover only two weeks ago, when Narcissa gave us the letters. I know that you know that Dumbledore ‘rescued’ Severus but it is the 'how' at the time that was unclear. Yes, supposedly he was spying for the Light, but I now have the closest thing to proof that he was not. Dumbledore has him under Custodis Regent. How that got passed especially since he has not reached full adulthood nor gotten married nor had his fiancé sign it, I do not know but I have included the contract the Ministry's agreement to the contract.

At the moment, I have joined McGill, the Light, and the Neutrals in the Alliance of Shadows, whose emblem is here below. It looks somewhat familiar and I hope you can place it where I can not. Together we are working to bring down Dumbledore. We have also discovered that Dumbledore replaced the office MRRO books with his own versions which does not state the responsibilities of attending Hogwarts. It appears that the Muggleborns truly had no idea of the debt they owed. This is being rectified.

As well it appears that he sealed an infant because their parents objected to magick. They, the Dursleys, seem to hate, revile, and despise magick. Of course, these are the same people he placed Harry Potter with. Not only was the placement illegal, not only did he not check up on the child, but the child was in acute danger during most of his life from his so-called guardians. They have been arrested and now stand trial for child abuse and attempted manslaughter.

The final piece of new, Father, is the one I believe most disturbing. As you know the size of classes at Hogwarts has been dropping. Apparently, many of the Muggleborns do not get their letter, they in fact seem to stop existing. While it could be that they die through accident or because people fear their magick, the rate is alarming. For more than sixty years it has been going on. Apparently, someone has been going around and sealing these children much like Dumbledore sealed the Dursley child. While there is no proof that he sealed these children, he may have taught his sealing technique to others. As for his motive, there is much speculation, my view is that he used the falling numbers to promote three facts, for the muggleborns 1) that they are truly special since they are among the small amount of muggleborns able to get into Hogwarts, 2) that the reason there are so few of them is because the Purebloods have either driven them out or killed them, and for Purebloods, 3) that to marry a muggleborn would decrease the magickal population as they rarely produce magickal children anyways. Apparently, the Hoher-Prinzi of Magische Reich will be coming to help us deal with this... depraved action against children. According to the letter they sent me, which a copy in included with this letter, they have found that it is a modified Sleeping Beauty curse. They have also requested to stay at the manor from Samhain to Imbolc and I am inclined to accept.
Your loving son,

Lucius

St. Mungo's Hospital for Magical Maladies and Injuries
4th Floor
Spell Damage Ward
Office of Improperly Cast Curses and Spells

October 22, 1991

Healer Broughton,

I am Rene Wiede Hoher-Prinzi and I have been informed that you are to be our contact in England regarding these vile sealings. I have reviewed the case and upon consultation with several high ranking people and based off the magickal scans that you have given us, we have identified the curse. It is a modified version of an ancient Sleeping Beauty spell. According to Master Healer Zeder, the reason that the cancers are so prevalent is because the feedback is forcing parts of the body into stasis. I will also be bringing another Master Healer by the name of Bach and two Journeymen Healers Lilie and Erle. We have a potions master who is called Eisenhut who is an excellent Potions master but I have heard you have access to Snape, if you could arrange a meeting, I believe Eisenhut would be very grateful. He admits that Snape is much better than he himself. They will also have a guard attachment, the head of the guard is Eiche, and this is because they are members of the Royal family. Our official reason for traveling will be a state visit with the Queen of England. While it is too late to arrange things for Samhain, I will be inviting her to Yule.

According to Zeder, the discovery of the type of spell means you will not have to wait a year to detangle it slowly. Instead it should take no more than a month. He also suggests finding another building that will be equipped only for these patients as you have so many of them. Attached you will find some research detailing how we discovered it and what treatment we suggest. However before we are sure both Zeder and Bach wish to examine them in person. We will arrive the 29th.

Be well in Magick,

Rene Wiede Hoher-Prinzi

Ruler Mage of Magische Reich
Abraxas Malfoy read over the contract, if one could call it so, slowly. Truly it was a masterwork of the basest sort. His sponsor-son was barely better than a slave. This travesty has gone on for a decade which was a decade too long. Anger grew in him with every word. Slamming his hands on the desk, he stood.

“Middy, prepare my baggage, we are returning to Wiltshire.” He stood, his dark grey robe billowing about him. With angry strides the sixty five year old wizard strode through the palatial hallways, his rangy form screamed deliberation and fury. His handsome face and silver gilt white hair shone under the beams of sunlight. Striding over to a fireplace, he removed some floo powder from a carved silver box. Throwing it angrily into the fire, he snapped, “Pembroke Law office, Aeacus.”

A few seconds passed before a blond hair, bearded face appeared in the fire. “Sen-Lord Malfoy, a pleasure, what may I do for you?”

“Aeacus, do you remember when I had my sponsor-son's betrothal contract written up?”

“Yes, in fact you did not reveal his name nor the name of his betrothed. You were worried about the information getting out and despite my skill at Occlumency, anyone can be defeated.” His mellow soothing voice came from the flames.

“Indeed. I bound Severus Tobias Abraxas Snape to Carmus McGill.” Abraxas watched as several micro-expressions ran across the lawyer's face.

“I see. You did not cede custody to Dumbledore, did you? As I am familiar with the Prince entailments, he has to be forty or married. He is neither.”

“I did not.”

“Then we can do something with this. You are returning?”

“Of course, I will not let the bastard harm him any further.”

“Very well, then my professional advice is contact Gringotts, get a review of the vaults including an itemized list of removals and so forth. Come back, but do not reveal yourself to any but those you trust and myself and Gringotts. Floo everywhere. They are celebrating Samhain on the 31st but the astrological date is the 8th. Which is a Friday and the day of the Hogwarts Board Meeting. My suggestion is go speak to some of the members of the Board and let them know about this then that night during dinner you should enter and confront Dumbledore publicly in front of the school. You must warn Severus of course, as well as Lucius and the McGill so they can support him.

“Also, speak to McGill about joining the Alliance of Shadows. Their aims will fit your desires.”

“Yes, Lucius did mention them, very well. I will see you in a couple days. Be Well, Aeacus”

“Be well, my lord.”
Sunday October 27, 1991

Bank ta’ malta, Gringotts
Underground
Bank Manager’s office
4:37 PM

Bronze hand growled under his breath. Gringotts’ once informed of how the Potter fortune had been violated, had ordered every vault that ever had been touched, connected, or monies transferred to Dumbledore audited. Heads had rolled and they would continue to do so for this grievous breach of trust. He knew what Sen-Lord Malfoy wanted and he had the proof in his hand. The Ministry of Magick of the United Kingdom had ordered these violations and the bank had followed those orders. Which now meant that the Goblin Nation had in their claws a reason to demand renegotiation of the treaties. They were to protect the treasure of their customers, therefore they needed more freedom to prevent such abuses. Yes, this would be valuable for the next ICW meeting.

Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry
Third Floor Corridor
9:00 PM

Isssssss it still here?

“Yes, Master.”

The fool hassss not moved it?

“No. He believes that perhaps the Longbottom child is the prophecy child or that if he can encourage him to risk his life that Harry Potter will step into the light. Also, he has heard rumors that Carmus McGill will be attending Samhain and may bring a guest, he is hoping McGill will bring Potter and that once Potter is here, that he can convince Potter to come here for his schooling, playing on his parents’ and their desire to have their child here.”

I seeeeee. So the teacherssss will be busy and you can pass the safeguards?

“I can but try, Master, there will so many people in the castle, including Dark wizards and witches, that they will be more likely to blame than myself.”

True... then make the attempt on Thursday.

“As you wish, my Lord.”
Malfoy Manor
Wiltshire
Lucius Malfoy's Office

Lucius smiled at the paper that had appeared on his desk yesterday. A note from his father.
“Tomorrow, 11:00 PM”. As the clock struck the eleventh stroke, the fire in his fireplace glowed the fierce purple of international floo and his father stepped out. “Lucius.”

“Father.”

“I am proud of you. You have learned to ask for help and help you shall receive. We will take back your brother but for now, let's discuss this with your wife.”

Pink highlighted his features for a moment before he nodded. “Yes, Father. By the way,” He spoke as they left the office for the family sitting room, “did you realize that the Americans are experimenting with new ways to increase wizarding fertility? Some might even bypass the Dark Mark.”

Abraxas stopped and stared before following his son once more. That boy never ceased to amaze him.

Monday October 28, 1991
Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry
Family Room
8:00 AM

Augusta Longbottom huffed a bit at the wait. She had written to inform Dumbledore of this visit at least three days prior and still her grandson wasn't ready. She knew it wasn't his fault as he was a good child and when informed did his best. Finally, the door opened and the Headmaster entered… sans her grandson.

“What is the meaning of this Dumbledore?!”

“Madam,” Albus Wulfric Percival Brian Dumbledore smiled benignly as he entered. “He will be here momentarily. I wanted to speak with you first. I understand that you wish to remove Neville from school for the day and I was hoping to persuade you not to. While he does not have classes on the weekend, this is the beginning of a new week with new assignments. Yet if it is necessary due to some emergency I would hope you could tell me a bit about it so that we may better look out for any reactions once he returns.”

Augusta drew herself up, shoulders back. “It is Family Dumbledore. Not yours. Produce the Heir to
the Longbottom name forthwith.”

Dumbledore sighed softly. “I did so hope you did not believe these rumors. I never intended any harm, merely to reunite a family and provide safety for an orphaned child. However, what you believe is of course your decision. I'm sure Neville is here.”

Dumbledore turned and opened the door to see Neville Longbottom in true Pureblood dress standing outside the door. The young boy tilted his head in respect, “Headmaster” before entering the room and bowing to his grandmother. “Grandmother.”

“Neville, you look well. Come, we have Family Business to attend.” She placed her hand on the crooked arm he held out to her and together they walked past the Headmaster and down the hall. Neither spoke as they left the building and exited the grand gates of the school's limit. They walked a little further and stopped.

“You did well, Neville. He is not to be trusted.”

“No, Gran. Some in Hufflepuff and Gryffindor still believe in him and some in Ravenclaw think he just miscalculated but all of Slytherin is against him. First and Second year Gryffindor except for one, are against him. At least half the Third years. I'm not sure about the other Houses.” Neville reported.

“I see… good to keep track of that. Now, we will be traveling to France. I will side-apparate you to the International Portkey office. It's time to bring your Great Aunt home. Hold fast.”

She felt him tighten his grip on her arm and the uncomfortable squeezing and pulling of Apparation. With a harsh breath they appeared in the International Portkey office where a young woman with copper red hair pulled back in one tail stood. Beside her stood a tall man in Auror robes. He stepped forward, his black dragonhide boots clicking on the floor. Two steps away, he stopped, came to attention and bowed. His short dirty blond hair barely moved. “Lady Longbottom, Na-Lord Longbottom. Welcome, I am Hyssop Rogers, I am here to escort you Port Lyons in France to meet the family of the woman known as Marielle Lecroix. Some of the children show magick, so the binding is breaking but with me there to authorize the release from the Statue, there will be no problem. A French Healer will be there to explain in detail why the binding must be broken.”

Lady Longbottom nodded. “Thank you, Auror Rogers. Madam Sestras, thank you for locating her and making contact with the family. If we may go, the sooner begun, the better done.”

“Of course, Madam.” Angeline held out knotted rope. Please take hold.” As each person grabbed a note, she intoned the activation word. “Contact.”

A pop, then a buffeting of air surrounded them as they traveled, a slight sea tang brushed by them before they landed in a vacant lot between two buildings.

“Bonjour, I am Healer Mesamours. Welcome to France. If we will exit between the door frame, it will look as if we have exited a building here. Please.” A tall slightly plump woman requested. Neville once again held out his arm to his grandmother and together they exited the door, turning around she noticed it looked like a clothing store. Together the group walked down the street and for a few blocks to a residential section. Mesamours stepped forward.

“Number 547, please.”

Nodding at her grandson, they walked up and rang the bell. A young man, only a couple years older than Neville, answered the door. Angelique stepped closer. “Anders, bonjour. We came as promised.”
“Angelique, welcome all. Please the family is in the great room.” He stepped aside to let them in and led the way into the family room. “Mama, the Longbottoms are here.”

“Welcome, I am Elise and this is my husband Theodore. My aunts Marta and Celeste, my uncle Roberto, he is married to Celeste. They have those four over there Marcus, Celeste, Lise, and Gemma. My mother passed several years ago. I have my son, Anders who you have met, and my other son Josef who is seated over there and my twin daughters Alise and Annabel. My brother Andrew and my other brother Loren.”

Augusta nodded. “I am Lady Longbottom, the current head of the Longbottom family. This is my grandson, Neville Longbottom, the heir of the Longbottom family. The young man to my left is Auror Hyssops Rogers and the woman beside him is Healer Mesamours. You already apparently know Madam Sestras.”

“Yes, would you like a seat?”

“I would but it would be best if I remain standing for a moment. Has Madam Sestras explained why we are here?”

Yes, it's about my mother, supposedly she was born in 1940, she was adopted in 1941, she died in 1968, after having three children. I was born when she was only 16, in 1956. I had my first child at 19. My brothers do not yet have children.”

“I see. It appears that your mother was the child of Oren Longbottom. He was brother to my husband Alistair. He lived in France and smuggled his child out. Only recently we have discovered who she is. Now for a question of a sensitive nature, my dear. Exactly how long have you been given to live? With your cancer, I mean.”

Elise gasped. “I…I…”

“And your brother, both survivors but quite afraid to pass it on to their children. You are wondering how I know this.” Augusta whipped out her wand and pointed it to a teapot on the table. A swish and pour a cup of tea. “Lemon, sugar?”

Elise dropped to her knees. “I don't understand.”

“During the muggle's Second World War, we too were fighting a war. Us Witches and Wizards, against an evil Dark Lord by the name of Gellert Grindlewald. He despised people with no magick, Muggles. He believed that Muggles were so destructive that they needed someone to control them lest they destroy not only themselves but us as well. We do share the same planet. In fear for your mother's life, Oren and his wife, Anastasia bound their daughter's magick and allowed her to slip through the cracks with the other muggle children, for if a magickal child was found among them, they were taken. This binding was not meant to be permanent. It has disastrous consequences, including causing several types of cancer. It killed your mother; it will kill all three of you unless we unbind it. You will need to learn to control your magick but better that than dying. Your children already show a weakening of the binding but they too must be unbound or their developing magick will cause their early death too. Are you sure you don't wish a cup of tea?”

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Tuesday October 29, 1991
Rene looked at his family; to be sure, people would not believe that they were royalty. Their clothing were neat and clean but typical Healer and Potion robes. In fact, Eiche was the only one of them who looked like he was royalty. Laughing softly, he nodded to the elves, who disappeared with the luggage and tossed in the purple powder.

“Wiltshire, Malfoy Manor.” And stepped in.

The sensation of falling through purple fire, the almost silent crackling that surrounded him. He leaned forward slightly and let the magick of the powder move him. It seemed like only a few second that lasted years but at the end he was spat out and gracefully landed on his feet wand at the ready.

“Your Majesty, welcome to Malfoy Manor.”

Rene nodded and stepped aside. The fire roared, longer this time as one after another twenty more people came through. Rene nodded. “Lord Malfoy, Lady Malfoy, Sen-Lord Malfoy. These are my companions. Zeder and Bach are Master Healers, Lilie and Erle are Journeymen, Eisenhut is a Potions Master, Eiche is the head of our security detachment. Thank you for opening your home to me.”

“It is our pleasure.” Lucius bowed. “Please we have ordered a light lunch of soup and salad before we escort you to your wing. I do hope you find everything in perfect order.”

“I'm sure well will. Madam Sestras mentioned you are a paragon of Dark Virtue and I have heard nothing less than that from others as well. I am pleased to spend Samhain and Yule with you.”

“I must remember to thank her for recommending me with such sterling credit.” Lucius led the way out of the Floo room, barely noticing, but definitely observing, Eiche's wariness. Dumbledore would not know what to do Thursday night. Keeping him off balance was playing directly into their hands. As they sat down, Lucius raised a glass. “A toast, to Balance.”

“To Balance!”
Chapter Summary

The start of Samhain.

Chapter Notes

I tried to finish the week before Halloween... couldn't do it.
I did finish on Halloween. So I went ahead and sent it to beta who got it back to me yesterday. Let us pile love, cookies, and thanks on Evie, who did the job quick and well.
Now, this is only the start. I wrote the entire thing but it wasn't meant to be one chapter. I got to a point and the muse said, "Next Chapter". And they were right, if I went past that point, it would get lost. So the next chapter, is already given unto her and she is working on it, should be posted in a couple days.
Oh and thanks to Evie for the title.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 24: Blood and Gold

Thursday October 31, 1991
Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry
Great Hall
5:47 AM

The House elves smiled as they set out the materials for the day. For the first time in decades there would be a Celebration of Remembrance and there would be Muggles, many Muggles in attendance. They practically vibrated at the chance to display their skills for new people. With rather manic grins, they finished up with the Gryffindor common room and moved on to the Ravenclaw.

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Malfoy Manor
Wiltshire
6:45 AM
Eiche Hoher-Prinzi smiled and gently wiped his mouth with the cream napkin. “That was delicious. Our compliments. We thank you for the agenda that you have given us and I must say that I believe this exercise will truly benefit both groups. If you don’t mind, during the trip, we will circulate. This will allow you some time to meet up with those you are sponsoring, as well as allow us some contact with the community without the pressure of our positions. In fact, if we can, we propose to be unobtrusive during the celebrations. I do believe it will be... enlightening.”

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King’s Cross Station
7:33 AM

The Doctors Granger smiled as they noticed several other students’ families mill around the area. Two men in obvious wizard robes held up signs directing those who were in the know to a ‘closed’ area by the front of the station.

“Wellcome, I am Cereus, apparently.” A middle-aged man spoke up, moving to the front so that he could talk to all of them, “I am a Muggle Liaison with MMO and the Alumni association. Before we leave, we want to give our parents and families a chance to experience the whole Hogwarts experience. Therefore, we will be taking you to enter the special platform of 9 and 3/4. It has a slight Confundus charm on it to make your entrance unnoticeable. When you come onto the platform, you will be facing the Hogwarts Express. We will be taking the Express to Hogwarts like your children have done each year, with one difference. There will Witches and Wizards who will join you to discuss whatever you want and we will be holding informative classes and talks in several carriages. Some of you were curious about this Holiday, whether it is a religious observance and, boy, is that a simply complicated issue in the Magickal world and society. We have also invited several Wizarding companies such as lawyers for those of you who have received contracts, as well as goblins from Gringott’s to help answer economic questions, along with some media people. You are not required to talk to any of them but since there has been interest in these areas, we thought that it may be something you would like.

“Another thing that will be unlike the student trip is that we will not be leaving so late. We will depart at 9:39 AM. So, let’s start?”

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Gryffindor Common Room
7:10 AM
Simon stood staring at the common room along with the others students. The stones shone with an inner light, and despite the fact that they had grown used to candlelight over the past month, this was beyond that. All the furniture had been removed and on the floor, and there were several thick carpets in red, orange, and gold. Some had shots of blue and white that were almost like designs. The twisting designs seemed to be like that of dizzying and flaming animals. Simon tried to trace one and got lost in the twisting turns. Others looked like fireworks of colors splashed on the ground.

Deputy Headmistress Minerva McGonagall stood in the center of the room and beckoned them in. “Well, come and be well. Sit and relax. Today we celebrate Samhain. Traditionally there are two ways one determines Samhain, by date and by the sky. I know that Madam Vector has been going over the astrological Sabbats. For Samhain, it is usually accepted to be at fifteen degrees Scorpio, which will occur on November 8th of this year. However, many consider that to be the peak of Samhain; this is because it is believed that the weakening veil is noticeable for the two weeks before it is its thinnest and the two weeks after as it heals. So, while there is much to do with the day before, day of, and day after astrological Samhain, many cultures also have smaller rituals that are done for those two weeks before and after. In the Ársa Albion Wizarding Tradition, we often do remembrance rituals and you have been participating in some of them as we have prepared other the past week. For every class for the past week, we’ve been reviewing meditation and calming down before class. And we have noticed the difference. Less magick in the halls, better grades, happier students.

“Now the other way, is also traditional, we celebrate it at the same day every year, which is during the last day of October. While the astrological date may shift anywhere from October 21st to November 11th, this day is in-between these two days. For simplicity’s sake, we will be celebrating Samhain in Hogwarts on October 31st. However, for those of you who are sponsored by a Wizarding family or born as part of a Wizarding Family, it would not be unusual for you to leave for the weekend closest to astrological Samhain for a Family ceremony. However, for this year, we have decided for the sake of fellowship to not do so. The ceremony today for us will be...” She paused and smiled sadly. “It will hurt, it will comfort, it will make many of you sad and that’s absolutely fine. From time to time, humans need to be sad. This is a day of Remembrance. Many of you today have someone you have lost. Parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles, and older siblings. People who fought in our last War. I do not know nor do I care on which side they fought, nor should you. What is important is that they are not here. They should never be forgotten. Remember, even if all you have is a name, think on it and then ask what type of person they would have been. Would they be mostly serious? Or fun? Perhaps they might have been both. As you meditate this morning and think of them, you call them to you. They will feel it and they will come. Which is why we also have asked some Aurors to be here today as well. Doors, windows, and even mail slots swing both ways. If you feel... uncertain or scared, come to one of us, is that clear?”

A murmur started lowly as the students moved to sit and got comfortable. Simon smiled as Hermione sat on the rug next to him. They were close enough to talk to each other but not close enough to touch. With a nod, Weasley sat on the other side of him and pointed up. Above them floated candles. Candles in all colors, some even shaded from one color to another. One in particular caught his eye. It was a dark grey but faded to a cream near the top. As he noticed it, it floated down to him.

“Once everyone has a candle, we shall begin.”

Hermione shrugged and looked up. A candle floated down towards her, it was a green slim taper with flakes of gold in it. While Weasley had a blue one that matched his eyes, he had his wand out and nodded at them. Silently, they pulled out their wands.

“Well, first, wands out. Point the tip of your wand at the base of the candle. Then bring to mind one
or two people you wish to remember for today. It’s okay if all you remember is a name or scent. It’s okay to close your eyes.”

The light dimmed and her voice took on a soft quality. “It can be the memory of a hand against your cheek, the scent of cologne, a deep rumble of a softly heard voice, the color of kind eyes; it can be the softening of your parents face as they remember those they wish you could remember. Let it fill you. Let that image or that smell or that color fill you. Slowly open your eyes, focus on the tip of your wand. Place that feeling there and let it go.”

Flashes of different colored lights flared off. When Simon blinked, he noticed the change in his candle. A doe lined in silver pranced upwards. A streamer of staff paper ran around scaling towards the top. A man with the horns of a ten-point stag lay in the center.

McGonagall walked around helping the few who hadn’t gotten it. Soon enough she came upon Weasley. She looked at his blue candle, which seemed to show two men looking at each other or one man who was looking into a mirror. “Your mother misses Fabian and Gideon quite a bit, doesn’t she?”

Weasley nodded. “Yes, Ma’am. She usually gives Fred Gideon’s journal and George Fabian’s as gifts. Said she wanted them to grow up knowing the men she named them for. They tell us some stories... I would have liked them, I think.”

McGonagall nodded. “You would’ve. Especially Gideon. He was a thinker. I notice how much you enjoy chess. Gideon would have grabbed you for a game anytime he could find you. He was a brilliant strategist. He had a temper but he realized that if he controlled it and only let it out at planned times. He claimed he ‘lost’ his temper but only when it was convenient. He was a wonderful man, a true Slytherin. I was always glad to be his friend.”

Weasley stared at her as she moved to look at Justin’s candle, who was sitting next to him.

He leaned closer to the other two. “Slytherin! Mum never said, neither did Fred or George!”

Hermione shrugged. “Does it matter? He sounds rather nice.”


"The whole Oxbridge competition is silly too."

"Yep, but it is what it is. There’s a couple of cops who often came to speak to us. They were from Oxford originally, actually they still are, but one was related to one of my teachers in one way or another… They would come and talk to us. Anyways, the younger one, Hathaway would always call Oxford 'England's second best' university, he graduated Cambridge of course. The older one, Lewis, smirked and said 'Canny one, you live and work at home of England's second best!' Hathaway would sigh, his long face sad and say 'I know how far I've fallen. Can't even go to a reunion and admit where I work.'”

Hermione laughed. "Oh dear, and this whole Gryffindor/Slytherin stuff is worse!?”

Weasley nodded. "Yeah, but... my grandad never mentioned it like this... have to wonder if it's another thing like the 'muggle/wizard born thing'. If it is it would make sense."

Simon frowned. "How so?"

"Well, if everyone is focused on how 'evil' or 'bad' your chosen target is, then they don't see what else is happening. I do it in chess. One of my pieces I move aggressively, while another I move
whenever you think I am boxed in with the aggressive piece. Most people think I move the second piece to draw their pieces out of attacking my aggressive piece but really, it's advancing and carving holes that I can use in ten moves to checkmate my opponent."

Hermione frowned. "So you use one piece as a stalking horse, to draw the attention clearing the way to win?"

"Yes."

Simon shook his head. "But then why hasn't anyone else realized he's using the Slytherins as his stalking horse?"

Weasley shrugged.

"Perhaps because there's not been this kind of unity in years, which would be why he helped to destroy the unity in the first place, so no one would realize what he's up to." A soft voice came from behind them. A round faced, slight chubby boy with an open smile under chocolate hair smiled at them. "Neville Longbottom, Heir of Longbottom. You don't realize what your father did, do you, McGill?"

"Call me Simon; Longbottom, Weasley."

"Neville."

"Ron. And he's right... Even my mom and dad are talking about your Dad's alliance. They aren't sure they want to join but the fact that he's gotten some of the greatest or at least most dedicated families of the Light and Dark to not only be in a room together but work together is amazing."

Simon shook his head. "I have no clue what you are talking about."

Ron looked at Neville. "Really?"

"My dad said he had some things to tell me but they could wait until Yule. He said that he got some people on all three sides to help Dudley. Apparently one of the reasons he's so large is because someone blocked his Magick. So, they are working on undoing it."

Ron frowned. "That's dangerous. Look... can we talk, all of us, later. McGonagall's almost done helping the others and we should be focusing on the past, not the future right now. After all, Samhain is all about what has gone before."

Hermione nodded. "Yes, let's... how about tomorrow? That way we can invite some other from other Houses."

The two wizard-born boys nodded. "If we can, let's meet in the Great Hall around ten?"

McGonagall strode back to the center of the room. "Now that we have our candles done, they will remain with you all day. If you let them go, they will float over you, high enough to be out of the way. When you wish to hold them, just think of them in your hand and they will return to you. Right now, we are going to have a candle meditation. We chose this because Fire and its properties are the most like Gryffindor. To be Gryffindor is to be brave, yes. It is to fight for what you believe is right, even when all else tells you it is wrong, it is in our nature to be bright, rambunctious, and flamboyant. Like a bonfire we roar but like a fire out of control, we don't always pay attention to what we are doing. The downside to the Gryffindor personality is that we can be self-righteous. We can focus so much on what we believe that we forget the other side or bystanders. Fire banked, controlled is useful. Uncontrolled fire is dangerous.
"We are the house of Ruby and Gold. Ruby of Flame and Blood. Gold of Power and Justice. We can also be the Ruby of Corruption and Destruction. We can be the Gold of Greed and Ego. We should strive to be the best of us, not the worst."

Truth spoke with a crackle of fire.

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Ravenclaw Common Room

“We are the house of Sapphire and Copper. The Sapphire stands for the Night Wind and Knowledge. Copper is the metal of Life and Connection, which was the first metal for both war and peace. This is what we aspire to, yet there on the other side, we can be the Sapphire of Obscurity and of Oblivion. We can be the bright Copper of Ego and Arrogance. We should strive to be the best of us, not the worst. Sometimes we wait until our knowledge tarnishes with age because we can’t bear to part with it. This is the problem with Copper, it can conduct knowledge and inspiration or it can tarnish and dull. We are not dull. We will shine but only through strict polishing, that means we have to seek input from others than ourselves. Shine comes from friction... let us pledge to shine with the inner glow of knowledge along with the ability to share it without other. Let us be the best of what we are, not the worst.”

Above them, air moved. Softly, quietly it whispered to the youngsters below who listened for wisdom on the wind.

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Slytherin Common Room

"We are the house of Emerald and Silver. The Emerald of Insight and Longevity. The Silver of Protection and Secrecy. At times, we have forgotten this and have been subject instead to employ the Emerald of Wealth Generation and Jealousy. The tarnished Silver Properties of Imprisonment and Withholding. There are times to use both the positive and negative aspects of our nature, but at all times we should take the view of Longevity and the wisdom of Insight. To further our Longevity, we seek to Protect what we deem precious, and we use our Secrecy to help with that. This is what we should remember as well as one more important fact of both Emerald and Silver; they are loyal. All these properties are qualities of Loyalty. Remember this above all. We are the best of our House."

Snape strode forward, but for once he was not in his customary black robes, but in a green robe, dark as the waters below the surface of the Black Lake. Placing one hand on the cool stones, he looked upon his charges as the candle flames lowered and the stones shone brightly before turning clear. On the other side, in dark green waters, hippocampi and merpeople, swam around.

“We swim, unseen, silently, in the water. Seek the wisdom of the lake.”
Behind him, his students stared into the rippling green water as it bounced it light through the room.

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Hufflepuff Common Room

"We are the house of Obsidian and **Sulphur***. Obsidian is volcanic glass, the very mantle of this world comes through fire, wind, and water to still be firm and stable. The other elements may be able to change parts of us but not everything. We are still the bones of the Earth. We are firm and steady. Sulphur, a most remarkable mineral, it is necessary for life to exist. It is in our hair and skin. It is necessary for the plants that feed us and can warn us of decomposition. It has a reputation for the smell but it is useful in healing, planting, war, and potions. Versatility is its main point. Versatility and Necessity. This is what Sulphur is. This is what Hufflepuff is truly about. The Durability and Essential nature of Obsidian and the Versatility and Necessity of Sulfur. Yet, this can also be to the detriment of us. When Durability turns to Pugnaciousness, when being Essential turns into be the Only and the power to use or deny it. When the Versatility turns into Equivocation, when Necessity becomes Fundamentalism. This is where we fail and we must not. We shine like the dark bones of the earth that we are and we do the unpleasant but necessary functions for life.

“We tend to meditate not in fire nor water, nor smoke on the wind. We tend to have two methods. To lose ourselves in stone or earth. For those of you who wish to do a live meditation, there are several flowering plants to use. See joy in their simple complexity. Follow a vein to the stem and see it as it takes nourishment from the Earth. For others we have stones, feel them are they smooth or rough? The warm hidden in each stone and the coolness surrounding it; these are the bones of the Earth. The bones of our Mother."

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Draco swam up from his meditation and stood. He felt good, relaxed. Of course, as a rule, mediation had been a part of his morning ablutions since he was two. Stretching, he moved quietly up the hallway to his godfather’s office. Knocking, he waited for a response.

“Sir?”

“Draco?”

Draco entered the office and sat quickly in the chair before Severus’ desk. “I know that you can’t tell me exactly but... I wish to ask Simon to celebrate the Sabbat with me. Do you know of any reasons that I should not?”

Severus stared at him, folding his hands. “And you think I would have information about such a
“Father loves you, sir. On this day, no lies should be spoken, as you know. It is one of the few times you can ask and get a real answer. My Mother and Father love you as they would a sibling. For who else would they seek advice from?” Draco stated.

Severus’ lips twitched. “Indeed. Did you not also celebrate Mabon with him?”

“I did.”

“I see... you do know that I will tell your Father of this?”

“I expect no less.”

“Go! Celebrate!”

Draco stood, bowed before turning and leaving.

Severus chuckled before writing a short note and calling a house-elf.

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Hogwarts Express
8:11 AM
Carriage 14

Lucius Malfoy read the note from Severus and smiled tightly. “Well it seems as if Draco has indicated a preference, my dear.”

Narcissa smiled. “Of course. Towards McGill’s son?”

Carmus chuckled. “That... would not be surprising in the least. They... sparked, the first time I saw them together, I knew. They would either hate each other or love one another.”

Lucius nodded. “It would be no little good for them to enjoy each other’s company.”

Ellen Granger sat up from the plush seat, tucking her black curls behind an ear. “Excuse me but I think this is one of those things that we Muggles just don’t get. Do you mind if I ask some questions?”

Narcissa leaned forward, placing one hand on Ellen’s knee. “If you do not ask, how will you receive knowledge? Personally, I will not take offense.”

“Nor I.” Lucius smiled.

“Nor I.” Carmus agreed.

Some of the others noticed a change in temperature.
“Thank you. Lucius mentioned that Draco indicated a preference and you seemed to accept it was towards another male. What type of preference?”

Lucius crossed one leg over the other. “For now, friendship. Close friendship, but with the opportunity to become more than friends later on. Draco is only eleven and while puberty can happen that early, it is more likely to happen within the next three years. If Draco and Simon do choose a sexual relationship, that will be between them and whatever first marriage partners that we, as their parents, will arrange.”

Ellen nodded. “You mentioned earlier that First Marriages are for children. They are both male. Does the Wizarding World have a way around this?”

Carmus smiled softly. “Mother and Father are liquid terms in the Wizarding World. Remember we have a smaller gene pool therefor we worked hard on creating new combinations. Dumbledore believes that one of my two best friends is the ‘Mother’ of my child. Sean was a good man. He will watch Simon to see if he has inherited his Mother’s gift. Words mean quite a bit in Magick, they are important focusing tools. So, when a child calls someone Father or Mother, you can take it to mean that the person either seeded or carried the child, respectively. There are several ways, as you say, around it. Including sex change potions and use of magick to create a false womb. Sometimes this works, sometimes it doesn’t. In America, there are several who chose to go the Muggle route with In-Vitro Fertilization. There is a greater chance of a Squib with that route though. In Switzerland they have combined Magical and Muggle practices with the parents magick performing the IVF under direction from the doctor. This has rarely produced a Squib. There are many ways for parenting in the Wizarding World.”

Alan stared at them. “So, it’s truly about Magick and compatibility, no bias against two men or two women or age?”

Lucius shook his head. “An older spouse might actually be good for some.” Lucius turned towards Carmus and raised one eyebrow.

“There are a lot more Muggles than Wizards. It is because of this scarcity, I believe, that Wizarding culture doesn’t have the same problems as Muggle culture does.” Carmus smiled a bitter smile and rolled his head to the side. “Lucius, Narcissa, Draco would have to do something incredibly repugnant for you to disown him, correct? Something on the order of slaughtering an entire family to sacrifice the fetus in some brutal and vicious blood rite, correct?”

Both Malfoys paled impressively. Lucius cleared his throat. “Indeed... but I do not believe Draco could even imagine that much less think about doing such a vile thing.”

“That’s a scene from a horror movie, ten years ago. In fact, it’s likely some Muggle has tried to copy it. I am not saying that Muggles do not value life but in many cases it is that they don’t value different life. Muggles find it so easy to have children and throw them away. I know... I know... they are bad parents but they are still part of your Culture. I have seen children disowned, cast out of their homes, told to not call their parents or family ever again over paltry things. Whether a child prefers their own gender or chooses a different religion. Muggle Parents coercing children for sex either to themselves or clients; Parents selling their children for drugs; Parents using their children to punish the other parent; Parents beating their own children to death for crying or asking for food or because they are rebellious. Beating their children simply for having magick. Parents who rather have their lovers than be a parent, and they would actually hold their child down to be raped rather than to be alone.

“Magickal children are rarely abused for long. Which is why the Potter mess is a mess. Usually the magick lashes out and kills the abuser. Sexual abuse doesn’t exist. Magick, you can’t rape a magickal child. That is a gift the child gives when wish to. Family Magicks usually see to that as well. It’s easy
to say that it’s only a few people but... if you have twenty apples and ten percent are bad, you will only find two bad apples. When you have ten thousand apples? You see a lot more bad apples. Every day there are reports of children beaten until they die on the floor, starved, raped, brutalized. It is why I do what I do.”

Narcissa lowered her head. “That is foul. Lovers can wait. If they love you, they will wait. It matters not to us whether he loves Simon or another, save if that person breaks his heart. I care not if he fights with us every day, he is there to fight with us. Carmus... how?”

“Many Muggle Parents love their children but some become so consumed with themselves that the child becomes an extension of themselves. I know this one woman who decided she didn’t want children but also didn’t want to work at a ‘female job’ such as nurse or teacher. She wanted to go into construction. Her family was furious that she took Shop rather than Home Economics and Architecture rather than Fine or Liberal Arts. As soon as they were no longer legally required to support her, they kicked her out. She almost dropped out of school but we found her a place to stay and she was able to keep studying. She is doing well but just because she didn’t want to marry and raise children, they believed that she wasn’t woman enough for them.

Lucius frowned.

Ellen Granger sighed. “True, but there are many parents who don’t do that. Most don’t. They sacrifice for their children after all. You had them because you wanted them. They didn’t ask to be born.

Alan chuckled. “That’s true. Sometimes women even risk their lives to bring them into the world.”

Carmus laughed. “That’s true. Like everything, there is balance. There are those who never should have had kids, but there are just as many if not more whose kids are lucky to have them as parents. I’d rather focus on the fact that most of the children, right now, have excellent parents. I don’t know them all, but they are here. They are here supporting their child, even if they don’t quite understand everything. And ain’t that wonderful?”

Narcissa faced Ellen. “Indeed.”

Hogwarts
Outside the Gryffindor Common Room
8:25 AM

Draco nodded at others as he passed by towards the Gryffindor Tower. Last Sabbat he had asked Simon to allow him to celebrate with him. He thought back to the smile Simon had given him and how he stressed 'you'.

*Draco moved next to Simon and laid one hand on the back of Simon's neck. "Simon McGill, will you celebrate this festival with me?"

"I get the feeling this is something pureblood I'm missing but yes, Draco. I will celebrate this festival with you."
End of Harvest, beginning of Dark, a perfect time to make such a request. Hidden motives and hidden desires. Today; the end and the beginning. Unfortunately, he couldn't ask the second question until Yule but that would be fine. Severus was sure to invite them, especially with the alliance in the works. Standing still next to the guardian painting in an informal but still well worked robe of black and silver, his hair with a small amount of gel to keep it off his face and a pleasant smile on his face. Slowly the painting opened and several Gryffindors came out of the hole. Some ignored him, some nodded. One told him that the first years were coming soon. Draco nodded politely and waited. Laughter floated out from the hole. Simon's laugh. Draco had known him for a grand total of three months, yet already he knew his laugh and how sincere it was. Weasley and Longbottom appeared first, both giving him a courteous nod which he returned. Grainger, no he must remember to address her in his thoughts as Hermione considering the contract under review with her parents, came after with Simon.

"Draco! Blessed Samhain."

Draco's smiled widened. "Blessing of remembrance to you as well, Simon, Ms. Granger." Draco replied softly. "May I escort you to break your fast, Simon?"

Simon started to nod, then stopped. His lips thinned as he tried to remember the proper response. "I would be honored and pleased to be escorted by you, Draco."

Draco tilted his head minutely and turned, expectantly.

Simon stepped closer and placed one hand on Draco's right wrist.

Draco stepped off, expecting and appreciating Simon following.

Hermione looked at the two of them, a small frown on her face before turning to the other two wizards. "Why is Draco being so formal?"

Ron shrugged and set off behind the two boys. "Remember Simon wasn’t raised in the Wizarding World for all that’s he’s actually Old Blood. He said his mum raised him mostly Muggle but he and Draco share a Godfather, so likely he’s teaching Simon noble manners."

"Indeed. And Simon did well. Don’t worry, Granger, your time will come. Soon too, I believe."

"Oh?" Hermione looked at him eagerly.

Simon laughed at the look on her face. "Always hungry to learn something new, aren’t you?"

Hermione nodded, "But it’s not new, it’s old. It’s traditional. And,” she paused, “it’s magickal, isn’t it?"

Draco stopped suddenly, turning to face her. Around them, several other students took note of his aberrant behavior. "Explain... please."

Hermione took a deep breath. "In class, Flitwick and most of the teachers keep talking about intent and will. They mentioned that Dark Magic is powerful and must be tightly controlled. It is demanding and strong; that to practice it is to force your will step by step so that the Magick will do what you wish it to. Most of the students here that admit to being Dark are very... deliberate. They pick their words carefully and act in certain set patterns as if every action..."

Simon’s eyes grew large. "... it has an equal and opposite reaction. Newton’s Seco- no Third Law. But Hermione, it’s more like every action causes a reaction. It’s more like ripples in a pond. Every move, every word, every act causes a ripple or turbulence."
Another voice came from the crowd now forming. “So many ripples become waves, you have to compensate if you want to surf the wave? Or avoid being brought under.”

Neville nodded. “Magick is in everything, it’s everywhere but remember we, by that I mean magickal folk, live and prosper where it’s highest. We radiate magick, that’s why house elves *are* house elves. They benefit from being around us and our magick just like we benefit from being around other sources of magick.”

Hermione frowned, “So magick... is like water. If we were fish, we wouldn’t realize we were in water because it’s always there. Magick is always here in deep places and shallow places. Muggles live in shallow places and Wizards live in deep places. Our using magick causes ripples and turbulence, but known ripples and turbulence.”

Draco smiled tightly and waved her on.

“Light users used the top layer while Dark users use the deep-down layers.”

A third or fourth year Ravenclaw gasped. “Like the ocean currents, you can have one current up in the epilimnion and another in the thermocline. They can even go in different directions but they are necessary to circulate water and keep our weather systems at work. Without it, several places would freeze. Which is why we *need* to have Dark and Light, to keep magick healthy. However, when we have earthquakes, the bottom layers of water barely seem to move but they still cause huge tsunamis. And that’s why those who practice Dark magic are so... restricted. One small move in the deep magick can cause huge waves everywhere else!”

Draco relaxed. “Do you know how long the Dark families have been trying to explain that to the Light idiots?!”

Several of the other Dark aligned children laughed in relief.

“Language, Malfoy!” Percy Weasley snapped.

Draco shook his head. “I can call the Light idiots today, Weasley. The Muggleborns fumbled through to an underlying facet of the Dark magick in less than a season that we have been trying to explain to you for decades.”

Ron flushed. “Well yeah, in that case, you can say it.”

Percy Weasley shook his head. “Perhaps it wasn’t a lack of our understanding but a lack of proper teaching.”

A fifth year Slytherin girl laughed. “Sorry but no. It’s another aspect of the Dark. We don’t teach our children so... bluntly. If you just hand them knowledge, they never learn to synthesize it. We would rather hand them facts and let them put them together in different ways until they get to the truth. This way they learn what fails and what works.”

Hermione smiled. “Perhaps but that’s because you are used to hidden depths. Isn’t it so that Light magick is surface magick? Then doesn’t it make sense that they are rather transparent and prefer to be just told?”

“You are Hermione Granger, are you not? Lord Malfoy is up for your Sponsorship? I am Alentha Kelly and very pleased to meet you. You may call me Alentha. You are right but why should we be transparent to them? We, as you say, are Deep Magick. If we were to be so obvious, we could make a fatal mistake and be in danger from our own Magick. No, it is better that we do not pick up bad habits. Dark magick is not so obvious. We must always be aware when we use it that we could cause
unpredictability.”

Hermione nodded. “I see. Thank you.”

“For?”

“For teaching us something about the Dark. What better day to learn it than today?”

Alentha laughed and held out her arm. “May I escort you to break your fast, Miss Granger?

Hermione stepped forward, laying her hand on Alentha’s wrist. “I would be honored and pleased to be escorted by you, Alentha. Please call me Hermione.”

“Hermione.” Alentha murmured and moved towards the doors to the Great Hall.

Draco smirked as he followed, still walking with Simon who moved slightly closer. “Perhaps Father is right. I should be used to that. Kelly... of the Irish branch I believe. Right by Cashel. Cream and dark blue.”

Simon turned to look at him. “Her family? Is that important?”

Draco nodded and led him into the Great Hall, which instead of four long tables was populated by over four-dozen smaller ones and seemed to have grown in area. Draco led them towards one slightly Slytherin-ward of the middle where Alentha and Hermione were seated. He stopped by a chair and gestured to Simon as he waved the chair back. “Simon, it matters because this year, many of the families, especially the more traditional ones are not going to arrange First Marriages. The fact that many Muggleborns and their families are willing to submit to Bloodtests and genealogical research means that there will be more opportunities to breed magickally strong children. This is an opportunity that we Purebloods haven’t had in almost four generations.”

Ron and Neville approached and with no word of discouragement from the other two couples, sat down and started to fill their plates.

Alentha nodded. “Indeed. One must be careful mixing blood. However, with the chance for revitalization, my family is thinking of Sponsorship and even investigating Guardianship. The Kellys in my branch have sometimes mixed with descendants of squibs but only those who have not left the area in the past five generations. We know their bloodlines; we know what secrets their blood harbors. There is not much risk, but even so, the pool is still being depleted.”

Neville nodded at Kelly’s words. “Even Gran is thinking about it. There are too few reasonable matches for me. She was worried that my First Marriage would be delayed.”

Percy Weasley took a seat without a word and a brunette fourth year Ravenclaw sat beside him. “Hello, my name is Mia Almengor. Please call me Mia. I admit to being a Muggleborn, so please do not be offended by some of the questions I may ask. I was at the meeting in which you talked about marriages and First Marriages but I must confess to be still confused in some way to the significance and more so to the need.”

Draco nodded at Alentha. “Mia, I am Alentha to you. Blood is important, not just to Magick but to us. I know it seems elitist to focus so much on it however there are real fundamental reasons to do so. For example, take Flitwick and Hagrid. One is part goblin and one is part giant. Imagine if you will, six generations from now. Flitwick is gone and so is Hagrid. Their great-great-great-great-grandchildren meet and fall in love. Hagrid’s magick is still present in his bloodline as is Flitwick’s. Perhaps it only shows as some of Flitwick’s descendants being smaller than average while Hagrid’s is taller than average. Yet the two who fall in love and marry are of average height. They decide to
have children. Flitwick’s descendant gets pregnant and is bearing the child. A recessive trait is activated and that average descendant now finds themselves trying to bear the child of a giant. It will kill them. That destroys two powerful sources of magick. The mother and the child. Not to mention, the father may lose control and become a danger to everyone. That is a simple matter of Blood. Now think of the fact that both giants and goblins eat raw meat. It’s part of them and they need raw meat. Then take a child of that mix and cross it with someone of Vampire ancestry. Overpowering need for Raw Meat and Blood. The last time that happened... well, it took twenty Aurors to destroy her. She was a vicious predator in London during the 1880’s. They thought her just another murderer. Janus Anna Caroline King was destroyed in her lair under London on November 9th in the year 1888. No greater failure from the mixing of blood is recorded. They didn’t actually find all her victims.”

Mia frowned. “Then the Wizarding World created Jack the Ripper?”

“Unfortunately. That only stressed to us how important Blood truly is.”

Hermione frowned. “Yes, I guess it would. So, for these marriage contracts, one of the requirements is a blood test to see what, if any magickal creatures I have in my background, correct?”

“Yes, but not just creatures. Bloodlines are also important. The Malfoys have certain Family Magicks that follow their bloodlines so if you were a distaff Malfoy, you might get more magick from the sponsorship than you would if you weren’t. Also remember, Lord Malfoy will be negotiating your First Marriage.”

“He will?”

“Of course. He will, if he gets your Sponsorship and really... Hermione, you want the Deep Magick. I can see it in you. Given a choice, you will not be Light nor will you be Neutral. You will gravitate towards the Green, the Dark and what better family to introduce you to it than the Malfoys. In regards to that, as well, Draco... my family rarely gives their children a contract before their fourth year. For the past four years, my family has not given any contracts out whatsoever under advice from several of our haruspex. Myself, two cousins, and my brother, who will enter next year, have no contracts. Nor would I be averse to one.”

“I shall so inform him.”

“My thanks.”

Simon shook his head. Even with explanation there were still mysteries among the Dark. Eating slowly, he looked around the room. Very few tables had only one house at them. Only those diehards who resisted mixing sat alone. A flutter of movement in the rafters called his eyes to them. Moving closer to Draco, he murmured. “What’s with the owls decorated with ribbons?”

“It is Samhain, the time for the Dark to send out marriage proposals. The owls are Formal Owls and the ribbons are the colors of the House to which it belongs. It will deliver a scroll sealed with the House colors but bound in the colors of the House of the betrothed. Look.”

An owl swooped down and landed a couple table over in front of a dark haired Hufflepuff from third year. It had ribbons of dark forest green and pale yellow. On its back was leather wrapped scroll. He reached for it and opened it. The scrolled had a green wax seal with a shimmering yellow impression but the ribbon that encircled the scrolled and was held closed by the seal was midnight blue and white.

“The green and yellow are the Allen line, and the young man receiving it is Jonas Roger Allen, 3rd year Hufflepuff. The midnight and white are the colors of the Smith family, right now the only Smith
of that line is Zacharias Evan Smith, 2\textsuperscript{nd} year Hufflepuff.”

Simon watched as Allen opened the scrolled and read it, nodding before picking up his plate and moving through the tables to where Smith sat. Smiling, he leaned down to speak softly to Smith. A murmur from Draco and they could hear them clearly.

“Blessed Samhain, Zacharias. Will you do me the signal honor of celebrating the year with me?”

Smith’s eyes flickered to the scroll and back up to the 3\textsuperscript{rd} year. He nodded and replied. “It is my honor to be asked and accept. Please sit with me?”

Allen smiled and sat, placing his food down. Never looking dismayed at the cool invitation, he moved several items from his plate to Smith’s and continued to eat.

Simon pulled back. “I think I missed something.”

“Smith isn’t thrilled but accepting while Allen has no objection and may even like Smith. He is pleased by the contract. He fed Smith from his own plate, as he should since he’s the elder. It’s his responsibility now to take care of Smith, and if I don’t mistake it, also his pleasure.”

“Oh I got that... but if it’s their First Marriage, it’s for kids, right?”

“Yes.” Draco looked confusedly at him.

“Well, they are both boys. How are they going to have kids?”

Draco choked. “Magick. Anymore and you need to ask Severus, okay?”

Simon laughed at his expression. “Of course, Draco. By the way... last time you asked, but this time I’m asking. “Will you celebrate with me?”

Draco took a deep breath. “Aye, this day and all year if you wish.”

Simon flushed. “Today but I don’t think I can have you all year.”

Draco frowned and turned to look at what Simon was seeing. A regal Malfoy Eagle Owl with ribbons of Silver and Black stood there with a wrapped scroll on its back. Draco’s hand never shook as he reached forward and unwrapped it. The Malfoy black and silver seal on a ribbon stripped in gold, silver, and bronze. He turned back to Simon. “This year and every year if you wish it.”

Hogwarts Express
Car 8
10:17 A.M.

Anabel Napier followed the Grangers into a rail car. The amazing things the Wizards could do. Each rail car was much bigger on the inside. If only the Hogwarts Express was blue. Giggling softly, she took an aisle seat. Large and soft, the seats appear to be more armchairs than rail seats. At the front of the carriage were two men. Both dressed in Wizard Fashion. One wore black robes over a rich deep purple under-robe, the belt was black leather with many pouches. He wore black boots with
darkened buckles. He had dark reddish-brown hair pulled back in a tail and a weathered face. In his hand, he held a wand and a circle of wood with a handle attached to it. His black robe was trimmed in rose with gold symbols. The other man was dressed in dark chocolate three-piece suit, complete with pocket watch. The chocolate trousers and jacket framed a rich deep plum waistcoat that had a diamond pattern of gold threads. Over this he had a simple black robe.

“Welcome one and all. If you will find seats, we will start our talk about Haunted Houses. My name is Abraham Noctis and I am a Wizard. With me, is Auror Patrick Cord. We are part of the Ghost, Revenant, and Poltergeist Haunt Investigation Coterie, which is more commonly known as GRAPHIC.”

“A Coterie is a group of wizards and witches who work in concert to affect major magickal undertaking. No more than thirteen and no less than three. The ability to work in magickal harmony with another is a prized skill. Right now, GRAPHIC’s coterie number eleven. Although they do work individually or in pairs in the initial investigations, when it comes time to act, they never work in less than three at a time. The more difficult the removal, the more people it may require.

“Now what is it that we remove and what does it have to do with Haunted Houses? Well... first most of those places you consider Haunted are not. They are simply Wizard Homes. All magickal beings, including witches and wizards ‘leak’ magick. That affects the places we invest our time or emotion in most.” He pulled out a slender tapered wooden stick and waved it slowly. Two houses appeared side by side. They were the same house. “The first house is a wizard home; it has soaked up cast off energy from the wizards living there. Magick travels in bloodlines, so each family’s magick has a slightly different taste. Homes where we live and do so much, not to mention have families that live, love, hate, fight, make up, cry and spill blood in soon come to be imbued with magick. It makes the home somewhat sentient, not truly a person but alive enough to have preferences, to have to be cajoled, feel neglected and react to the family.

“That is why there are no apartment buildings in the Wizarding World and most homes are detached. There are flats above shops but few of them or a person might buy one in a muggle area and have many complex wards laid down. The mixing of magick from different families can cause chaos and trouble. It is better if they are separated. Now what happens when a Wizarding home, which has been loved for years, finds it has no people left? If it’s left alone and neglected?”

The Auror stepped forward. “That’s where we come in. Those houses go mad. Sometimes they sink into depression and end up depressing the area surrounding them to the point that most people move out. Sometimes we get what you Muggles call a ‘haunted house’; Which is essentially a place which tries to bring back its family through the memories embedded within its walls. Then you get ghosts walking the hall. Maybe the house reaches back before its current shape and you have ghosts walking floors that are not there anymore. Those are fairly innocuous and not at all dangerous.

“Then there are the dangerous ones, those that are angry. They will try to recreate themselves and their wishes but they lack the power to do so. These houses will torment people to generate power, sometimes even kill to use people’s flesh and blood to recreate what they want. Those houses must be destroyed. That is where I come in. My coterie and I subdue and in some case, destroy insane houses. Anyone who moves into one can fall prey to the madness of the house. To give you an idea, think the Overlook Hotel in the Shining or the DeFeo house in Amityville Horror. We in Britain don’t tend to have too many, mainly because stone, while it records well, doesn’t react as much as wood. That’s why wands are made of wood. In the Americas, houses are often wood interior and in the case of older houses, mostly wood. Therefore, they react more.” He stared at them with a considering look, “How many of you have heard of Fyvie Castle?”

Most hands went up. “Good, now how many of you have heard of the Sealed Room of Fyvie?”
Some hands dropped. “Alright, a fair few. Now how many of you have heard of the Laird’s Curse of Fyvie Castle?”

More hands fell.

“Okay, for those of you who don’t know. Fyvie Castle, which is located near Turriff in Aberdeenshire. Thomas Erceldoune also known as True Thomas said that he was to visit Fyvie, so the doors were held open day and night, guarded but opened, since he could speak no lie. After seven years, a fierce storm came up and it was on this day that Thomas decided to come to Fyvie. Some said that the wind was to blame, others say it was just they were tired and decided to be rude but the door slammed shut as Thomas approached. In anger, Thomas proclaimed a curse:

"Fyvie, Fyvie thou shall never thrive,
As long as there's in thee stones three:
There's one in the highest tower,
There's one in the lady's bower,
There's one underneath the water gate,
And they’re three stones you shall never get.

“Two of the stones have been found, but the one by the water gate has never been found. Also, no first-born son of any of the Lord of Fyvie have managed to live long enough to claim Fyvie. Though it is a horrible curse, it is also the only way to keep the Sealed Room sealed. So, what exactly does Thomas the Rhymer have to do with the sealed room? The room was offered to the Wizarding World as a prison for one of the vilest and cruelest... persons to ever walk the Isles. So vile that before Thomas Riddle, they were considered to be the Evilest of Lords. So dangerous they were that they were bound in seven sacred woods and five blessed metals and three sacred stones. And that was before they were sealed into the room of Fyvie. They were bound by some of the harshest and most impossible spells to release by the Dark, the Light, and the Neutrals. Yet every curse has to have a loophole, if it doesn’t, then the curse can implode. Therefore, the curse has as close as impossible to fulfill conditions such as ‘dry water’ or ‘cold that burns as brightly as the stars’ though that one has happened. One more condition is that the first born heir of Fyvie must open the door to let them out. However, if the heir or Lord of Fyvie opens, allows to be open, causes to be opened, or fails to prevent the opening of the door from outside then his wife shall die and he will be struck blind. And in Scotland there were rules about those who were damaged or cursed; they were not being able to hold Lordships of their own.

“Thus between Thomas’ curse, and our own on the door... we hope to keep them forever in the room. Or until we can defeat them permanently. Part of our job is to check on the person every year. There is one spot that is allowed for us to apparate, that is teleport, into. To leave, we leave through the door. After all, the handle is on the inside, therefore it is not being opened from the outside. Many believe Fyvie to be well haunted... other than the ghost of Grisel Seton, there are no haunts there. Everything else they feel is simply the aura of the person in the Sealed Room. However, that aura, could in time attract ghosts. So that is another job for us. Maintaining the health of haunted homes, at least those who have not gone bad, rehabilitating some of the homes that have gone by through care and helping them find owners who appreciate them, and destroying those who are too far gone is what we do. No matter what, I wouldn’t change my profession. And I haven’t even gotten to tell you what we do with Spirits and Poltergeists!”

Anabel smiled and clapped. Scary but fascinating and one day her daughter might even be able to do these things. Not bad for the daughter of shop clerk. Raising her hand, she wondered. “Sir... explain a bit more about coteries and can you tell us more of your cases?”

“Yes, Abraham and I have a few unsealed cases we can speak about. One is Peeves, he’s the
poltergeist at Hogwarts. He’s an experience! A coterie is a group of magick users who work together to...”

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Hogwarts
Ravenclaw Side Hall
10:42 AM

Simon watched from his position next to Draco, his head on Draco’s shoulder as the final act of Rion the Brave finished. Rion had already faced a Banshee, three giant direwolves, and now faced Barrowights. Draco’s hand rested above his hip as they watched. Turning, he could see that beside them Hermione was seated but not still. She was writing without looking. The writing appeared weird, loops and squiggles. He even noticed that when the play ended, she was first on her feet to clap. Not that he could blame her; it was really interesting! A few minutes passed before three of the actors came back out on stage. Rion, who was played by a 6th year Ravenclaw named Brian; Arian who was played by a 7th year Ravenclaw, Marissa and Blöd, who was played by another 6th year, Anna.

Brian stared at the group. “So, okay... I guess there are some questions? Who first?”

Simon watched as Hermione sat up and then tilted her head. Some of the other students were looking at her, expecting her to once more dominate a question and answer session. Several even frowned but Hermione just lowered her head and tucked her hands under her arms. Simon raised his hand.

“Did Rion ever exist?”

Brian smiled. “Likely yes and no. Rion actually means King or Ruler. It’s possible that a rion did do these things but that the same Rion did it... not likely. In fact, did you notice that my counterpart’s name is A- Rian. Riona, Rian, both can be used for Queen or Ruler. The fact that it has an A in front of it is an elevator, meaning Holy Queen. This can actually be linked back to ancient beliefs in which the King was expected to wed the land first. The land was fertile, the land nourished life, the land could be changeable and therefore the land which was the giver or life was considered female. In Ireland, the spirit of the land, Tara was married to each of the seven kings. The other side of this was if the land needed from her husband, he was expected to give whatever she needed. That included his own life. Many a king was killed to revitalize the land.

“In the play, I sought guidance, received weapons, and was given direction by Arian, who is the revered lady of the land. In some of the older traditions, Arian never speaks but instead directs her ‘fingers’. And not sign language. Apparently, her ‘fingers’ were small beings who obeyed her and from the descriptions, they might be house-elves!”

Excited chattering broke out among the group. Hermione smiled and picked up her notebook, once again taking notes and happily listening to the information flying about.

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Carmus strolled down the aisle, checking compartments for anything tense-filled. Lunch would be served soon, so most presentations were wrapping up. The car for the GRAPHIC team was completely full, but considering how many muggle stories were about haunted houses, perhaps this wasn’t unusual. Smiling at the fascination that so many of the families had for magick was good to see. Hopefully this would help when younger siblings ended up at Hogwarts. Stopping short, he turned back to a doorway that he had just passed. In the carriage was a goblin, with a family of muggleborns; There were two parents and two primary school aged children. He knocked on the window. The goblin looked up and the door opened. “Lord McGill, this is Mr. Gregory and Mrs. Angela White, with their twin boys Andrew and Casey. They have one child in Hogwarts: a young man by the name of Daniel White. They are interested in the changes that will take place with the curriculum next year.”

“Ahhh, well have you two joined HAARP? There are no dues, as we are trying to reach out and connect the graduates of Hogwarts who have returned to the Muggle community, as well as the parents of Muggleborns with Wizarding folk. The idea is that there was a lack of communication. As you may have heard, the foundation of the Wizarding folk disagreement with Muggleborns was that after bringing the Muggleborns, or as many are starting to call them First Generation Returnees, into their society and their premier school, they would leave. Leave and take their magick and magickal blood with them, meanwhile disdaining the faith and traditions of the Wizarding folk. Naturally after being snubbed by the Muggleborns, they would in turn snub them. And you know how it is, it gets bigger and bigger with every year. Turns out that the materials given to the Muggleborns was... altered and in such a way that the Muggleborns had no idea of what gift they were being given.

“Have your parents, or grandparents ever given you something, something you thought was useful or just something to be given only to find out that it was an heirloom from your great-great grandparents?”

The twin boys shook their head and Angela grimaced. “My grandfather, he had this awful sculpture of a cigar store Indian. My parents displayed it all the time. I hated it. I thought it was an awful stereotype to continue. When my parents died, we got the house and the twins were four and they liked to play with it. I put it in storage. I didn’t want that thing in my house. My grandfather came over once and noticed it was gone. I told him that I didn’t care for it at all and wouldn’t have it in my house. He was quiet about it. Three years later he died. When we went through his papers, we found out that he had built it with his uncle in 1912. Actually, I should say his half-uncle; that uncle was half Native American, and from my great grandmother’s first marriage. But he loved my grandfather, so when my grandfather’s parents died of the flu in 1918, that same uncle took him in. He died a few years later, apparently from lung damage, but by that time my grandfather was an adult. He never forgot building, sanding, and painting this thing. His uncle laughed at it, called it a joke on the idiots who bought them. I can’t imagine how much my disdain hurt him but he said nothing. Now, I treasure the awful thing because it’s a memory of my grandfather and his uncle who loved him so much.”

Carmus smiled. “Then you understand. We gave the Muggleborns our most sacred thing and they treated it as if it was merely a tool then threw it away. So of course, we were angry but now we know it is not because they hated us but because they didn’t realize the value of what they were given. Just as you didn’t understand the connection that the figure represented. Though considering
we are heading there for Samhain, perhaps during the necromantic portion, you should concentrate on your grandfather, tell him that you understand now and when we send the messages you can send one with the traveler."

Gregory White frowned. “Necromancy?”

Rockhound smiled. “Not the idea of non-wizard necromancy. No corpse torturing. It means to speak to the dead, which they do every day when they speak to the ghosts who inhabit Hogwarts. In this case, I believe there is a portion of the night, where they will send a ghost onwards through death to their final reward.”

Carmus grinned. “Yes, we are finally sending on Cuthbert Binns. He was the History of Magic teacher. He sat down in the teacher’s lounge and died. Got up and went to teach class. Apparently alive, he was an excellent teacher but the longer he was dead, the more he repeated himself. Now he’s just going over Goblin Wars and destroying the love of History for so many students. We plan to have Remus Lupin take over next year but for the rest of this year, we are having Magickal History graduate students come in as guest teachers. That way they will get taught History with all the love and passion it should be taught with.”

Angela White smiled softly. “And that brings us back to education. We were told that Hogwarts was the best but just a glance over the educational statistics provided by HAARP proves it’s not. While it is the largest in the United Kingdom, it seems that there are many smaller local schools that do just as well.”

Carmus nodded. “Yes and no. Those school are a lot smaller. Since the two wars and the angry reaction of the purebloods to the whole muggle-born misinformation kerfluffle, the rate of birth has gone precipitously down and of those which are larger, they are more exclusive. You can only get into them if your family is local. That is why there are less than three hundred students in the entire school despite the school being built for over a thousand students. At their height, they had a waiting list of two or three hundred. Hogwarts stays in business due to three things: first, it is the school for those of a certain power level; second, they do have the best teachers in the field; and three, the prestige that the school still carries acts as a cachet. Many people believe it to be exclusive due to its numbers. Hogwarts was built not to teach everyone magick but to teach the nobles magick. Remember, for the magick community, nobility isn’t limited to funds or even lineage; nobility is a status of magickal power. Those other schools cannot contain the power of Hogwarts students and in fact, the power of the typical student at Hogwarts would oppress any student at any of those other smaller schools. Therefore, no school would and cannot and should not accept your children except Hogwarts. Yet many of those students went back to the Muggle World and thus we lost quite a bit of powerful Noble Blood. So, while they present it as an honor, the truth is simply that if your child does not go to Hogwarts then there is nowhere in the UK for them to go.”

The Whites looked at each other. “I see... what about Durmstang and Beaubuttons?”

“Durmstrang and Beauxbatons, are on the continent and have a very different curriculum. Beauxbatons is Neutral in their educational standards while Durmstrang teaches Light, Dark and Neutral. And Hogwarts is skewed too far into Light Magick only. That will be corrected next year. As you have heard, Light doesn’t mean Good and unfortunately that has been the position that has been sponsored. However with our new curriculum that will be changing and one of the biggest changes is that we are bringing back Nature of Magick classes. Those classes are designed to allow students to examine their own magic and learn to use it in the best way for them.

“I was surprised when I learned that my magick had a connection to the dead. At first it worried me but my grandfather who did at one time teach the class, explained to me that if I didn’t dictate my
magick and go and try to force my magick into actions that it wouldn’t naturally flow and would
cause harm not just to me but to others, as well. Most accidental magick accidents happen because of
that. The child wants to do something but their magick doesn’t naturally flow that way so it
backfires. We have the duty to teach children how to use their magick appropriately so that they can
become their sterling best. The same reason that some people who naturally tend to the Green or
Dark as most know it, have problem with Gold or Light spells. They are trying to do magick in the
wrong way. What are you good at?”

The parents looked at each other. One of the twins spoke up, “Casey is good at writing and drawing
and he also sings well. I like music and dancing and math.”

“Good, but what if I decided the only way for you to make music was to write scores, no singing, no
dancing, no instrument. What if I just wanted you to compose?”

Andrew frowned. Casey laughed. “He’d hate it. He would go spare!”

“That’s exactly the problem between Green and Gold. Green is going spare and they can’t make the
Gold faction understand.”

“Ah,” Gregory sighed, “so you will be teaching all three paths of magick until each child finds one to
understand?”

“Exactly.”

“Good. That’s good.”

Hogwarts Courtyard
12:13 PM
Lunch

Draco took the plate from Simon and offered his arm. Lunch was served outdoors despite the chill. A
warming charm and jacket or thick robes kept people warm enough despite the temperature. A large
buffet style lunch was provided with house elves protecting and keeping the food warm as well as
providing a cover that blocked any rain from hitting the courtyard. This time they weren’t hidden,
dressing in fine towels altered to be almost tunic, they smiled and had to be prevented from
overfeeding the students. Apple moon cakes and cookies were given with each plate. Benches were
aligned against the walls with benches. They strolled over towards a seat where several other
students sat.

“If it’s between us, I don’t know why I can’t see it, Draco.”

“Because there are terms you can’t understand yet. Things that are specific to our world and I rather
you have your father there to explain it to you rather than you misreading something and getting
upset.”

Simon scowled. “I’ve been reading and I’m not exactly an idiot.”
Draco stopped and nodded. “That’s true but still this is still new to you. Just... trust me?”

Simon sighed. “Fine, but at least father’s coming today. When are they supposed to get here?”

Draco smiled gently at the question. Not because it was funny but because it meant that Simon was showing a bit of trust in him. “Between three and four. Even though they left earlier, they are going slower to give the parents some time to get information. It will still give us time to show them the Houses and some time to tour the grounds before dinner at seven. Though you probably won’t see him until around five or six, he’s going to want to visit with Severus.”

“They are rather close... don’t you think?”

“They probably would have married save his father was a muggle and now Dumbledore has something on him that allows him to have some type of control over him. He can’t marry Severus off but even if he could, he would never entertain McGill’s suit. After all McGill is neutral and Dumbledore would never give Severus to someone that he didn’t absolutely trust and that means a Light Wizard or Witch.”

“That’s ridiculous. I wonder what he could have on him?”

An older student replied, “Custodis Regent.”

Draco’s head whipped around, “He didn’t?!?”

Hermione stopped as she passed by and traded looks with Simon who waved her to his other side. Neville and Ron sat as well.

“Draco, what’s Custodis Regent?”

Draco sat there, looking surprisingly angry. Simon looked around and Neville sighed, “He basically made Professor Snape a child. He somehow convinced the Wizagamot to strip the Professor of his rights and put him under the ‘custody’ of the Headmaster. It’s an extreme step. Since he is under ‘custody’ he has no rights. If the Professor didn’t have a Guardian or a Sponsor to guarantee his rights or vouch and take responsibility for his actions, then it’s possible but rare. How do you know, Copley?”

“My mother was requested by Lord Malfoy to dig through the Ministry files. She found it... in the Child Services division. She was furious that anyone would approve such a request on someone with as such a prestigious reputation as Potions Master Snape. I can’t tell you how many words I learned while helping in her office. Apparently, the professor is one ‘child’ that Dumbledore has kept tabs on.”

Draco paled even further. “It’s actually worse than that and I need to speak to my father when he comes. My grandfather Abraxas is Severus’ Sponsor.”

Copley shook his head. "Every time we think we see the depths of the depravity he commits in the name of the ‘Light,’ it becomes worse. Is there nothing that he won’t do or despoil or profane? If he despises the Magickal world so much, perhaps he should have his wand broken, his magick bound and forced to live in the Muggle world!”

Several other students who were listening voiced agreements. One young lady whispered, “Poor Professor.”

Draco’s head snapped up. “Don’t you dare! Don’t you dare insult his fortitude with pity! There is nothing to pity, he didn’t do anything wrong to deserve pity. I am proud of my Godfather for putting
up with this and still being strong. He needs no pity and no one will give him any. Right?” He stared at her.

Various replies of “No” and “Never” came from around him.

Ron nodded. “He is Lord Seacrest and Scion of the Prince Line, who could expect less than determination and fortitude. This only proves his right to his Line.”

Draco nodded. “And we will make sure he will get justice truly served. Dumbledore has overstepped his boundaries by far. He is violating the Law of Magickal Inheritance.”

Hermione frowned. “Earlier we mentioned Sir Isaac Newton’s Third Law. I don’t know if you know them, but to put them succinctly, the First Law is that a body at rest stays at rest and a body in motion stays in motion. I guess in magickal language, if magick is disturbed, the ripples keep going. The spell will never stop unless they are acted upon and magick that is still will remain still until it is acted upon.

“The Second Law says that an object in motion will continue in the direction it is at the same rate it’s going unless something acts upon it. That’s a bit more complicated since it deals with force, mass and acceleration but if I had to put it in magickal terms... the force you put behind a spell will cause it to move fast, right? It will move as fast at the start all the way until the end unless something gets in its way.

“The Third Law is that for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. Say a spell is shot at a shield. Both disappear, because they are equal and cancel each other out. If the spell is stronger then the Second Law applies, it’s not going to stop, but it may slow down, since the shield itself causes it to slow down. And the First Law is that either never starting or never ending a spell. Like the spell that hides the magickal world. As long as nothing interferes, it will stay the same. Never changing but things do act upon and wear it down but if nothing did wear it down. In other words, it would be a perpetual spell. Which is impossible because it would mean that it can work indefinitely without an energy source and that’s not possible.

“The Equal Reaction Law is what I’m most curious about. The McGills help Magick balance itself, right?”

Simon nodded then looked up and smiled. “Of course, if we help Magick keep the Balance then maybe we are the instruments that Magick is using to stop Dumbledore. Magick is living, I’m not sure it’s sentient in the same way we are but it grows and changes.”

Copley looked at Hermione. “I see what you mean, but then that would mean after an intense period of Light, Dark may rise but what sort of Dark... I mean Green?”

Ron smiled at the older boy. “Well that depends on you and your families. It’s obvious that we and by that, I mean the Gold families have a skewed idea of what the Green families believe and act like. As far as the Weasley’s in Hogwarts goes, the slate is clean. If you show us who you are, then we’ll accept it. It’s obvious that we were given a very prejudiced view of the Green. We define ourselves as seeing clearly, but how can we continue to believe his lies?”

Several other students of the Light aka Gold nodded in agreement.

A seventh year Gryffindor said, “If not us, then who? We are young enough to change more easily and forgive more readily. We must start as we want to go.”

Slowly the talk turned more to what one could expect for the rest of the day with some of the Darker
students telling a bit of their family traditions. Unseen by them, Professor Sinistra and Professor Trewlaney smiled softly.

Hogwarts Express
Carriage 14
2:47 PM

Ellen Granger watched as Carmus McGill sat quietly, his head leaned against the window slightly, but she could see minor twitches in his arm. Similar to her patients when they tried not to be afraid. Slowly, she leaned forward as to not surprise him and put a hand on his. “Maybe I am being presumptuous but once we contract with the Malfoys, we will be as good as almost family, your fiancée Severus is as good as his brother, which makes you in a way part of the Malfoy family, as I will be. So, that would make you my brother at once remove. Family is important to the Dark, even though you are more Neutral than Dark, as it lets them relax in their company and I wish for you to know you can do so in our presence and will hold whatever silence you wish of us.”

Lucius Malfoy parsed that sentence for a moment before nodding. He whipped out his wand and cast several privacy spells in quick succession. “Indeed, and it seems you will well grasp the lines and webs of Family. Carmus, let us share whatever burden you bear.”

Carmus looked at them then frowned. “I have never had siblings and of the two who help me, one is under the rule of an interfering bastard who can compel truths from him and the other is dead. Tell me; do I seem to be in control of all... this?” He gestured in a circle. “Do you believe me so wise and powerful? I know that Lucius respects me for the unseen power that I appear to be. What do you believe?”

Ellen turned to her husband who tapped his cheek thoughtfully. Alan Granger looked at Carmus. “A manager. Even with magick you can’t be in ten places at once. Why do you think we have an office manager? She knows more about our practice than we do. We work at the office and she runs it. Your scope of knowledge is too much for one head to hold.”

Carmus smiled wistfully. “Indeed. Though I have no siblings, I do have cousins by the beach full and while they are... useful, as their Lord, I must take care of them. There are no less than four thousand of close family members and all of them must be provided for. A sibling or two or ten would relieve my burden immensely because the power of the McGill frankly, it frightens me. I could give an order and on the other side of the world, a person could be killed and the killer would have no idea who ordered it or why. I can never risk a ‘will someone rid me of this troublesome priest’ moment. Every word, action, perceived feeling I project must be perfect. It is how the McGill is perceived to be all knowing, all-powerful, ever strong. I must never be seen as weak. I hold all this together because if I do not, then it will be my mistakes that kill people.

“Even this moment has to carefully managed. I must be able to talk freely with you, as you will be my trusted lieutenants, yet I do not want to mimic the Dark Lord. I do not want to replace him in Lucius’ bonds. He is, and always will be, a driving force for the Green. I worry that I place too much
on you and do to you what has been done to me. When we step out, I must once again be the all-powerful, all knowing McGill. I tell you this out of trust and I tell you this because once that barrier falls, you cannot speak of this except between us alone. I tell you this because I will need your help and dedication but do not give it to me. Give it to the world that we wish to create for the children. I fear if you give it to me then you will be no more and no less than any of my clan members.”

Alan looked at Ellen. “You said you have no siblings but in this car, I see four.”

Carmus smiled softly.

[1] *Yellow Diamonds or Topaz or Citrine or SUNSTONES

Chapter End Notes

Stay tuned for the climax of Samhain!
Chapter Summary

The other half to Halloween.

Chapter Notes

Please forgive the wait. My beta, Evie did great work but has not only started a new job but then been laid out by this evil flu going around. Please send her healing wishes, chicken soup, and cookies... lot of a lovely chocolate. So now here is 10K+ words to finish up the Feast!

Chapter 25: Emerald and Insight

Thursday October 31, 1991
Hogwarts Platform
Hogwarts Village
3:10 PM

Narcissa Malfoy stood regally on the platform and thought back to a time when she was younger, scared to leave home but ready to learn. On her left, she felt a gentling presence. Almost like a hand skimming the surface of her skin, a familiar hand, from very long ago. Someone who had passed long ago but remembered as fresh as yesterday.

Eiche Hoher-Prinzi stepped forward. “I figured you would feel it, Madam. After all, you are a Healer.”

“Yes, and I must introduce you to two of my fellow Healers. Na-Lady Flanders and Lord Wiley. They are working with me on the examining our first known case of the mishandled sealing. Dudley Dursley.”

Eiche’s mouth twisted in a moue. “While I understand that he was only following what he learned from his parents, I cannot understand why they thought to abuse their nephew so. If it would be wrong for their child, then it was wrong for their nephew. Is the child receiving therapy other than to unseal him?”

Narcissa nodded slowly. “Yes, he is. We three were the team trying to unseal him. If you would like to see our notes, it will be no problem.”
“Yes, please.” A murmur growing louder brought his attention back to their surroundings. Carriages arrived at the platform. Each being led by four large dark silvery grey horse shaped creatures.

Eiche watched his fellow travelers, some looked wondrous and some looked fearful. A soft deep persistent tone rang out as the ‘horses’ stopped. Albertus and Cereus stood at the edge closest to the carriage.

“Those of you who can see what is pulling the carriages, please move to our left, thank you.”

There were a few moments of shuffling until there were two clear groups of people.

Albertus turned to those on his left. “I am so very sorry for your losses, especially if you had to see them go.” He turned back. “Those ‘horses’ pulling the carriages are called Thestrals. They are rather friendly creatures, loving and kind but you cannot see one until you have knowingly seen death. That means you must see someone die and know that they are dead. Those of you on the right, I am glad you have never witnessed a death and I hope you never will. Normally we would take you by boat but as chill as it is getting, we rather wait for that until spring. No more than six to a carriage, thank you!”

Eiche held out his arm and led Narcissa over towards her husband and friends. Together with the Grangers and McGill they climbed into a carriage. After they settled, they felt the carriage move.

Carmus made the introductions, indicating that they were to call him and the other members of his family by name in order to preserve their anonymity, and leaned back. Turning towards their guests, he gave him a nod. “Eiche, your other fellows?”

“Blending in. Each of them are doing as I have done, run a low level diagnostic scan. Nothing that violates privacy... more like sensing the arena. It however will give us an idea of who still has lingering traces of suppression. And there are many traces.” He bowed as they approached the group. “In fact, there are some who are notably squib descendants.”

Alan Granger frowned, “You can tell that?”

“Yes, Dr. Granger. In our province, there is very little differentiation between magickal and non-magickal family. Family is important. We don’t rid ourselves of our squibs but then again, we have very few squibs. Part of the reason, I believe is that as early as the late 17th century, we noticed the consequences of a small gene pool. My family decided that either our people would marry out or my ancestor would make them marry out. Some refused but once he placed their titles and entitlements on probation pending that they marry outland and begetting children, the lords changed their minds. It gave us quite a foothold in other lands as well as enhanced our magick by bringing in new gifts. We also are not an island. So, it was easier for us.

“As a Healer, my senses as well as my relatives are finely tuned towards magick. Squibs have magick, but it’s very low. Over the generations, the magick regenerates and their magick sings more. So, what few squibs we do have, we keep them. They are a dormant vital source of magick and are treated as what they are: Family.”

Carmus smiled. “We do not have Nature of Magick in Hogwarts this year. Nor for at least fifty years before now.”

Eiche paled. He leaned forward, his voice a harsh whisper, “McGill, you have permitted this?”

“Not exactly. The McGill’s haven’t had large main family in a while. My father was an only son as am I. My son is my only child but if things work out, in a few years, I look forward to another child.
My father would not be of a temperament to be a teacher and every teacher we tried to place, Dumbledore blocked or convinced the Wizengamot to block. Eventually, we realized that no one really read the charter and perhaps that’s what Dumbledore was counting on. That’s how and why I can take over the school now. The charter clauses are now in effect. As the McGill, I can change the curriculum to suit the current needs. If I had taken over before now, before the community realized how bad it was, I would be the enemy and instead of help to fix the problem, they would fight me.”

Eiche shook his head bewildered, “How foolish of them to allow that class to lapse. If you don’t understand your magick, how can you control it?”

Lucius barely refrained from a sneer, “And why do you think the majority of this country speaks to the Light, the Gold?”

Eiche nodded. “Yes, without understanding there is no control. Without control there is fear of their magick. In fear of their magick, they refuse to understand. They barely touch their magick and skim the surface.”

Narcissa smiled gently. “Indeed. The families of the Green have kept the lessons. Many of us have old Nature of Magick books and in fact, try to preserve the teachings.”

Ellen Granger pulled a notebook out of her purse, quickly writing notes. “Sorry, but I’m trying to understand this all and my notes will help me do so. I do have a question. Dark, Light; those we know but what is this Green and Gold?”

Lucius turned towards her and leaned forward on his cane. “Do forgive me if I sound as if I am lecturing. In the past, before Christianity ever hit these Isles, there were three known factions. The Green, the Gold and the Silver. The Glas, the Óir and the Airgead. The Green is the Dark, it is the very land, the tarnish on bronze. It changes and hides changes. It can make things brittle. The Gold is the Light, it shines brightly, it can plate and blind, but it is also soft. It is pretty and full of light. The Silver is the Neutral. It does not shine so bright as the gold, but it is stronger than it. It can hide or be solid. They are between the Green and the Gold. To help people accept the changes, we are trying to change the terminology. Dark implies evil and that is the fault mainly of Christianity coming to this land.

“I am not inveighing against Christianity, but they do tell you to fear the dark for the evil that hides in it. Look at how they lightened their messiah? Look at the clothing, white for marriage, for christening. Black for negative things such as funerals.”

“Black is also for priests.”

“So that you stop seeing them. Most church fellows wore brown at the time, but they want you to see them as interchangeable, the uniform matters, not the person inside. When people hear Dark, they connect it to evil without even thinking about it. Changing the terminology will help us get them past that block.”

Alan looked at his wife, she looked back at him. “True. Very manipulative but… sometimes it is needed. And really, it’s returning to what it used to be. Isn’t that what this whole movement is… going back to the foundation, finding the weak points and rebuilding properly without the flawed structure?”

“Yes. And hopefully the change isn’t coming too fast.”

Eiche frowned slightly, “So how did it get this bad?”
Carmus continued to stare out the window. “Superstition, Myth, lack of integration; take your pick.”

Lucius looked at him. “Part of it is, as we are taught, the main division between the Gryffindor and Slytherin. Whether Hufflepuff or Ravenclaw took a side, we don’t know. Gryffindor wanted everyone to be allowed in, no matter what the risk while Slytherin wanted separation and only select few in. In a way, they both got what they want. Hogwarts is open to all above a certain power level as they are necessary to lead and provide for our community while the British Community is somewhat isolated due to the Statute of Secrecy. Due to their conflicting desires, the other three forced Slytherin out of the school and to this day, the division stands.”

Eiche leaned back, “That is regrettable. To lose one of the founders of a such a school would be devastating and not just to the culture, but the wards and even to the very fabric of the institution.”

“Except it never happened.” Everyone turned towards McGill who straightened up and smiled. “If it had, then the very contract that constructs the school would be frayed. And it isn’t. I understand why and how most graduates now can’t see the underlying threads of magick but you can, Eiche. You have had the lessons in Nature of Magick, you can look at the wards, same as I have been since we have started this carriage ride. The tops are picked at but the underlying wards are strong and healthy. Nowhere near as sick at the top wards.

“Slytherin was never forced out. There was an issue with retrieving a magickal child. He died and Gryffindor who was,” Carmus smiled bittersweetly, “a complete and total honor bound naïve idiot paid were-gild to the family. To the grandfather whom they were trying to rescue the boy and his two sisters from. When the person was questioned as to where he had come from, he mentioned a farm near Hogsmeade. That was enough for them to find the school. There was a battle, which only proved Slytherin’s point. Non-magickal humans, at the time, could not handle the truth of their child’s power. This foolishness lead to the beginnings of the evil that would later become the witch hunts and the Inquisition.

“This then lead to the strong muggle repelling charms as well as the whole Statute of Secrecy. Slytherin never wanted complete divorcement from the world at large. He wanted to protect the children. If the parents reacted badly then take the children. If the family was known to have harsh religious views, then take them as babies so they grew up sane and without the whole load of self-hate because ‘I’m a spawn of evil’ thing. Gryffindor, on the other hand, was a complete and total optimist. Which is not a surprise considering their relationship.”

The Grangers, Malfoy and Eiche looked stunned. Ellen Granger shook her head. “Next thing I know you are going to tell me they were lovers! Were they?”

Carmus laughed. “Yes, no, both? Remember... magick! They were.... there is no muggle translation really. Did we ever discuss what coterie is with you?”

Alan Granger shook his head. “I don’t believe so though there was a discussion of it at a meeting but just to us, no.”

Narcissa Malfoy placed a finger to her lips, tapping thoughtfully. “A coterie is what many people in your society call a coven. There are a few differences. A coven is a group of magickal people who work together and who keep holidays together. A coterie is more entangled. First, it is not done among the regular magickal people. It is done more with graduates of the high magickal schools like Hogwarts, Beauxbatons or Durmstrang. It involves a level of magickal power that most regular witches and wizards can’t maintain. In a coterie, we amplify, direct, shape and control our magick to create or handle larger magickal problems. That’s what wizarding nobility does. And if necessary, we must and will sacrifice our lives for the magickal population. In times of war and plague, it is we who must enter the field and take care of the wounded it is ourselves who must enter the places of
danger. We have the ability; therefore we have the duty.”

“Aye. In my homeland, coteries build magickal houses, districts and communal buildings. Depending on their strength, they can clear streams, revitalize land, do general curing or construct defenses. Not only build them but maintain them, strengthen them, tear them down if necessary or any number of major workings. We have the power to do so and the life of a magickal noble isn’t just to sit pretty. We can and do get dirty when required to and even Master Malfoy with all his refinement is part of a coterie. He manages his lands, estates and serves the government when he can and likely does require massive magickal contributions. Power without Duty, Wealth without Responsibility.... in those ways lie destruction and death. Magick would lash out at us if we failed in our duty.”

“Indeed. Coteries are vital. Some are very formal, some are not. Some as large, some are not. Right now, I and two other Healers form a rather tight informal coterie. We are studying the Dursley child to figure out how to save him. Medical Research and the ability to direct magick in fine detail are my main contributions to the coterie. Spellwork and Spell Damage is Na-Lady Flanders’. While Lord Wiley contributes Defense.” Narcissa explained. She gracefully nodded to Eiche. “Together we should find out exactly how it was done, although to our great pleasure we have Eiche and his family to work with us. They have already found the main basis for the spell, a modified Sleeping Beauty. That normally but not always falls under the Neutral Binding spectrum, now to find out it’s association, how it folds back and what potential traps are in there. But let us not get distracted. Enough shop talk, we should almost be there.”

Carmus laughed, “Indeed... just about... now!”

The carriage moved in an impossible ninety degree angle as Carmus tapped the sidewall it turned transparent. They had stopped on a ridge and below lay Hogwarts. The tower speared upwards with their blue tiled roofs sparkling in the sun. Black Lake seemed to sparkle as the sun hit the ripple. Flag flew from every tower, even the stones seemed to shine. The wind carried laughter upwards. Before and after them other carriages stood. Slowly in unison, they backed up and turned that impossible angle again but backwards and moved closer.

“I hope no one is afraid of heights!”

With a thundering clatter of hoofbeats, the carriage launched off the cliff edge.”

Simon opened his eyes. Draco and some of the other purebloods led them through a meditation where they concentrated on the present, thinking about what they wanted at this New Year. He had never really thought about it like that. A New Year, it was the magickal New Year, a time to rest up for the upcoming busy times after winter left. It made sense that the descent into winter was the time to prepare, a new time, a new year.

Simon let Draco escort him about, remembering the aftermath of their lunch discussion. He had
watched Draco’s face as he ate deliberately. He had never seen someone who ate like every measured bite was a necessary task to be done just so. It went beyond the Malfoy Mask into a region unknown. He had looked at Ron who shrugged. Taking the bit between his teeth, he decided to slip his hand into Draco’s before going back to his food. Draco slowly relaxed. It had felt manipulative but... after Draco relaxed a little bit, Simon had let his head rest on Draco’s shoulder and Draco taking the hint, wrapped his cloak around them. Just give him a chance to play gentleman and he would jump all over it. Of course, turnabout is fair play which is why when they had finally gotten up, Simon had taken Draco’s hand and held it close, wrapping one arm around Draco’s waist. It was weird because he usually saw older teens doing things like this but Draco... Draco acted like this was okay especially if you were contracted with him. He’d have to talk to Draco or maybe his Father. Was it normal to have him feel so... so... so old compared to him? Of course, the idea that an eleven year old would get a marriage contract. It reminded him of the history books where people got married at twelve and died before they were thirty but magickal folk lived longer so what was even the rush?

He let Draco ‘escort’ him around for another couple hours as the tension left him completely.

“You know, I already like you. And we aren’t getting married like right now. You don’t even have to sell me on how elegant you are. Sometimes you confuse me. We’re eleven and you act like if we don’t act like we are adults, then someone is going to yell at us. We aren’t and that’s okay. Why do we even have a marriage contract at eleven? It’s not like we can even do anything! Or want to.”

Draco turned to face him slightly. “It’s not about what we can do physically, it’s about making sure that the person you want is available come courting. It doesn’t matter if you want to court someone if they are already contracted to another.”

“So it’s like reserving a table. Contract with them so when you are ready to get married, no one else will be able to steal them.”

Draco grimaced. “Not... exactly.”

Simon moved behind Draco, wrapping one arm high across his chest and pull his backwards. “No one is going to steal me Draco.” Simon turned to let his head rest against his friend’s back. “No one can steal me. Remember last month when you threw a tantrum because I wanted to make friends?”

Draco bristled. “I did not ‘throw a tantrum.’”

Simon laughed. “That’s why our godfather had to order you to clean up your room after you calmly disagreed?” He could feel Draco ready to jump up and tightened his arm. “Doesn’t matter. What does matter is this. No one can take me; they can’t steal me. And all day you’ve been... clingy. I like spending the holiday with you and wouldn’t mind keep doing so but just remember, I’m not going anywhere. Besides, Father won’t contract me to anyone I don’t want.”

Draco let go of a large breath. “Yeah, but you don’t think like we do. You don’t even really want to be contracted.”

“I think this is why you wanted me to wait to read it but if I have most of it right, then this contract will give your family rights over me and it will give Father rights over you. Slowly blending our two families. It’s another way of making sure we are taken care of.”

“Yes, partly.”

“He did take care of me. He got me away from there. He is making them pay. People hate them. He is changing Dudley. They’ll hate that. Oh, by the way, Dudley’s coming. On the train. Father is
giving him a glamour and calling him ‘Douglas’. Father wants him to get some exposure in a friendly
environment, so can you please not fight with him? Ignore him if you want, but don’t fight. I... don’t
forgive him yet but he learned it from his parents. Father says he can be redeemed.”

Draco stared at him, eyes wide before huffing. “Fine!

Behind them, gasps were heard. Turning around, they were amazed as carriages swooped and flew
overhead. Simon turned to Draco. “I guess the parents are here.”

Albus Dumbledore walked down the empty hallway. The castle was almost glowing; the house elves
were so excited to not only be celebrating Samhain but also to have the families of the students
coming. The castle seemed to spawn another forty guest quarters, even opening up sections that had
disappeared over a hundred years ago. Perhaps... yet it allowed the muggleborn children to feel like
they weren’t giving up everything. True, they knew it was only because of their blood that the
Purebloods didn’t like the muggleborns, however, the reasons they had been pushing was causing
people to doubt his actions. Even the muggleborns believed that the Purebloods had a point. That
was concerning.

The tap tap tap of heels on the stones of the castle approached. He knew those steps. Hurrying to
intercept his Deputy, he smiled and held up a hand. “Minerva, a moment, please.”

McGonagall stopped. She was wearing her traditional black robe, but around her waist was a red and
gold cloth belt that was knotted on the left. The ends brushed the tops of her black button up boots
with symbols sewn onto the edge. She took a deep breath. “Yes, Headmaster?”

“Minerva, I have made mistakes, even tragic ones but I did so believing that I was helping to bring
the children of this school together. I see now how much they are enjoying these celebrations. I
thought that if we met them halfway, they would reach out for the rest. I never intended nor wanted
to deny our traditions to our Pureblood students. The muggleborns were taken from their home and
thrust into this world with little explanation; I merely wanted them to have something to hold onto.
Please, it’s a new year, can we not start again?”

“And that Headmaster is the problem. You wanted to give them something to hold onto to, to hold
them back, to give them a place to run away to. And that is a mistake. Yes, they are young, but they
must learn to live in this world, this community. Their parents should allow them this commitment
because they were born Magickal. They are Magickal. Much like birds push chicks out to fly, so too
they must jump in feet first. They need to be immersed so they can actually make a decision when
they get older whether to stay or go. Your policy made their choices a mess. They were neither fish
nor fowl, nor good red meat. Yet, you did not ask for information, you assumed you were right and
when others pointed out that you were not, you did not listen. And to my shame, I allowed it. I
believed in you, Headmaster. I believed that you cared for each of our student.

“Severus and I have been talking, along with Pomona and Filius. And now, now I understand what
he was saying. I understand what was hidden and I am ashamed. When the Board of Governors
decides to relieve you of duty, I will not put myself forward for your position. Too much time here
has caused me to be blind to your actions. Nor will Pomona, Severus or Filius. In fact, I will be
leaving the Deputy Headmistress position entirely and stay with Transfiguration solely
“According to the new layout, I will be Head of the Transfiguration department with no less than two teachers and four journeymen to assist. The two teachers will take over the classes below sixth year and I will teach sixth and seventh. Each teacher will get a journey man to help and I will get two to help monitor my students as well as provide tutoring. I will also no longer be Head of the Gryffindor. That will leave me time to concentrate on my students… all of them. Three hats are two too many. It is time for change Headmaster and unfortunately you can not be part of it. I must now go lead the Gryffindors into dinner. We shall see you there.” Minerva turned and walked away, her stern boots clicking.

Albus sighed, blue eyes glinting like sharp ice. _They dare. They dare attempt to remove him. If it was not for him, who would defend this place against Voldemort, not that anyone seemed to understand that danger. And what was he expected to do?! Hand this school over to the Dark who would train them into killers for Voldemort? He wasn’t dead, he knew the minute he saw the child that Voldemort wasn’t dead but now… now is the time Voldemort would appear. Especially since that damn McGill had brought Harry Potter into his reach. All he needed was to mention the fact that McGill brought a guest in the right ear and soon, they would realize that unless Potter was brought under his control, they could never be safe. Voldemort never feared anyone like he does me. They will regret it when the time comes._

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Dudley waited as they landed in the courtyard. The train had been amazing and scary. The adults had let the younger children roam around in a special section of six cars. At first he wondered why they were unattended then he felt a small hand move his from some sweets. An invisible hand. A familiar one. Dayn. House elves were here.

Before he had left McGill had tapped him with his wand and shown Dudley that he had changed slightly. He called it a glamour. His hair was almost black and his face darker as well, almost tanned. He had lost weight already and his face appeared slimmer. He was told to answer to the name of Douglas Lawson. Most of the children looked normal but some of them obviously weren’t. Many of them said they already had family at that Hog place and wore ornate dresses.

Dudley would have just kept to his seat but Dayn wouldn’t let him. Probably ordered by McGill. It wasn’t as bad as he had thought it would be and the food was delicious.

Few other expressed doubts but none of them seemed against this unnaturalness. Then they had someone come in and talk about how they were going to be talking to the dead?! And they acted like it was normal. What kind of freakishness would this be? Worse, they made them put on silvery grey dresses called robes. It seems like every time he was going to say something or correct them on normal behavior, something likely Dayn, stopped him. How did that interfering thing know? Finally they were going to get off the train, though he didn’t think it would keep Dayn from shadowing him.

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Second floor balcony overlooking the inner courtyard
Minerva stared over the crowd of people. Never had there been this many people in her memory of Hogwarts. Students, family, even a few ministry members and Aurors were in attendance. Her stern face softened with a small smile. Pulling her wand out, she tapped the balcony and waited while stones turned and formed a staircase, she walked down as people turned towards the magick. Many of their eyes were fascinated. Finally stepping to the courtyard floor, she waved her wand and the stairway turned back to its original form.

“Welcome and Merry Meet. My name is Minerva McGonagall. I am the Deputy Headmistress of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. I have been elected to speak to you before we enter the main hall. I am usually the first staff member your children meet as I oversee their introduction to Hogwarts and its’ House system as well are preparing them for sorting in the main hall before the feast. Our main hall is, if you may forgive me for boasting, one of the wonders of the magickal world. Once we enter, please take in the ceiling. As for the hall, it will be decorated in some forms that you recognize and some that you may not. If you wish to know, then please ask questions. We will be glad to answer them.

“Today’s ceremony will be led by Lord Lucius Malfoy, a leader of the Pureblood Green tradition. Samhain is considered a ‘Dark’ or ‘Green’ ritual. Dark doesn’t refer to evil but because it’s magick that delves into the darkest, deepest, more hidden sense of yourself. It’s also called ‘Green’ because what is Nature except Dark and deep? Delving that far down can be wild and unpredictable. To harness the Dark and Green Magick one must have an iron will to handle the tempest formed within each one of us.

“Samhain is a Dark celebration. This is the end and start of our year. This is the time we put to rest our secrets, our dead. This is the time we welcome them and let them know we miss them but they need to move on.” Minerva walked through the group, stopping from time to time to straighten a student’s tie or adjust a hat. “Today we will perform a necromantic ritual. Now, there are many myths about Necromancy. Let’s clear them up.

“Necromancy means to divine by the dead. However, it covers more than divination, it also covers speaking with, commanding and exorcising the dead. It means recovery and rejuvenation. It means to understand death and life. It is healing. Tonight, you will be communing with the dead. That isn’t exactly speaking. You may get emotions, memories, feelings, impression or even scents. Tonight, the ritual is to help lay your dead to rest. To give you a chance to say goodbye and for those beyond the veil to know that they are remembered and missed. It is a way to heal from their sudden death. Therefore, let me introduce Lord Lucius Malfoy.”

The crowd parted as a tall stern looking man walked down the middle. His hair was so pale a blond that it was like bleached bone. His gray eyes were so pale that they looked like mirrors. He wore a steel gray robe with embroidery in black. He stopped next to the Headmistress and nodded. Words were exchanged quietly and he turned to the crowd.

“Well met, I am Lord Lucius Malfoy and I am pleased to share this experience with you. Welcome to our Samhain ritual. When you enter, you will find a candle and a sharpened stylus. With the stylus, write the name of a dead family member upon it. This is who you will be communing with. If you don’t remember or know the name, then a description such as ‘my Father’s Mother’ will do. Hold it until instructed.” He turned and with a tap of his wand, the door opened to the main hall.

Jack-o-lanterns seated on autumn leaf wreaths. Shimmering dark grey circles encircled by stalks twisted wheat. The smell of spiced roasting apples drifted out of the door. Crystals shaped like stars; five, six, seven pointed. Clear, they shone with a soft light. As each student entered the candle they
were holding gently lifted away, lighting itself. Some of them lowered in front of the nonstudents until each was taken hold of.

The normal seating for the hall had changed instead of four long tables, there were eight lines of tables. No House flags flew over the tables, only Hogwarts flags. So many students ended up sitting with friends rather than by table. Still most chose the two table closest to where they sat normally. The loud gasps and sighs from the visitors as they looked up at the ceiling of the great hall or rather lack of ceiling made the residents laugh. Their children slowly led them into the hall where some family members were already seated, mainly those who were living in the magickal world already. Although many had been on the train, most had floo’ed in.

Carmus looked down where Dudley was walking next to him. “Impressive, isn’t it? It reflects the current night sky outside. Right now, though, it is taking its image from above the clouds, closer to space, because of the overcast weather. It is a gorgeous sight. How was the trip? I figured you didn’t exactly want us to hover over you. Not to mention, you’ve been doing well.”

Dudley looked up at him before facing forward and taking a seat. Simon sat down next to him with Draco on his other side. “Father, Douglas. Isn’t it brilliant!!”

Carmus laughed. “It is, but shush, Lucius is on.”

At the head table, Albus Dumbledore sat, hands twined across his stomach looking for all the world like a genial grandfather watching a performance. McGonagall sat next to him, tall and straight as did the Hogwarts Staff, several Aurors, a couple of goblins and representative of the Ministry. The candles and stars dimmed until all the remained was the faint glow and Lucius in the middle. His clothing was different, a long fall of dark silver robe, on it were faint black shapes outlined in black thread. His hair gleamed, shone with silver fire. He raised his hands and a thick silver candle came down to him.

“This is the time of the Dark, of Nature’s rest. She is preparing to sleep and cover herself with the cloak of winter. The twilight of Mabon has ended. Dusk is gone. In her dreams, Nature envisions the future and put away the past, her dreams allow the veil that separated worlds to thin and travel is permitted to a scant few. In the space between her waking and her sleeping, they are not too different. To this world comes souls who have passed on. They came, lived and died. In this place, their time is done and spent but there is worry, there is fear in the unknown. That is why so many look to the past, look to us. They will travel today in search of us and it up to us to reassure them of our well-being, of our strength and to urge them on to their rest. For in truth it is a rest. A place of healing, a place of renewal from where they meet their fate and destiny. And we each must face death and our destiny. That is what life is.

“It may hurt. It may scare us. It may embody the most fierce agonizing and exhilarating emotions; one can not get lost in them, we are beings of power and will and to subsume our humanity to them is to be lost. We are strong. We can never give over to unrestrained emotions. Our power is wildness and strength; it must be directed and tonight we will direct it at those gone before. We will use our words, our influence, our power to soothe and comfort and encourage those that we have loved and lost to stop holding on to the past and move forward. Take up the stylus at each seat and into the candle write a name or description of who you wish to commune with or who you feel around you. Concentrate on them and then release the candle. It will hover over you until we reconvene for dinner. In trust, we part until we meet again.”

The light dimmed for a moment then the room slowly rose to brightness.
Dumbledore sat silently in his chair. The ritual introduction performed by Lord Malfoy seemed so innocuous but that is how Dark Arts starts. The idea that the children were participating in Dark rituals was saddening. It was one thing to talk to ghosts but a whole different thing to assist in banishing and necromancy. The students weren’t ready for the emotional toll it would take on them nor how seductive the power to could be and yet... and yet the Board of Governors not only allowed but supported this. It is a shame that he didn’t have more sympathetic members who listened to him. The idea that one of his students would be seduced so far as to lose themselves to this was frightening. Minerva, who he could always count on, would not listen to him, this time. That she believed that these rituals were so simple and innocent was disappointing.

He had tried, he had tried so hard to keep this society from walking the Pureblood path---those deluded fools who thought this evil was acceptable. As his mother always said: The devil was seductive.

Simon led his father and ‘Douglas’ towards the entrance to Gryffindor tower. “You were Slytherin when you were in school, right?”

Carmus nodded, enjoying how excited his son was. “Yes, and no, I’ve never been in Gryffindor Tower. I’ve heard tales though. The couple of Slytherins who have been there or gotten a glimpse tell tales of being blinded by the gaudy.”

Simon laughed. “Yeah, Draco said that too... but,” he said teasingly, “we’ve improved it. First years got a section of the common room and so did the upper years and the middle years, so it’s comfy for everyone. Not as elegant but comfortable.”

‘Douglas’ was staring at the paintings. “They move.”

“And talk. Our guardian is a portrait called The Fat Lady that guards the Common Room.”

“You mean Madame Carmina Louise de Beaumont? She was a very famous musicalist and vocalist. In her time, she performed for courts of Emperors and Kings.” Carmus gently chided him as they approached the slightly open portrait. Several students and parents were talking and examining the portraits. “Good evening, Madame de Beaumont, and how has your day been?”

de Beaumont giggled. “It has been magickal indeed. I have missed the New Year celebrations for so long. And you, Lord...?”

“McGill. And yes, it is nice to see the students involved in celebration.”

A short man with pale brown eyes and a somewhat tired expression stepped forward. “Madame, I am Reginald Todsworth the Third and I heard Lord McGill mention that you were a musicalist. What exactly is that?”

She smiled. “Pleased to meet you, Mr. Todsworth. No offense but are you perhaps a Muggle?”
“Yes, I am.”

“Ahh, well a musicalist does music, I suppose, but it’s hard to explain.”

Carmus stepped forward. “If I may, Madame. I believe it a function of differing cultures. Mr. Todsworth, a musicalist creates music much like your composers. Now, most wizards and witches can use their wands to play a memory of music that they heard. Yet to use the very air to compose music, they can not. Musicalists can. You are familiar with a Theremin? Using an electrical charge and positioning the hands to create music? It is similar to that, save she can produce the music of violas, pianofortes and other instruments.”

Several parents and students were staring at the portrait. Mr. Todsworth stepped even closer and bowed. “Then truly you are a fine artist. I myself play the bass cello, though not first chair. If I may ask, since you are portrait, do you still have the ability to do so?”

The painting shook her head ruefully. “No, I can play back compositions that I made during my actual lifetime but the magic that imbues this painting with my personality can not perform magick in that way.”

“Ah... but if you would not mind, could you please play us a small fragment of one of your compositions.”

“I would be delighted.” A sweet smile graced her face as she pulled out a long thin rich black wood wand. She stood up straight and held it in a light grasp before bringing it down sharply. A thunder of drums started. A set of flutes rose high in counterpoint before swooping low. The music filled the corridor, bringing people from all over the castle. Even the paintings nearby got crowded. Suddenly, the maestro pulled out a second wand and from the side came a low hum that grew louder and was identified as some string instrument. The music swirled and grew to a slow crescendo before one single harp string sang then disappeared as it was the popping of a soap bubble. Silence reigned for a moment then the clapping started. Some of the younger participants whistled and cheered.

Todsworth looked at the painting in amazement, tears shimmering. “Maestra, that... was music beyond my dreams. It will sing in my heart like a clarion call. If I can endeavor to make my cello sing half so well, I will be honored.”

Madame de Beaumont blushed prettily. “You will embarrass me with such fulsome praise but I thank you for your words and am pleased by your enjoyment.”

A wizard, not much taller than Todsworth stepped forward. “Reginald, that was her composition ‘Spring Wakens’. I have a recording and perhaps we can find a way to record it so you can listen to it at home.”

“I would appreciate that, Stephen, truly I would but I am also blessed to have a ‘live’ so to speak performance. Thank you, Maestra, thank you.”

She curtsied, cheeks flushed and opened slowly.

As people passed through the hold, many took the time to peer over the corner and thank the Maestra for allowing them to witness her work. Several students bemoaned the fact that they had never heard about musicalists. Many graduating students were unhappy that they would miss out on the restored music classes next year while others seemed abuzz with the idea that they might be able to join such classes. Lucius Malfoy appeared next to the McGills. Carmus sent the boys inside with Draco.

“I have forgotten that she was such an artist.” He murmured.
“Many did. I believe that’s why she started visiting other portraits. It is not only the general public who has forgotten our many accomplishments and wonders. I do believe several of the students will be querying other paintings to see what hidden talents and accomplishments they too have. Many forget that all these portraits are of notable Hogwarts graduates. They languish in the shadows when they should shine in the light.” Carmus replied. “The boys have gone in; shall we join them?”

Lucius nodded, “Yes.”

The Common Room wasn’t as awful as reported and Simon excitedly showed them the different redesigned sections. The colors apparently had been toned down and matched appropriately. The furniture was both elegant and comfortable. Each piece finely worked and of excellent quality. It was rare to see the other houses common rooms but today, each house was open. After all the locations weren’t secret, only how to access them. Of course, the dorms were open only to the residents and their families but just seeing the other common rooms was enough for most of them. Each one very different but suited to the residents.

Hufflepuff had a large round room, the other edge was diving into eight section. Seven large equal section and one corridor leading from the entrance. The center was open and there was a firepit in the center. Very community orientated, just like the Hufflepuffs. In the center of each outer edge was a door that lead to the dorms for that year. A year common room, the second floor was the boys and the third were the girls. Ravenclaws’ common room was full of study cubicles and tables as well as bookcases. The walls were lined with them three deep and the cubicles were spread out among the common room with tables in the center. One whole side however was devoted to a large window charmed to provide natural light at night, it had a bench seat all along it, covered in deep midnight blue fabric. After an hour or two they ended up in Slytherin House and wandered down the hall to Severus’ chambers. Inside the whole color scheme was moderated with wood, some browns and creams.

Lucius shot a tempus into the air. It read 4:07. A knock on the door and Draco, Simon and Dudley entered, followed by Severus. Simon walked over to his dad and curled up next to him. “Slytherins do a water meditation, it’s peaceful but I liked the candles earlier.”

Carmus chuckled. “I don’t doubt it. You need movement, while most Slytherins like the slow movement that resembles control.”

“How is he acting weird?”

Simon frowned and turned to look up at his dad, trying to find the right words. “Draco… he is all… possessive, enough to creep me out. I’m not explaining right because Draco is possessive. He barely liked me making friends but since he got that scroll, he’s… touchy. Not like I’m offending him. He is holding my hand; he always has a hand on me. He pulls me close to his side. I like him, he’s my friend and I guess he’s important to me for some reason, but he acts…”
“He acts like a lover, like he’s older than eleven. You usually see that in older children. Fifteen or sixteen. He’s acting like he’s your boyfriend. That is truly a culture mismatch. See, in pureblood culture, his handsiness isn’t sexual. It is possessive. He’s laying claim to you. Purebloods don’t really touch.

“Draco, Narcissa, Lucius; can I borrow you for a moment?”

The Malfoys moved over to where they were sitting and took some seats. Dudley and Severus followed. “Draco, I know you are happy to have a contract but you are confusing Simon. I applaud your foresight in asking him to wait until I could discuss it with him. Thank you. However, Simon was raised mostly muggle and your behavior which is right and true for a pureblood, isn’t appropriate in the muggle world. In fact, it comes off as creepy and sexual, which I know it is not. I would like to ask you to illustrate a point.

“Simon, do you remember when you learned to extend your aura outward?”

Simon nodded.

“Good. If we could all extend our aura outward, you as well Dudley. It should work for you.”

Simon looked at his hand and a slightly lemony glow started to color the air around him. He turned to look at the others. Mr. Malfoy was a clear ruby while Mrs. Malfoy was a faint blue green. They reached out towards each other and their aura extended tendrils to mix with each other. Severus Snape gave off a bright light silver, whereas Draco was an icy clear blue. Carmus had a darker gray but Dudley… his was a burnt orange with shots of twisted sickly purple cords wrapped around and through it.

“Are those the binds?”

“Yes, I am so sorry about that Dudley. We will help you but for now, look at Narcissa and Lucius. See how they seek each other. Wizarding parents often allow their auras touch their children. But Simon, you didn’t have that. So… you don’t have that hunger to share. Draco does. He wants your auras to touch, to taste each other and bond you closer. Most magickal people do. You feel your aura stretching out and you feel Draco’s desire to share. You interpret that as sexual because it’s the main form of desire you see out in the muggle world. It is not. It is desire but not what you think it is. It’s a bit scary for you, but this is something you really should speak about with Draco. He won’t know unless you tell him. And Draco you have to accept that he won’t always react like a pureblood. Teach him the customs but don’t always expect him to react like a pureblood, alright?

“Simon, tomorrow we’ll go over the entire thing so I can explain it all to you, alright?”

Simon and Draco nodded. Draco held out his hand, palm outward, his aura still glowing. Slowly Simon raised his hand parallel and watched as sparks flew. Draco smiled.

“Slowly.”

Severus moved to stand and held out his hand to Carmus. “It’s time for the Inter-House Reflection, May I escort you there?”

“Of course, dear Severus.” He watched as their aura blended.
Albus stood at the lectern placed before the Head Table and stared at the crowd. Purebloods mixed with Muggles. Closing his eyes, he tried to think of what he could say to dissuade them for this foolhardy path. Beside him, Minerva cleared her throat and gave him a look as if she knew what he was thinking and was warning him away from it.

“Welcome to Hogwarts. By now you have toured the castle, met some of our ghosts and portraits. We are glad you are here. This is time of great significance: A time of looking towards a choice of pathways. When I was young, my parents celebrated the New Year much like we are doing today. We chose this day to rededicate ourselves to our choices, for our choices define us. We spent hours speaking and reflecting on all the follies and joys of the previous years. We would dedicate ourselves to removing the follies and flaws that we had done while we sought solutions to help us prepare for the New Year. That was long ago but still a joyous time. As you reflect tonight, I wish you to reflect on what you learned, what choices you made and what you can do to make this next year even more wonderful than last year.

Lucius stood up, once more garbed in ritual robes after the Headmaster had finally stopped speaking. He moved with quick long strides to the center of the front space.

“Tonight, we remember. Tonight, we honor. Tonight, we dream of the future. This is the observance of Samhain.” He raised his hands and the candle floated down to him. So too did the other candles slowly fall. Each person took theirs. “Tonight the veil is thin and if we are lucky, our loved ones will return for a brief moment. Close your eyes and remember the scent of their skin, the shine of their hair. The creak of their favorite chair. Slow your heartbeat, it is soft and let the presence fill you.”

As many did, mixed in were some dark purebloods who raised their wands high and chanted softly.

The veil is open
as our hearts
let those who come
in love pass through
let no harm
let no cruelty
let no fear
enter this sacred space.

It was repeated in many languages:

Latin

Velum est apertum
ut corda nostra
fiat illis qui veniunt
transitum amoris
et non nocere
non crudelitate
Ne timesas
hunc sacri.
Many languages that had but only one meaning. That meaning resonated in the hall and in their hearts. Slowly, those assembled started to repeat the words in their preferred language and the
temperature began to lower. A wind from nowhere moved around them. A few laughed, some cried. Yet others smiled and gasped. The feeling, the scents mingled and lingered. It seemed only moments before Lucius started to call them back. Slowly the temperature rose and many opened their eyes to show a sense of peace.

“Let us thank those who joined us and ask them to go in peace, for they are loved and they must travel on. There is no grief any longer, just the joy of feeling them one more time. Let them go towards what awaits them. Bid them leave with love, trust and peace.” He stood there waiting for a few minutes. “And now we feast. Some still linger but they too shall pass on. After a ritual, food serves as a grounding mechanism and you should be hungry anyways. So let the feast begin.”

Food appeared on the tables. Soon the buzz of conversation and communion was all that was heard. Laughter, quiet stories. At least that was until the doors crashed open, as a tall man dressed in black and purple robes ran in. On his head was a dark lavender turban. He ran to the head table where Dumbledore sat. As he approached, Dumbledore stood. “Quirinius?”

“Troll… troll in the dungeon! Thought you’d like to know.” He yelled breathlessly then fell to the ground in a faint.

Screams were heard as Dumbledore yelled for silence.

“Prefects, take your houses back to their Houses. Teachers, come with me.”

A tall dark black man in African styled robes stood up, shooting sparks into the air that resolved into a DMLA. “Silence! I am Auror Kingsley Shacklebolt. Headmaster, Prefects and seventh years stay here. You, along with the parents will be the last line of defense. Sixth years, you are responsible for the younger years. Continue with the feast. Aurors and Teachers, you will come with me. Apologies to our visitors. While such things are not common, they are easily handled. And while we welcome you, just like in any community, there are those who either disagree or tend to stir the pot. At the best, this is a prank in exceedingly bad taste. We shall return momentarily. You have the Ministry’s word and mine.”

Lucius stepped forward, “Auror, tonight our power is ascendant. We may be of use.”

Shacklebolt nodded. “Some must remain to provide adequate protection. Choose five others.”

Lucius bowed and turned. Immediately, three women and two men stood and headed for him. As he turned to the Auror, McGill stood there. “If your power is ascendant due to the Sabbat, then mine is ascendant in this place. I will join you.”

Lucius smiled gently. “But of course, in this place, your power is supreme.”

They moved swiftly towards the door where both teachers and other Aurors waited. Together they left the hall. A glowing green light enveloped the door and faded.

Outside the main hall
Kingsley and the other Aurors turned as one and pointed their wands together at the door. Though no words were heard, a spring green light leapt from their wands and covered the doors.

“It will take much more than a troll to break through those doors. Teams of no less than three members and use only legal spells unless you are in danger of death.” Kingsley intoned. “I want one Dark person with each group.”

Lucius moved over to Carmus and Severus, “Shall we gentlemen?”

Carmus nodded and turned down the hall. “This way.”

Ten minutes later, they heard a crash as if a drunken tree or troll was stumbling down the hallway. Carmus smiled and turned towards his fiancé. “Shall we?”

Lucius nodded. Together, the three of them turned the corner. They stood with Carmus on point, Severus to his left and Lucius to his right. The troll was swinging his club erratically, stumbling through the corridor. Carmus turned to Severus, his eyebrow rising. Turning back, Carmus cast a violet red spell while Lucius’ spell flew past in an eye-searing orange to spread out into a shield. Carmus’ spell seemed to slow him slightly.

Lucius frowned. “It’s an upper mountain troll; most of Alensky’s spell won’t work.”

Severus nodded and suddenly a dark green spell shot past the shield, splitting into six thin blades. They sliced through the flesh of the troll, a second spell from Lucius hit home and caused the troll to collapse, still but alive.

Severus sent off a patronus message to Kingsley. “The troll isn’t acting properly.”

Lucius shook his head. “Mountain trolls aren’t geniuses but they do know how to walk a straight line. The beast was drugged. Meaning it was brought into the castle. Likely by someone who knows and understands these beasts. If they can identify the subspecies…”

Carmus spun around. “Quirrell. He sent us on this snitch-hunt!”

“Why?”

Severus stiffened. “The philosopher’s stone. Albus hid it in this school.”

Carmus bit back a curse. “Of course, that’s why he named it that. But the last one was made by Flamel who trained Dumbledore... The 12 uses of Dragon’s Blood. He’s in the main hall!”

The three turned and ran towards the main hall. Kingsley came around the corner and stopped. Severus turned. “Quirrell let it in!”

Kingsley pointed three Aurors back the same way the three came and beckoned the rest to head to the main hall. Five minutes later, they stood before the hall doors. Again, the Aurors raised their wands but this time the green light intensified then shattered. The doors opened to a calm scene. Poppy Pomfrey had Quirrell seated at the end of one table, wrapped in a blanket while all around them the feast went on. “Dad!”

Carmus spun around and caught his son, pressing a kiss to his head. “Hey. Troll handled. Everyone! Once again, HAARP, the Ministry, and Hogwarts ask for your indulgence. The troll is handled and everything is once again well.”

A red flare over in Quirrell’s direction caused him to wonder. Carmus leaned back against the cool
stone and closed his eyes. Awareness flowed into him from the stones. He leaned down towards his son, “My love, I hate to do this to you but now is the place and time. If you do this, despite the harm it may to do you, then I can protect you.”

“Dad?”

“I need you to go over there and touch Quirrell. On his skin, there is a reason he’s all covered up, but to protect you and this school, I need you to do that. Something will happen, it will be scary but only you can do this. I am so… so… so sorry. I’ve been looking for another way. Every forecast says if you don’t do it today then… more evil will arise. I don’t want to do this.”

“But you have to. Because of the prophecy, it gives me power to change things that otherwise can’t be.”

“Yes.”

Simon looked up at him, “You will… still…”

“Love you, forever. If you don’t go, I will still love you. If you run out here, screaming ‘Murder’, I will still love you. This has nothing to do with that. This has to do with being a McGill… it’s what we do. We do the hard, gritty, nasty stuff to keep Magick in balance and… Quirrell is out of balance. Some of what Sean prophesied is hidden from me. Often I can’t read it until I’m close in time.

“I wish your introduction to the McGill duty was a better one but… most of it will be hard on your soul but because of this time and this place, I have the best opportunity to protect everyone.”

Simon held onto his father tight before letting go. He walked over to Quirrell and smiled. “Professor? Thank you for protecting us.” Simon hugged him gently, letting his cheek rest against the professors’. Suddenly he felt himself pushed back strongly.

“What have you done?!” Quirrell screamed as he stood and spun, running with his hand on his cheek until he slid to his knees in the center of the hall “What have you done to me, MCGILL?!!?”

Carmus strode towards the man, giving the doors a slight wave as they crashed close. The magickal pressure in the hall rose, keeping people focused and quiet.

“My son did what was needed. A McGill’s duty. You are out of Balance, Quirinus Quirrell. Horribly, terribly, poisonously out… of… Balance.” The click of his heels on the stone fell into dead air. “But you are not totally Quirinus Quirrell, are you? Perhaps you have not been since you returned from Albania. Did you give into the Smothering Dark; did you let it overwhelm you? You… inept dilettante. Did you believe that the spirit you met would submit to you? Your skin is powdering because you have been eaten from the inside out. What have you done in my home?” Gray ash fell from his cheek, cracks crawling over his skin. “You are totally lost. You can not be saved. Yet I hope that your soul may be refreshed.”

Carmus tapped him in the center of his head and the professor disappeared in a puff of ash. Hovering there before the stunned Hall hovered a red-eyed specter.

“You… dare to defy me? Lord Voldemort?” A unspoken voice rasped out.

Gasps fell into the silence.

“Yes, because you have made a very big mistake. You are here, now and I will command you.”
“And who are you?”

A glow of dark light rose slowly from the floor. The floating specter flinched. “My name is Carmus Riordan Fredrich McGill, The McGill of Clan McGill. Necromancer of the Tenth Degree. And as a necromancer in his ancestral home on the day in which the veil thins, I command, I outcast, I banish you from this place. In my place of Power, you have no strength.” A small sharp spell sliced his shoulder.

“I’m a Necromancer, did you think spilling blood would help you?

In this hour, in my Place of Power; I command, I outcast, I banish you from this place. In this hour, in my Place of Power; I command, I outcast, I banish you from this place. In this hour, in my Place of Power; I command, I outcast, I banish you from this place.” As the third recitation ended, a howl echoed through the room. The specter stretched, its clawed hands trying to reach McGill but pulled backwards through a small upper window to disappear in the distance.

“Are you okay, Simon?” Carmus smiled, his face pale.

“Yeah, Dad.” He ran over and took his hand. “Everything is okay.”

“Good… don’t be scared.” He turned towards a touch on his elbow. “Take care of the boys?”

Severus nodded and Carmus smiled before he dropped into Severus’ arms. “Draco, Simon, Dud-Douglas… come.”
Bright yellow sparks flew up and the noise instantly died down. Cereus stepped forward, pushing a young man behind him. “Hello, yes. I bet we all weren’t expecting that. However, we did warn you that something untoward was likely to happen. No one expected that. I would like at this time, if we could show our appreciation to the Wizards and Witches who so quickly, so skillfully and so adroitly protected us. They were quick, efficient and adept.”

A scattering of applause and grateful murmurs picked up among the muggles until even the Wizards were clapping.

“Good, thank you. And thank you, to the Aurors and other wizards and witches, for being so dedicated. If I remember right, part of the revisions to the school included an Auror substation here?”

Kingsley nodded. “Indeed. It will service Hogwarts as well as Hogsmeade. Although this school is usually well protected considering that we have had rumors of some inadvertently dangerous actions, which seem to be borne out now by this recent conflict, we can not allow our children to be unprotected. After this, we have no choice to move up the decision. Rather than a separate substation, if the school will allow it, we will take over an empty classroom near the entrance while we build our substation.”

Minerva stepped forward, “Of course.” She turned to the people in the hall. “While this is shocking, it is also unusual, and we will find out how this happened. Once we know, we will inform you as well as how we are going to prevent it from ever happening again. For now, please settle, eat and recharge. I am going to check on Lord McGill. Blessed Samhain.”

The mood lightened and the chatter picked up. A square of chocolate was provided at each setting and people were encouraged to eat it to help recovery. For those who couldn't eat it, a fizzing potion appeared. Within minutes, a sense of peace fell over the hall and discussions continued.

Kingsley beckoned an Auror close before whispering instructions after which he moved to take McGonagall’s seat by Albus. “Albus, how did this happen? How did you not know that Quirrell was possessed?”

Dumbledore turned to him; eyes dim over his signature half-moon glasses. “I truly do not know. Such things are very Dark magick and I have made it a mission to keep Dark Magick away from this school and these students. Possession is such a violent thing, my boy. I cannot see how the wards
missed it. This summer, we will have to do a major check up on the wards. We cannot do it while school is in session of course and it will take longer than winter break.”

“Has he been anywhere recently where he may have been attacked?”

Dumbledore shook his head. “No. He’s been on campus unless he was looking in the Forbidden Forest and despite the danger of the Forest, I believe if there had been… wait, the centaurs. No, the unicorns. Something killed a Unicorn last month but the Centaurs didn’t know what it was, and Hagrid has been patrolling the Forest. He has found nothing. The Forest… it’s not…. Kingsley? You don’t believe that I would ever allow something like this?!”

Kingsley turned to look at him. “I wouldn’t have before… but?”

“Even with all the accusations, I would never allow a child to willingly be hurt!”

“I’ve spoken with Black, he’s told me about why Snape hates him, and I can’t… understand how you would allow that. Detention for attempted murder? And this excuse of how it would have prevented Remus from getting his education? You fought for Muggleborn students but not Lupin? You can see why I have to ask.”

Dumbledore nodded. “Unfortunately, I do. I wish it was not so but I do understand. As I told Minerva, I have made mistakes, many mistakes born of optimism. Nothing because I wanted to cause harm. I only wanted to help them.”

“Yes, but you helped them with things you weren’t qualified to which only makes things worse. Now something is killing unicorns in the Forbidden Forest and you didn’t tell the Aurors.”

Dumbledore sighed. “If I had, what would have kept the Aurors from entering the Forest in force and disrupting the peaceful inhabitants? Or worse, The Minister sending in Exterminators from the Dangerous Creatures office?”

Kingsley sighed. “Because despite what you think, we are used to handling him. He could order it but it can’t be done. The Ministry’s agreement to the Hogwarts Charter forbids it and if he violated that section, then he would have found his workers removed from the surrounding lands. The magick would have ensured it. I understand that you are looking at the big picture but let us handle the close details. Now… now, he will not only get to place an Auror detachment near Hogwarts but in it as well and likely I won’t be the only one seconding people there. Now, after this meal, I need to see McGill… hopefully, he can fill in some details. Although,” he grinned with joy, “That was the best exorcism I’ve seen. Especially with all that power coming from his own internal stores. GRAPHICS would love him.”

Dumbledore nodded. “Indeed… in fact, it’s quite impressive what he did. I don’t know of any who would be so quickly repels such a spirit. While he does profess to be a practitioner of Dark Magic, his skill in defense of it is admirable. If I had but known, I would have been pleased to offer him a position. Do you think he would accept it now? I confess that this… situation has me quite on edge. I do believe it would be reassuring, not just to me, but to the others if someone of such ability was to take over the position. I…”

“I shall ask him, of course but if he does not then it will be a pair of Aurors per month until the end of the year. It will satisfy the Ministry.”

Albus looked at Kingsley and nodded. Now was not the time to protest his innocence, right now he wasn’t talking to his friend Kingsley who was an Auror but rather Auror Shacklebolt. And that person was entirely too… perceptive. Donning a contrite and sad expression, he agreed.
Madame Pomphrey sighed as another Healer stepped into her office. “Madame....”

“Yes?"

He sighed and straightened up. “I hate to do this because it appears to be … but do you have some potions that you can spare?”

“The potions cabinet is right here, what do you need?”

“No, Ma'am, I mean...” He stepped forward and closed the door. His eyes darted around the office, noticing that there were no paintings. “My name is Eiche Hoher-Prinzi and I am from Austria. I am aware that you have the exclusive services of the renowned Potions Master Severus Snape. My family has been trying to contact him to do a commission for us. However, we haven't been able to get to him. Our messages are forwarded to his Regent who refuses to reveal who they are. We get a return letter from a lawyer and that's it.”

“Regent? Severus Snape is a Potions Master, he has no need of a Regent nor does he have one!” Madam Pomfrey stood up, shoulders back. Somehow feeling insulted for her fellow.

Eiche frowned. “Yet he does. I have seen the letters from my own brother's desk. It says he is not available and that unless we supply the recipe for detailed analysis, there is nothing to discuss. We have not done so because of the manner in which we were dictated to. While it may be prideful, you must understand that not only was it developed en famillé but it also uses several restricted ingredients and while we have no problem with allowing Potion Masters access to the recipe, it is a powerful recipe and spell. We deal with as a Protected Potion rather than a General one. Despite my physical proximity to Master Snape, to approach him without permission would be suspicious as we do not know who his Regent is. If they are close then they might try to forbid contact and we can not afford that.”

The Medi-witch frowned. “I understand, but you must understand that as a Medi-witch, I would see such a bond on Snape as it may affect his health, something I am responsible for... of course. She sat down stunned. “I don't suppose you know this but it has come to my attention that I may have been interfered with … and I doubt that I am the only one. Approach him. Not now, not here at Hogwarts. I fear... yes, fear is the right word. I truly do fear that the person who interfered with me would have no compunction of doing something this despicable to Severus.

“Severus is not an evil man. Dark, yes but as a Medi-witch I understand how much of our repertoire comes from the Dark. I am not as shallow as most of the UK is. I trained in France. I chose to remain a Medi-witch when I saw the shambles of Healer training in my home country. A Medi-witch on the mainland is halfway to Healer training here. So, yes, I know Dark isn't evil. Severus is Dark, he fights against it because he and his fellows were taught Dark is Evil. He made mistakes.

“He joined the Dark Lord because he truly believed that the Dark Lord wanted to achieve a sense of Balance. But because Dark Magick isn't taught here, the Dark Lord did not take the right precautions and fell head first in the Dark Magick. And you know exactly what happens when the magick...”
Eiche frowned. “Magick is powerful, it wants what it wants. It needs a being’s moral compass from going too far. It is an absolute in a world that can’t be lived absolutely. Perhaps that is what is wrong with this particular person you fear. He has abandoned his will to the Light Magick without regard to the fact that it isn’t always right. It can and has deranged people before.”

“Yes, that may be true. In any case, Severus repented and the Dark Lord was apparently, disembodied, according to what we have seen tonight. Unfortunately, that will only encourage people to think that this person was right. The fact that the McGill defeated him using Necromancy hopefully will also show people that person's way isn't the only one or even the proper way. But as for Severus, approach him off grounds. Are you staying with anyone or hosting a party this Season?” Pomfrey asked.

“We are staying with the Malfoys.”

“Good. Narcissa always was a strong young woman, good Healer as well. She could go far. They are good friends of Severus. Every year they have Yule Festivity. You will no doubt be invited and that person will not.

Carmus walked down the hall slowly. His son and Draco were at his left elbow and Severus at his right. His fiancé looked stern and displeased. Both he and Lady Malfoy disapproved of his getting out of the infirmary today. He pointed out that the Goblins would be coming soon to test people for their heritage and he wanted to be there both to see it and to help new-found family communicate together. While he was still a bit pale, his hair was pulled back in a tail and his silver robe was open with casual Muggle clothes under it. Simon slowly leaned into him as they walked. With a smile, he put his arm around his son, noting how Draco held tightly to Simon’s hand. He could see Simon’s aura flare and Draco’s trying to soothe. Perhaps they would be a good match. Sighing, he waited for others to enter the Great Hall before entering himself. A silence fell and slowly clapping started up, to his shock, until cheers rang through the hall. Carmus stood stunned. He could hear Simon laughing a bit.

“Ahhh… thank you?”

Madam Bones, head of the Department of Magickal Justice stood before the head table. She stepped up and bowed her head slowly. “Carmus McGill, for the services and protection of the student body and visitors to this school as well as repelling an attack by the Shade of Voldemort, you can expect to receive the Order of Merlin, Second Class although if my motion goes through, it will be First Class. Carmus stared at Madam Bones for a moment before speaking, “Thank you? Really… it was my duty and honor. I am a Necromancer of the Tenth Level and to allow such a thing is a perversion of our Art. I could not turn from my sworn duty. I am glad that no one was hurt.” He let his eyes roam over the people in the Hall. “I hope that this does not scare you from enjoying Hogwarts! I thank you for your honor of me and am grateful that I could serve. Please, enjoy today and blessed be.”

Bones nodded. Moving closer, she lowered her voice to a conversational level. “Now, why am I not
surprised? The Minister is planning to be here by 9 AM. The Goblins are coming as well, both to test the Returnees and their family but also to check the wards. Last night, Lord Malfoy commented that you mentioned that the wards were frayed. During the meeting, I am hoping you can explain that. I do have some questions but food first.”

“Of course, Madam.” During their conversation, Simon and Draco had detached from him and headed towards a table where their friends were seated while the adults drifted over to a large oval table where Lords Black and Malfoy were seated, along with Consort Lupin-Black, Auror Shacklebolt, the Doctors Granger, McGonagall and Dumbledore. Carmus took a seat next to Lady Malfoy with Severus on his other side and McGonagall who was seated next to Dumbledore then Sprout and Flitwick. For which he was grateful. Breakfast was laid out and he could feel the stares of his newly declared siblings and fiancé on him. Sighing, he took larger than normal portions and started to eat. After about twenty minutes, Madam Bones cleared her throat.

“Now that you have something in your belly and I won’t be murdered by your family for distracting you from eating, can you really explain what happened last night?”

“A Shade possessed a teacher and was controlling him. I still don’t understand why the wards didn’t detect him. Hogwarts wards are anchored in the land wards and those wards… well they are tight wards. I did notice on the ride in that several of the newer wards are frayed. As if they were modified without regard for how they should fit and patched over and over again.” Carmus frowned. “I understand that even with the Goblin examination, there is little one can do now. It will have to wait during summer and I will be calling in several McGill ward makers to work on it as well.”

Dr. Ellen Granger frowned. She noticed the flash of anger on Dumbledore’s face. It was a quick roll, a tightening of the mouth, a flare of light in the eyes. She could read people’s emotions in the quick movements. It came in handy when her patients couldn’t speak. “I know we spoke of it somewhat yesterday but exactly why does it concern your family?”

“Well, this castle is McGillishame.”

“I know but wasn’t it given over the school?”

“Never! This place is sacred to the McGills. As I said, the school is Hogwarts, the castle never was. It is still our home. It can never leave McGill hands. That is ironclad in the Charter. It’s also why I was able to channel so much power here. Less than I thought but enough for my purposes.”

Albus Dumbledore smiled softly. “Lord McGill, are you saying that you own Hogwarts?”

“No, Headmaster. I own the castle, not the actual school. I have an original copy of the signed Charter in my archives. In return for the use of the castle, the school was enjoined to maintain her wards, her lands, and obey the Laws of Balance in regards to Magick which is seriously in danger considering the level of teaching in this school. This was magickally sworn by the Founders to my ancestor. To this end, the Founders gave certain rights and duties to the McGill family. One of which is the right to teach or install a teacher for Nature of Magick, by the way, I got in contact with my choice. He has accepted.

“We have rights to enter the castle at any time, to visit her. She is our ancestral home so we can never be kept out. In fact… how would you like to meet her?”

Dumbledore jerked in startled amazement. “Meet her?”

“Yes, it won’t take any energy from me. I just have to let her feel my magick and wake her. It is no danger to me. I promise, Severus. No danger. No blood. Just letting my aura touch her is good
enough.” Carmus stood up and walked slowly towards the Gryffindor table; tapping his son on the shoulder he tilted his head. Simon stood up and together, drawing attention they walked to a wall. Carmus leaned down and whispered something in his son’s ear. Together they touched the wall with their left hand and laid their heads against the wall. It shone slightly and faded. In the center of hall, dust swirled and lifted. Carmus took his son’s hand and led him to the center.

“It is okay, come meet her.”

The form took the shape of a young girl, who looked to be about five years old. She was dressed in a brown and gray set of clothes. Her brown hair had a few sun streaks in it and her eyes were a golden brown. She curtsied.

“Carmus and Simon, blessed be.”

Dumbledore led the procession from the table. Severus moved forward, not noticing the flash of displeasure as he walked past Dumbledore. He moved closer, tense.

“Severus, Ellen, Alan, Lucius, Narcissa, Amelia, Minerva, Dumbledore, Kingsley, Draco,” As he named them, each nodded to the young apparition. “This is Eilimin. She is McGillishame.”

“Well met. It’s not often that I am awakened. The elves are so happy and this is the first time in years I’ve had extra energy.” She spun around and levitated to address the hall. “Well met all! I am glad that you are here to celebrate with us. I have missed it! Anything you need, merely ask!” She turned back, “I am glad you woke me. There’s a problem.”

Carmus nodded. “The top wards are fraying.”

“Yes, they are but there’s another problem. Some of the underpinnings are missing.”

Dumbledore stared in shock. Yes, he knew that the school was alive. Most magickal residences were ‘alive’. It was a side effect of the presence of magick over the years. Everyone knew the homes soaked up the family’s magick. When you have three to five hundred students living in a place for seven years, learning and using magick then of course it would soak up magick. The school has been here for a thousand years! But to have a soul, an actual soul inhabiting the school.

His mother had told him of such barbaric acts, the mixing of a child's blood into the mortar to make the building strong. Such murder was the darkest of acts and yet he admits to his family’s act so blithely. Not only that but McGill had corrupted Severus despite all he had done to save him. He decided that he needed pull Severus up by his reins. He was forgetting the rules.

Carmus nodded and looked at Madam Bones who also nodded and led the way out of the hall. The meeting was to take place in a conference room behind the Great Hall. The Minister of Magic, Cornelius Fudge, was just entering the room where seven Goblins sat. He exchanged a greeting with
everyone and found a seat. Except for Eilimin who hovered next to the table.

“Minister, forgive me but the young lady is the spirit of the castle in some way and she wishes to
give us a warning and I believe we should hear her out first

Fudge nodded, wiping his forehead with a plum handkerchief. His forest green suit with its orange
and yellow striped vest was taut over his stomach. “Yes, if you feel it is that important.”

“Madam, I am Eilimin Allea of Clan McGillis. I freely and knowingly offered my life to Magick in
order to preserve a magickal wellspring that is under this land. It is a duty of all McGills, even the
young ones, to preserve the Balance and Serve Magick. My death was peaceful. And they built me
this beautiful body to reside in. That is love.”

Madam Bones turned to Eilimin and smiled. “Yes, I suppose it is. You said some of the
underpinnings are missing. What exactly does that mean?”

Eilimin turned to Carmus who was paling even more, his lips pinched tight. “It means Hogwarts is in
danger. How sure are you that the underpinnings are missing and how did it not alert you?”

Eilimin sighed. “I’m not often awake anymore. You know as well as I do that during the celebration
of the Sabbats, I draw energy from the rituals. Those Sabbats haven’t been practiced for more than
six decades! I often don’t have the energy needed. I awoke yesterday for the first time in almost three
quarters of a century and thank you for driving that Shade out. He befouled me. I was vaguely aware
of him but unable to do anything. Now that I am awake, I can protect the children better. I can do
that which I love. I can feel them missing. They maybe nearby but not where they are supposed to
be. I can’t feel them like the living do.”

Fudge grunted as he shifted. “Yes, yes, but what are they?!"

“Bones.” Carmus leaned forward, one hand combing through his son’s hair. Several of the adults
were startled to see the boys there. Draco was holding onto his betrothed hand. The look on the
blonde's face dared them to say anything.

Carmus took a deep breath and released it. “Bones. My ancestors’ bones. Someone has moved our
graveyard. That is not permitted. It is a violation of the Charter and reasons to expel Hogwarts from
this castle!”

“Now, see here! You do not own this castle and you can not threaten Hogwarts like that!” The
minister blustered, his hands twisting the brim of his bowler.

A goblin chuckled. “He can, he should, and he’s right. This castle is owned by the McGills and
never transferred hands. The school is allowed to operate out of this castle by their good will and by
moving the graveyard, which the land wards are anchored in, you have violated the Charter.
Perhaps, not you yourself, Minister but whomever moved it. Violation of the charter can result in the
expulsion of Hogwarts from the castle or the destruction of any wards added without McGill
permission or even loss of control over Hogwarts itself as Lord Aicdan of Clan McGillis was
regularly considered the Fifth Founder by the other four. He allowed them to use the land and castle
as well as funded the start of the school. I suggest that you; Madam Bones, Minister Fudge, the
Headmaster and the Deputy Headmistress read the Charter and understand all the clauses because
several of the actions taken over the past three quarters of a century are in violation if our recent
examination is accurate.”

Two red spots glowed red along his cheekbones. “Please forward me a copy. The McGill
WardMasters will need that information.”
“Yes, Lord McGill.”

“Thank you for the warning, Eilimin, do you need to rest?”

Eilimin smiled, “Yes. But thank you for visiting me. Come back?”

“Of course and my son is attending the school. Rest now.”

She faded away leaving only a light trace of stone dust.

“Well now that she’s resting, I have one very and by that I mean extremely important question.” He petted his son’s head and moved him to the side. “WHO BY MAGICK’S BLOODY WRATH DARED TO DESECRATE MY FAMILY’S GRAVES AND PUT THIS LAND IN DANGER?! ”

McGill’s eyes were hard and slightly glowing a sparkling electric silver. His voice rang off the stone wall. Magickal pressure slammed into the occupants of the room. The Goblins moved back, chairs clattering. Fudge squeaking and slid down in his chair. Madam Bones and Kingsley leapt to their feet and stood back to back while others stared at him. Severus, the Malfoys, the Grangers, and the children alone were not frightened by him. Dumbledore seemed to be surprised by the magickal pressure, his blue eyes wide.

Severus pressed the tips of his fingers to the back of his hand and concentrated. Slowly it faded. Carmus turned to Severus, those bright fever spots spreading over his face, meeting over the bridge of his nose. Eyes glassy. Slowly, he turned to stare at the others. “Who.”

Dumbledore managed to gather his courage and stood straighter, his blue eyes twinkling in seeming concern. “My boy, be calm. The only graves on Hogwarts ground right now are the Founders, save for Slytherin.”

Carmus rolled his eyes. “And that is the problem, by the by, Slytherin is buried with the rest of the Founders. I don’t know where that foolish rumor came from that he was driven from the castle, because he wasn’t. Never mind that, you say ‘right now’ and that is wrong. I feel some of the graves, yet there are others missing! Who. Moved. Them.”

Minerva gulped and shook her head before her eyes widened and she gasped an ‘o’. “When I was a student here, a graveyard was discovered and several teachers went to investigate it. I don’t know what happened to it but likely Albus does as he was my teacher when I was here.” She turned to Dumbledore. “Surely you remember that.”

Dumbledore frowned then his eyes went wide. “Indeed, I do, Minerva. It was so long ago that I almost forgot, but yes. The Defense of Dark Arts professor at the time, Master Noir determined that there was an overpowering presence of Necromancy and suggested that the bones be moved to a proper place and the land cleansed. Headmaster Dippet agreed. However, we knew of no one who could cleanse the land and so the bones were moved the proper Hogsmeade cemetery.”

Glassy eyes turned to the Headmaster, who felt that glare as ice along his skin. “They were in their proper place and of course it has a presence of Necromancy. Every dead body there was cleansing the ground and protecting it from harm! My family's deaths are purifying a node here. They were buried here for that purpose. As Servants of Magick, we have more magick in our bones and it’s balanced! That was the point! This land has to be in exquisite balance and those bones ANCHOR THE WARDS! You are not allowed to excavate, move bones, move markers or in any way alter the topography of the grounds without McGill permission and evaluation!” Before him a crack appeared in the table.”And what of the McGill deaths since then, where are they?”
Madam Bones turned to Dumbledore. “Surely you know, perhaps Dippet made arrangement but you had to agree to it when you took over.”

“Well…I believe in the Hogsmeade cemetery is where they belong, my dear.”

“I am not your student, I am not your friend, and I am not your ‘dear.’ Apparently, they belong here, safeguarding their ancestral land. Hogwarts will have to pay to move them back.” She held up a hand to forestall his objections. “This came about because you did not study nor read the Charter. You must do so and the McGill or his representative will test you on your knowledge. In fact, Master McGill, if you can spare the time or if you know someone of your family who can, we shall arrange for supervised class for both the Headmaster and Deputy McGonagall. Also every new Deputy from now on, will attend a course on the study of the charter. Every new Headmaster or Head Mistress must display intimate knowledge of the Charter.”

Dumbledore shook his head. “I must refuse. Such Dark Magick cannot and must not be allowed around the children! It will not happen!

Minerva spun on her heel. “Apparently such Magick has been here for almost a millennia before they were removed with no risk to the children! Not to mention it violates the CHARTER. If you do not, then I will! I will not have this school threatened by your actions! This is going to the Board!”

Waves of Magick pulsed in the room.

“Oh yes, it will go to the board. Removing the underpinnings has caused massive flaws in the wards. They are shredding. It is because of this that Voldemort was allowed to ride Quirrell in. Who knows what other dangers you have allowed. Tell me? Did you get no warnings of danger from the wards? Have you ignored them enough that they no longer warn you? Did you get the warnings when Severus was almost killed? Probably not! I warn you, this summer the wards from the time you were first allowed any input will be destroyed and rebuilt by McGill and McGill trained ward masters. And... I believe I have need of a discussion with Madam Bones concerning the endangerment of minors, Dumbledore.” His voice grew hard and violent, if it was a blow, it would have beaten them into the walls.

Narcissa moved quickly to Madam Bones. “He can’t do this. He used too much energy last night, if he doesn’t stop, it could render him comatose or even kill him. He must calm down. He must not exert himself so. Severus is trying and so shall we. You must keep that fool Dumbledore from making it worse.” She turned from the other woman and stepped forward, her Malfoy presence wrapped around her; head lifted and in every way a pureblood Green witch. “Lord McGill, Carmus, Brother. This can be fixed, can it not? We will retrieve the bones and I am sure that your family has people who can inter them again and properly. Brother, you have not the energy. The fever rises; shall you abandon your child?”

Carmus raised his hands, red splotches covered them and he covered his face with his hands. “You are right. I have not the energy. I can’t fix this. I am too spent. Much too spent.” He turned from them. “I have no choice. I am only a tenth-level Necromancer, I can’t fix the bonds. I can’t anchor the wards to the bones. I must call Tristam. I have no choice. Headmaster, your actions have left me no choice. If you feared last night, you fear nothing real. I must call Tristam. Dayn.”

A house elf appeared, dressed in a clean uniform. “Master is very ill. Dayn will bring Master a potion?”

Severus shook his head. “No. Considering what Madam Pomfrey gave him, that’s an issue. I will formulate a Strengthening Potion.”
“Yes, Potions Master Snape.”

“Call Tristam, I need him.”

“Master needs him. Yes.” The elf popped out and the room fell to silence. Narcissa approached Carmus and carefully cast a silent spell. She frowned at the result and pulled a ring from her finger and handed it over to him. Carmus looked startled.

“Am I that bad off?”

“Yes, or close to it.”

Simon moved back to his father’s side and looked at the ring then at his father.

“It’s a healer’s ring. When Healers think they need it, they pull out special rings. They store and cleanse energy. Placing the ring on another allows that energy to be transferred. It’s not very personal but it’s an extreme measure.” He slipped on the ring. The red on his face started to fade.

Dayn popped back in, he held in his hands a large tray that he placed before Carmus. On it was a large bar of chocolate and a large cut of meat, covered in a brown glaze.

“Master Tristam is on his way. He said that if you call him, then you need energy. Eat the chocolate first then the molè beef. Tristam’s orders.”

Carmus nodded. “How soon?”

“Fifteen minutes.”

Carmus turned to the tray and started to methodically eat, he chewed mechanically trying to get as much in his stomach as possible before Tristam showed. He had to meet him and try to keep him from reinforcing all those negative beliefs about necromancers.


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Tristam stared at the castle. It was a familiar place. Even though it had been a while… well, almost a century since he last walked through these gates. He could feel the wards, even those that were damaged, around him; singing and laughing. They knew what he was and welcomed him. Even the cold and his cloak, both of which felt the recently perform ritual. It was rough but it definitely had the aura of his apprentice. Carmus was a bit showy but he had the intelligence to do what he was good at. Whatever had made Carmus call him had to be something big.

That made him wary and he pulled his aura and cloak closer, compressing the cold into something that dropped the temperature around him. Above him, a cloud cover rolled in. Before him, the door opened and he stepped inside.


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November 1st
The courtyard was buzzing with life. Tables and tents were set up, almost all of them with a coat of arms of various families. Three larger tents had the seal of St. Mungos, the Ministry of Magick and the Gringotts seal. Other than those three, family tents were arranged against the wall. Muggle families roamed with some already clutching parchment on which a family tree was depicted. So far, every single Muggleborn or as some called them now, First Generation Returnee had been descended from a Squib born within the last four generations. Many of the supposed Muggle parents had had their magick suppressed. Examinations from the Healers determined how damaging the sealing had been and appointments made to help them; Although some did receive bad news.

An icy feeling approached. Some shuddered and others felt soothed, while others felt nothing. The Goblins noticed, as did most of the Healers. They turned towards the outer exit and waited. Others noticed their stillness and turned to look where they were looking. Others turned as the main doors from the castle opened. It was almost a procession. McGill was dressed differently. He still wore a silver robe but under it lay a pitch-black shirt with runes embroidered all over it. He was still pale but his hair was held back in a severe tail with a tie that mirrored the shirt. His trousers on the other hand were the same color as his robe. His boots ran up to his knees and were as dark as his shirt. Behind him trailed his family, except his son who stood a half step behind. The Malfoys stood at his left, Snape at his right and the Grangers at his back. Behind him came the Hogwarts administration led by Dumbledore and the Ministry staff behind them with the Minister at the end. It looked almost like the Auror and Madam Bones were protecting him.

McGill stopped, smiling at several people to reassure them. Many wondered at the feeling. Their wizarding fellows told them it was magickal pressure and everyone experienced it differently based on their affinity. The door opened and a person walked through. They wore a cloak that shielded them from all eyes. It flew and danced in the breeze except there was no breeze. He walked through the leaves but there was no sound of the crunching leaves. He did not make a sound; even his footfalls seemed to be unheard. Even though he wasn’t identified, everyone knew who he was. Necromancer. The stuff of tales.

He stopped before McGill and spoke, his words falling into a dead air whisper that sounded like flames.

“You called me. I am glad to help. But why have you called me? And what happened to you?”

“Last night a Shade was in the castle.” The cloaked man somehow straightened even more. “It was possessing a teacher by the name of Quirinus Quirrell. Under his control, Quirrell let loose a drugged Mountain Troll. Myself, Severus, and Malfoy took care of it. When we realized that it was a distraction, we hurried to the Great Hall where everyone was assembled. Quirrell was there. My son, Simon hugged him and he started to dissolve. The Shade has totally eaten him away. It was the Shade of Voldemort. I banished and outcast him. It took a lot out of me.”

“I did not know Voldemort was disembodied. How did this come to be?”

“I am not sure. I know that ten years ago, he attacked the Potters. He tried to use the Killing Curse on the babe and it somehow backfired. This is the theory of how he was disembodied.”

“I see.” The cloak moved to brush against Carmus, stroking his cheek. He laughed and held it gently, stroking it softly.
“Still so active.”

“Yes.”

“Good day, Belovéd.”

“Malfoy, you led the Samhain Ritual?”

“Yes. We were to send a ghost on, but due to the emergency, we could not. We will instead do so ourselves once Lord McGill recovers.” Lucius replied, only his eyes gave a glimmer of the euphoria he felt from the necromancer.

“Lord McGill… then?” The whisper caressed the crowd.

“Yes, four years ago.”

“I am sorry, I was not there. Time moves strangely. If I am allowed, I will visit his portrait.”

Carmus shook his head. “You are always welcome. I could have Called you but I didn’t. Tristam, it’s okay. We knew it would come.”

“And Sean?”

“A couple of years before Father. We knew he would not make thirty. He could have if he had gone to the Vale but he chose not to. He did leave me a gift. Several Books that I will share with you.”

“There are times to call me and times not to. Have you forgotten them?”

“No! You have duties… and I would not take you from them.”

A sigh rippled from him and crawled through the crowd. “McGills!” He turned and knelt down. “So, you are Simon. I am pleased to meet you. I would like to visit with you later. I have very interesting stories from when your father was young.”

“Must you really?”

“Yes, I must really. I did help raise you after all.”

Simon smiled. “REALLY?”

“Oh yes, young necromancers often accidentally revive the recently dead. So, his father contacted me and I lived with them from when he was four until he went to Hogwarts. He was a lovely boy.” The smile was evident in his tone.

“Is that why he called you ‘Beloved’?”

A raspy chuckle filled the air. “No. He called my cloak ‘Belovéd’. ” He said, stressing the third syllable. “That is its name. A necromancer doesn’t buy or make a cloak. It is an aspect of our aura and magick. Usually around level five or six, it manifests. If your father didn’t suppress his aura, you would see wisps surrounding him or mists.”

“I live in the UK! It’s so out of Balance towards the Gold; if I didn’t suppress it then I would get nothing done.”

Another sigh crawled out. “It is not healthy for you. But I do take your point. At least release it around your Green colleagues.” He stood up and turned towards the castle. “Carmus, you would not
call me to lay a ghost or because of an Outcasting. The wards are frayed and they are asking me to do something. What is wrong?”

Carmus reached out to slip a hand under the cloak’s sleeve to touch him. “Someone moved a graveyard, they tried to cleanse the land. They removed the underpinnings.”

The temperature dropped from the cold of a Scottish November to the frost of deep winter. “WHAT?! ” The rasp scraped on the ears of the people around them.

“The underpinnings. They were moved to a graveyard to the town. I… I… I don’t have the strength or knowledge to anchor the wards and reset the underpinnings. I don’t even have enough power to bring them home!” Carmus’ voice raised and broke.

The frost broke and the air warmed. The cloak moved to envelop Carmus. “My dear, of course you don’t. This is why I exist; this is why you called me. You were right to do so. Love, it will be fine. I will move them through the Earth. I will reestablish the wards. I will do the anchoring. No wonder you are so depleted. You ran the energy for the Outcasting through you, didn’t you? You probably fried a few channels.

“That’s dangerous. Let me care for you. This is not just my duty but my joy.” A flash of gold and the ring that had been on Carmus’ hand was held out to Lady Malfoy. “I thank you, Healer but I have a better way.”

Carmus laid his head on Tristam’s shoulder before he was pulled closer. They stood for a moment before Carmus moved back. He licked a dark fluid from his lips and stepped back. “Thank you, Tristam.”

Tristam looked up at Dumbledore before laughing. “Don’t get your starry knickers in a twist, youngster. Before you scream about blood magic, we did not share blood but Necromantic Essence. Totally different and more vitalizing. So, dearling… who desecrated the McGills.”

“Ummmm, not telling. You would stop their heart in a second and then Kingsley, being a good Auror, would have to attempt to arrest you and I don’t want you killing him either.”

“A point.” Tristam was smiling. No one could see it but they felt it. “Very well. I will explore the damage.” The cloak flowed like water as it slid from his body to pool around the ground. The mists flowed in a roiling mass towards the open doors of Hogwarts. Dumbledore and several of the other Gold families stared in shock and disgust.

“Really now. Considering you are guests in my home, you should be better behaved even if it does bother you, try not to show it so openly.” A pleasant baritone spoke up. A young man stood there. His clothes done in maroons with silver etchings. His hair was short and brown with a few blond strands. He was rather wide and muscled with hazel eyes and a smile. “Hello. My name is Tristam McGillis. Though you can and will call me Tristam. I don’t use Master McGillis unless I’m in a formal setting and this is nowhere near formal. My cloak being an extension of my power and able to get into places I can not go is investigating what happened and why it happened. Once we know that, my cousins and I will make sure that nothing like that can happen again. Shades and Ghosts and even Poltergeists are not allowed without the specific and verbal permission of either The McGill or a Necromantic McGill and yes, Peeves, I can and always will see you. The magick here is a very deep and it can cause conflicts. Conflicts that have bad consequences. We will eliminate those. For now, please go back to your day and blessing of the season on you. May your dead travel well, may your memories comfort you.”

Madam Bones stepped forward, hand extended. “Tristam, I am Amelia Bones, I am the head of the
Department of Magickal Law Enforcement. Welcome. Tell me how much of that was the cloak’s doing?”

Tristam laughed. “Well since the cloak is the manifestation of my necromantic aura, all of it. I can use Necromancy now but I would rather not. It’s busy. This is actually the best time for me. With the veil being thin, I’m quite strong. It’s probably why my little one could channel that energy. Of course, if he did it properly, he would have drawn energy from outside himself to protect his channels.”

Carmus stared at him in shock. “And where would I get that?! I couldn’t drain the guests.”

“You would have taken so little, they wouldn’t notice and if not them then the ghosts themselves! All they would have done was go invisible for a day or so!

“I’m The McGill, my duty was to banish the shade.”

“You have a child; you do not do something so risky when you have that duty!” Tristam said softly. “Just as you should call for help when you need it or when you want it. If I have failed to teach you that, then I apologize. For now, I will visit Eili—”

“Forgive me. I know you were worried for me. But this one was different, Tristam. He... he has burdened his soul with horrible crosses. He wasn’t a normal Shade. I had to fight. I... Sean left me books. I didn’t know what was to happen, I knew something would. Samhain is too important a Sabbat to be ignored by Voldemort. I didn’t know that he did what he did. I had to protect Simon. If I die protecting him from that abomination then so be it. I want to live with my son. Yet, what he did... how he decimated his soul. I had to fight. I promised these people that we would protect them.

“I didn’t know if I could defeat it but in my ancestral home as a necromancer and Lord of the family, I had to try. I managed to Outcast him! Tristam—”

Tristam turned to him and hugged him. “Fine. But you aren’t leaving tonight. You are barely able to hold yourself together. Even now you are emotional and overwhelmed. You will allow me to care for you. I also want to spend time with Simon.”

“Thank you.”

“You know, you could command me as my Lord.”

“Yet, you are my Master.” Carmus lowered his eyes.

Tristam placed a kiss on his cheek. “Now, let me go visit my sister.”

Severus frowned. “Sister?”

“Yes, Eilimin.”

Bones frowned. “The spirit of the castle? But according to her, she’s been here since it was built and this castle is over a thousand years old.”

“Yes, I know. I’m the one who placed her here. She volunteered and despite my protests, she was accepted. She was old enough to offer herself. I decided that I wouldn’t fight it as long as I was allowed to separate her soul. That morning,” He smiled softly, lost in memory, “I woke her up, bathed her and combed her hair. I dressed her in a fine outfit of green and gray and blue, though her favorite was one our mother made her for a festival. It was brown and silver. I cooked for her, her favorite meal. Roast with turnips, carrots and onions. A sweet bread for dessert. I took her to the
wellspring that this castle is built on. I spread out a silver fur and bade her lay down. I took her favorite comb and combed her hair. I made a single thin braid. She pricked her finger and dropped seven drops on the braid and curled into me. I soothed her and she fell asleep. I separated her soul and placed her in a beautiful vessel that I had prepared.

“I demanded they make this castle a work of art. I demanded turrets, large rooms, a ton of secret passages. I demanded a library that would rival anything in the world. Oh back then the castle was full of children and she ran and played with all of them. I bid them find ghosts who would be willing to play and watch over her. Tapestries by the wagonful. I demanded the best. And I got it. Then before they finished, when we had maybe a day left, I allowed her soul to enter the castle. Already the braid had been mixed into the material. I don’t even know where it ended up. Her body though… that is located under the main hall. This is her home and that is why the Charter is so detailed. You are guests here. She is family and we would do anything to protect her. To do less is to fail as a McGill.

“So Simon and…”

“Draco.” Draco said.

“Simon and Draco, would you like to come with me? Have you met my sister?”

Simon nodded. “Yeah, she’s cool.”

“Yes, and I will give her a good dose of energy, so she can manifest more. Usually she siphons off a bit of energy with the various ritual and excess magic flinging about but with the lack of rituals for the past few decades, she hasn’t been very strong. So I’m glad you are keeping the rituals again. You should get to know your cousin.”

“Doesn’t that make you my cousin as well?”

“Yes but do you know how many greats there are? Just call me Tristam.”

Hermione stepped out and took a deep breath. “Do you mind if we come? We only saw her a little last night and she’s fascinating.”

Tristam nodded. “Not at all. And you are?”

“Sorry, Hermione Granger.”

Simon waved at the several others in the surrounding groups. “Ron Weasley, Neville Longbottom. Both in my house.”

“Welcome gentlemen. If any others want to come, I’d have no objection and neither will she “

As he turned to walk away, several others moved to join him. However, one young man was stopped by his parents who objected.

“What are you doing?! You are not going anywhere with a man who admitted to the callous murder of his sister.”

Tristam froze then continued on, surprised when the young man shrugged off his father's grip, despite the demands for 'Cedric' to return.

Carmus spun around as the doors closed.
“Diggory, you're an idiot. He didn't murder her. He released her. She was dying already. Her heart was failing and they couldn't save her. Instead he made sure she got a long lasting beautiful body and is as close to immortal as she can be. She has children to play with, books to read and places to rest. He's a Necromancer, not evil!”

Amelia Bones nodded and gave Diggory a look that could scorch earth.

A Healer approached the group, “Lord McGill, I am Eiche, why don't we head to the Healing tent and I once we check you over, you can go with the Grangers to do their inheritance test. Perhaps you will find another cousin.”

Severus watched as they moved off.

Albus Dumbledore approached the Minister. Together the group moved towards Hogwarts. “Well that was unexpected. Why don't you rest for a bit Cornelius and later we can meet and discuss what has happened.

A goblin dressed in a fine robe nodded. “True, I myself, wish to see what the Necromancer discovers.”

“Yes... I too wish to know that, Captain Bloodhook. While I'm not as reassured to have such Dark and powerful magick roaming unrestrained on the grounds, I understand the need for it.”

Severus sneered. “Try to stop him. Tristam would just ignore you and push you out of his way.”

Bones turned to the Potions Master. “You know him well?”

Severus frowned. “No, not well... I have met him before. I knew both Sean and Carmus well when we attended school. Inseparable. Tristam, I only met twice. Each time, his magick rolled me without pause. He wields his power without thought; not ruthlessly, no. When he said his cloak was an extension of his will... that's his power. There is a muggle poem called 'She walks in Beauty.'

“She walks in beauty, like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies;
And all that's best of dark and bright
Meet in her aspect and her eyes;
Thus mellowed to that tender light
Which heaven to gaudy day denies.

“It's by a man called Lord Byron. Tristam walks in power. It is a part of him like his hair or eyes. He doesn't see it as a tool or a hammer. It just is .”

Kingsley nodded, “He does. If he had been the Dark Lord, the madness of the War would never have happened.”

“Yes, but he never would accept it. He is devoted to his Necromancy. He is a Necromancer of the second level.”

Fudge frowned as they walked down the hall. “Surely that is not so high?”

Bloodhook shook his head, “The ranks are reversed. You said McGill was tenth level? Necromancers start at level fourteen and head up like a stepped pyramid. Tristam is the strongest Necromancer I have ever experienced. If Lord Voldemort is returning, I would want Tristam to walk beside me. I believe I will counsel King Ragnok to open negotiations with him.”
Inner Courtyard
An hour later.

Ellen Granger stared at her husband. “No. I'm nowhere near blond.”

Alan agreed. “That you are not but the idea that maybe three or four generations ago, that one of your relatives may have been... it's possible.”

“You are talking about 1930's and 40's. While I acknowledge that I am mixed and our child more than, we never had people that Nordic in our family. I have photos of my great grandparents.”

“Could it be an affair?”

“Of course it could be.” Ellen turned to the Malfoys. “I meant no offense but I now have to consider that my parents and grandparents have lied to me. I don't know how it is in this world but our racial identity is intrinsic to us, we absorb it by living it. We may not notice it in particular but eventually it comes up and slaps us. When I speak on the phone and then meet someone in person, they may have a hard time connecting that voice to me. Is it racist? Yes, but it's not deliberately so. It's unconscious. So now I find I may not be what I learned I was. And I have discovered a bit of racism in myself. I will deal with it because the idea of being related to the Malfoy family is nothing to be ashamed of at all. Nor will Hermione think so.”

Narcissa and Lucius sat still. “Perhaps we don't understand. This is a muggle thing?”

Alan tapped his cheek. “Hmmm, okay. A woman discovered her mother was born in a family in New Orleans. She was delighted to have found new family, much like several people here are. To her surprise, when she met that part of her family, the family that her mother did not speak of, they were black. The woman had been raised as white. Her father was perhaps a bit bigoted. It turned out that her mother was born with light black skin.”

Ellen nodded, “We call it 'High Yellow'. People with such skin can pass as white, maybe Greek or Italian sometimes. And at the time, sometimes you needed to pass just to get a job or even into school.”

“Yes, and her mother had fallen in love with a man who never would have dated a black woman, especially considering the time. So now, this woman, raised in a certain culture finds that her mother, her grandparents, her cousins are raised in a totally different culture. Not only that, but a culture of which she has no understanding. This would redefine her, as well as open her up to a whole new side of her family with new traditions and new understandings. Now imagine that in reverse. Not only do you have the racial divide but also the magickal one.”

Narcissa nodded and leaned forward. “I see... however we don't have such a divide in magickal culture. Our divides are political, species, and affiliation. Skin pigmentation is not one of them. Magickal culture has been thoroughly mixed. While Muggle culture was unaware of differing peoples, with magickal travel, that has never been our way. We may clash over being Light or Dark but that is magickal affinity, not skin color. We have even been divided over blood status but mainly because the Light either claimed or were sought by Muggleborns and Half-bloods. Even that can be
reduced to affinity. Actually, politics can be reduced to that as well. And if you really want to get
down to it, even the species divide is down to affinity.

“How we treat those who are magickal creatures and magickal beings is reflected by affinity. We of
the Dark or Green. If we have a poor opinion of a magickal being or creature there is no doubt about
it. We will treat them honestly while the Light tends to patronize them while applauding themselves
for their good nature. My family, the Blacks and the Malfoys, have always respected the Goblins
even when we may not like a particular goblin.”

Alan smiled and said, “Not to mention, why would you mess with those who could so easily destroy
your economy. They have absolute control over your money and its exchange rates. I am not saying
they would do so. They few interactions and stories I have been told about Goblins show them to
very exact in their dealings. While some, especially muggles, would see it as parsimonious, cheap or
weaselly; there are those who understand that any species under oppression, contract, or even heavy
restrictions would seek to minimize those flaws and amplify themselves. It is in a way, very
Slytherin. Which actually makes quite a bit of sense... you relate in a deep way to them. I bet you get
along a lot better with Dark Slytherins than those who were raised in another House here.”

The Goblin who was named Ebonsteel smiled, his sharp teeth glinting in the candlelight. “Very
perceptive, Dr. Granger. Indeed, we have noticed that ourselves. Therefore, I will not take your bet.
As for living under oppression and restriction, I believe you have been catching up on your reading.”

“Of course.” Ellen said softly. “Our daughter is part of this world and it is our duty to make sure she
knows her options, makes her informed choices, and knows that we support her. Now it turns out
that both Alan and I may have a stake directly in this world as well. It would be the height of
irresponsibility to not educate ourselves. But now that we know that, we are related to the Malfoys
on the distaff side, so let's see who Alan is related to.”

Ebonsteel nodded before pulling out a new sheet of parchment and a golden knife, “Indeed. Your
hand, Dr. Granger, please?”

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Carmus, the Malfoys, the Grangers and the Weasleys, as several of the teachers, stood on the
Hogwarts Platform helping the Muggles and Returnees onto the train, staying until the train was out
of sight. Dumbledore had not accompanied them. Several hours after the revelations of the day, the
visitors were on their way home. Dinner was soon and many of the students were in the Great Hall
when the leave-taking party returned and slipped inside. Mindhealers and counselors were drifting
through the room, stopping to talk to students. They had done their best with the parents and visitors
earlier that day but now with the students having had their families left, they worried if something
would be overlooked. Tristam had pride of place in one corner where he answered questions about
Necromancy under the watch of a disapproving Dumbledore. Professor McGonagall looked at
Dumbledore with great disappointment and her mouth hardened into a line. Catching the attention of
the other heads of house, she waited for them to join her before speaking to them quietly. This also
appeared to disturb Dumbledore. With deliberate step, the four heads of house stepped up on the
dais and set off sparks. The room quieted down.

McGonagall stepped forward. “Yesterday, something scary and wonderful happened. We learned
that... Voldemort still lives in some fashion. We also saw some incredible magick. We saw
Necromancy being performed to defend people, a side we don't often hear of. We saw teamwork
among our adult citizens who were willing and able to defend the students of this school. Those adults were once, like you, sorted into different houses. However, house didn't matter when it came to defending all of our students. Even our older students put house rivalry aside and we are so proud of them.

“Much has been revealed about our history, our blood. Much knowledge had been lost over the years which we are relearning. Prejudices are being examined and dismissed. Our youngest students are leading the way and we are so proud of you.

“Next weekend, we of the four houses will be holding lectures that we hope to continue through the year. The first of those will be about Magickal Creature Blood in our pasts. Magickal Creatures, in truth, should be described as those Magickal Beings who have no human physical appearance but in reality, is used for being not passing for human. For now we will call them Magickal Beings, which include humans.

“Many of our strongest witches and wizards have Magickal Beings in their ancestry. Most notably our own Master Filius Flitwick, most of you know that he is a Master of Charms. Do you also know that he is a Master Bladesmith? A Master Duelist? A Potions Master as well?”

Flitwick stepped forward, levitating a bit. “Thank you, Deputy Headmistress. Indeed I am, but I fear I would not qualify without some remedial training in Potions anymore. It has been a long time since I worked with them much. Most of you and other students notice my height, some of you joke about it. Would it surprise you to know that I am four hundred and twenty six years old. Yes, I know most wizards can live until they are two hundred and fifty but I am not completely human. I am half goblin and I am not ashamed of that, though many think I should be. I learned Potions many years ago as well as Bladework. However my family demands I keep up my Blade practice which I do during the summer as well as my Dueling. I travel around referring and doing exhibition shows since I have already achieved thirty Grand Master awards.

“So why am I telling you this? Because I tell you that you should not be ashamed of who you are nor who your ancestors were. If you are blessed to have Magickal Being blood, then that is a benefit to you. You will have talents others will not because of your ancestry. This is a good thing and hopefully, we can find some teachers to help you achieve your greatest potential.”

He lowered himself and stepped back. Professor Sprout stood up next. “It will be no surprise to you that I have both Dryad and Brownie blood? It explains not only my specialty with plants but also my nature to nest, that is to try to make things homey. I am proud of my blood. Yet in recent years, I have no mentioned it because I wanted all of you to feel that it was not necessary to have such blood to be a witch, that you were not deficient in not having it. Yet, by doing so, I have allowed those who do have Being blood think that it was abnormal. IT IS NOT! Every single person here has already earned their spot by being able to do magick. Your talent is magick. What other talents you have inherited whether family magicks or heritage or Being is exactly normal for you. I am proud of all of you.”

Madam Hooch walked out of the crowd and hopped up, landing like a bird. “I'm not a head of house but I do want to share with you. I recently found out that I have Horian and Undine blood. Hori ans are essentially Hawk People from Egypt. They are a proud race and often grew feathers. Like Animaguses, they were able to turn into different types of hawks and predatory birds. They hate to be bound to the earth. Undines are those who live in lakes and streams. Not mermaids, they look like women with long blue or green hair. They are playful and can be dangerous in an innocent way. They don't realize the harm they do at times. They hated to be caged and swim like we breathe.

“It actually makes sense to me about me. I love Quidditch, I fly and I swim. Both are natural to me.
In Quidditch, you fly and dip and soar. Just like you swim. The Horian is about three generations back while the Undine is seven. This is my history; this is who I am. I have never denied my desires and have striven to make the best use of them. Do no less and you will not dishonor yourselves.

The students stayed silent as the teachers left the dais. They seemed different. Or maybe they were looking at their teachers differently but the teachers themselves seemed to be more relaxed, more confident. Many of the pureblood students looked after them in envy. Though one day they too would be as stately. The Returnee students knew now why one should take pride in their blood. This weekend had been a revelation to them all.

Carmus leaned back against the cushions of Severus' couch. His eyes were closed and part of that cloak seemed to have taken up resident on the floor near him. Every so often it would creep up his legs like some small animal and rest on his lap. The first time it had, Severus glared at it until it slunk away. These next two attempts were caught by Severus; Severus the forestalled the fourth attempt, but by the time the fifth had approached, Carmus could no longer keep quiet about what was going on.

Leaning back so that he could look at Severus, he smiled softly. “Severus, you do realize that you are competing over me with a cloak? Yes, a cloak of power, but essentially a cloak.”

“Well no, it's not but it's not exactly sentient. It's his necromantic power allowed to roam free. I'm the only other necromancer here, so of course it wants to get close to me. This section most likely already finished it's assignment. It's a spiritual manifestation. Besides, you always win. You always will win. There is not one person nor being equal to you, so stop trying to beat up his cloak.”

Severus turned away just in time to see the boys leave their room in his chambers.

“Is Godfather still jealous of the cloak? Whoa, it grew!”

Carmus laughed. “No, it rejoined. Remember Tristam is my mentor. He taught me, he apprenticed me. His power recognizes my power and tries to protect me. Not from you, Severus but in general, so it's collecting at my feet. Your Godfather is trying to glare it into submission for daring to sit in my lap.”

Simon gave Severus such a look before shaking his head and walking over to the other couch.

Carmus snorted. “By the by, there are some interview questions for you to fill out as Harry. I would suggest you mention that your guardians only let you answer once a month and make mention of what happened yesterday. If you noticed, no owls came today. That is on purpose. Samhain is usually the night and the day but if they truly celebrated then they were in any shape to put a paper to bed. Tomorrow, expect the whirlwind. Your 'guardians' told you about what happened at Hogwarts or even better, you had come to Hogwarts in a guise since it was open to some of the public and you saw Voldemort himself. And you are so glad you already fulfilled the prophecy when he was vanquished him as a child. Also define 'vanquish' as defeated. You can spread it out all you want but hit those topics at least.
“If Dumbledore wants to claim you didn't, then he'll have to prove it and the best way to do that is let out the prophecy. After all, if it is prophecy, it must happen, yes? Otherwise it's false. If he refuses more people will turn from him. If it a true prophecy then we will find a way to 'vanquish' him. I already have a couple ideas under research but what will truly be applicable, I don't know.”

Simon nodded, reassured by his father's quick and precise discussion. “Alright, Draco read it over when I'm done?”

“I'll help you instead, after all 'Harry Potter' is being raised with a traditional Wizarding Family, he would learn most of this. “

Several loud knocks sounded from the door. Simon looked at Draco and they both hurried back into their rooms. A quick tattoo on the back of the door allowed them to see through it while it gave off the impression of a wall. This way they would have warning if someone came in. Severus stood up, while Carmus laid down on the couch, the piece of cloak flowing around the foot. Dumbledore would regret it if he stepped on it.

Again came the knocks. Severus wrenched open the door to see the Headmaster there, and he was furious. “What did you think you were doing?!”

“Headmaster?”

“Defending Necromancy, exposing children to that perversion. The castle will have to be cleansed! The idea that they used a child sacrifice to raise it! It is one of the Darkest Arts imaginable.”

“Except they didn't, Headmaster. The castle was raised without it, and the girl was not sacrificed for the castle, as she was already dying. She was sacrificed to keep an extremely powerful node of magick from going stagnant and foul. The castle was her reward for such a burden. If she is ever exorcised, then the node cannot be purified for at least another two millennia. So, then that node will poison the castle and Hogsmeade itself.

Severus frowned. “Tristam always said he had a special connection to this place but he never explained about her. He only said that the Servants were taking care of the castle and keeping the Magick from going wrong. It is regrettable but they sacrificed her for the Greater Good, something of which I'm sure you understand. However, at this moment, if you do not mind, McGill is sleeping on my couch. He is exhausted so I doubt you have woken him but I do not think we should continue this here. I have promised both Madam Pomfrey and Healer Malfoy that I would not leave him alone. I would not defy any Healer. They know way too many ways to take a person apart.”

Dumbledore who looked ready to yell again, deflated and moved towards the couch only to be confronted by a roiling cloud of dark grey fog. He recognized the Necromancer's cloak.

Severus sighed. “I can not figure out how it got in here but I can do nothing to stop it. It's protecting McGill. If you wish, you may try your strength at it.”

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Dumbledore looked at him, eyes flashing before they twinkled once more. “Oh, no need. I merely wanted to check up on him,” he smiled at the cloud but it would not let him pass. “I fear that it has been told to ward him from anyone, including myself. I did not handle myself well but we honestly tried to do what was right. To expose children to death magick... is unthinkable. Severus...”

“I would not even dare; how ever if you are concerned about consequences it is best to ask Tristam. They did have two very good points. One it was there for centuries and never harmed the students and two, if they do indeed anchor the wards, then it provided holes through which allowed unknown, unforeseen and unprepared for danger to enter. Anything that can help keep him out, is
worth it.”

“I see... then perhaps you can ask him where Slytherin's grave is?”

“Right next to the others, I would assume. It seems that his family has quite a bit of information on the Founders that we have forgotten. Perhaps we can have him stay until the next weekend so he can speak more about them. It fits nicely with Samhain and is mild enough to satisfy the children.”

“Yes, yes, that's quite a good idea. Well, I'll get going and let your friend rest. Until tomorrow, my boy.” Dumbledore left with a small smirk in his beard and eyes twinkling like stars. As soon as the door, close the children came out and lingered near Severus who guided them over to the couch. He put them on his left, so that Carmus could lay on his right. It was a tight fit but a wave of the wand made it work. As Carmus lay his head on Severus' lap, the cloak flowed over him. He looked at his fiancé and the children.

“One day I will kill him.”

Severus shushed him and stroked his hair until he fell asleep.

(Now is the time to read Servants of Magick)
Chapter Summary

Things happen. There are consequences but not all of them are bad.

Chapter Notes

I looked online to see what should be a good weight for a 11 year old child and was told about 90 lbs but in Britain apparently they use the term 'stone'. Quick conversion lbs for stone is 14 lbs per stone
That makes 93 pounds to be 6.6 stone, 98 lbs is 7 stone and 84 is 6.

CHAPTER 27: Fallout

Hogwarts Faculty Room
6:30 AM
Staff Meeting Room

The door opened and Tristam entered quietly. The teachers made a careful attempt to not turn to Tristam and to keep their attention off of him, as he moved towards Cuthbert Binns. Tristam smiled sadly. Since Samhain, all of the ghosts looked better and even more solid, including Professor Binns. Tristram stood behind Binns and raised one hand. He slowly pressed it against the silvery flesh and pushed forward. Binns froze, his eyes wide as he felt something happening. Tristam moved back and they stared at the ghost professor. Behind the thick glasses, his eyes seemed to come to life.

Tristam moved to stand next to the ghost. “Professor Binns, how do you feel?”

“Oh! Sorry, my boy, I didn’t see you there. I’m fine and you?”

“Better now that I can speak to you. They tell me that you are the History of Magick teacher and I wish to speak to you. Tell me, do you cover ghosts?”

“Sometimes.” Binns sat up, “Sit down, sit down. Now ghosts can be very valuable sources of history. They have lived through those times and can give a perspective of how they lived during that time. Ghosts who are more aware can actually compare their time with modern eras if they exist in a healthy environment.”

“Indeed. I have a ghost problem. My particular ghost does not ‘live’ in such a healthy environment. They don’t even know that they are dead. They died in their sleep and woke up as a ghost. And to my despair, they got stuck. They didn’t do well and they would repeat the same actions, over and
over again.”

“Oh dear. That’s awful. Poor spirit.”

“Yes, Professor; if you would tell me, do you know the date?”

“Oh, yes.” He pulled out a pocket watch, “It is seven forty two on the third of November in the year of 1953. Why?”

“Because it isn’t. Today is the second of November, your date is wrong.”

“Oh dear, I need to adjust it. This watch is supposed to need adjustment once a decade. How did it get so wrong?”

“Let me do that for you.” Tristam reached for the watch and carefully adjusted it. “There, that’s the right date.”

“Thank you, it is so hard with these glasses. He peered at the watch. “Oh dear, I don’t think you did it right. It now says November 2, 1991.”

“No, I did it right.” Tristam affirmed. “Professor, it is 1991. You died on April 8, 1933. Look around carefully. I know that Hogwarts rarely changes but you can trust me. I am Tristam, a second level Necromancer. I do not lie to the dead.”

“Oh.” He looked around. Truly Hogwarts very rarely changed but occasionally it did change. He looked about, some things were different. The room had changed since he had last truly looked at it. The radio was quite different, the lights were no longer simply torches but large globes hovering near the ceiling. A calendar on the far wall as saying November 1991. A chilling realization came over him, the ghost he had just pitied… the history he had missed while locked into a frightening cycle.

“And my students?”

Tristam smile dropped. “Ahhh… I’m sorry but for the past 60, well 58, years all you have taught was about the Goblin wars. Just that. Your classes are nothing but a time to play games or sleep for most of the students; to some, the smart ones, they do independent study. Most take their OWL’s but no further. Many who were excited about History lost that hunger. I am sorry.”

“No, no. It’s not you but me. I have outlasted my purpose.” Binns mourned.

“Yes… and no. Tonight, you will cross over. Our 6th and 7th year students are planning to use Guided Ghost Convergence Ritual from the 8th Lovat’s Spiritual Directory.”

“Ahhh, that is a good novice work. It has many useful rituals: to lay ghosts, to communicate with them, to calm poltergeists. True, Peeves isn’t that bad but several are. So, why do they need a Necromancer of the second level?”

“Well, my cousin who is of the tenth level was going to help them but there was an incident on the 31st. A Shade interrupted the night and they did not have the time to do the ritual. We actually got Camellia Binns to give permission to cross you over, but now that you are awake, may I have your permission?”

“Of course! It is only proper. I just wish I could give them one final useful lesson, but I will have no time. Alas, yet you still haven’t told me why they even needed a Necromancer. It is a simple ritual. Yet by allowing it, perhaps that can be my Final Lesson.” Binns said resigned.

Tristam nodded. “It is but it has been labeled as Dark.”
“Of course, it is! All permanent Magick is Dark! That’s the point! That was pointless.”

“True,” Tristam laughed. “But by being labeled Dark, they equated Dark with Evil and thus all Necromancy, even such things as simple as a prayer to speed a soul to cross over is not taught.”

“BALDERDASH! Who was the fool who decided that! Dark is not evil! I have never been ashamed of being Dark, it is why I could delve into History so much. It is why non-humans spoke with me! They view Light Magick users as not being respectful to Magick.

“Understand, they have an extremely close connection to Magick. They exist because of Magick, so they have a deep connection. Deep and Dark, it is a permanent connection that is vital to their very lives. Light Magick users skim the surface of Magick, using illusion and temporary Magicks. To them, that’s disrespectful of the fullness of Magick, it implies that the Light Magick user fears Magick. How then can they respect Magick?”

Minerva gasped. “I have never known that, and no student here has learned that. Master Binns, perhaps you can teach a Final Lesson. Tonight, after dinner, give a lesson. A final History Lesson. Tell them what discovering History taught you.”

Binns nodded. “Yes, that is a wonderful idea.”

Tristam smiled at the ghost’s energy. “Tell me, would it reassure you to know that the next teacher is also Dark? He’s a werewolf but very reliable. He has plans on how to handle the moon, he won’t even be on campus during those times. Yet he is already making plans to work with several other subjects a few times a month. Like Charms, so they can find out how they were developed and how they were first used and how they have changed over the years.”

“Good, that sounds interesting, I wish only that I could see the new lessons, perhaps I can but from the other side. It is time for me to go, without regrets. If you will excuse me, I’ll go now and plan out what I want to talk about.” Standing up, “Thank you for all your patience, my dear fellows and perhaps there is still hope yet.”

Saturday November 2, 1991
Ministry of Magick
Level 13
Wizengamot Meeting Chambers
8:00 AM

Minister Fudge entered into the normal meeting hall for the Wizengamot. Despite it not being as grandiose or impressive as the courtroom, it was still a large room with various tables, desks and workstations. The separation was very obvious but that was normal. The only thing that was odd was the fact that the Chief Warlock wasn’t there. Madam Bones was and if he wasn’t mistaken, she had brought several Warders and a clerk.

As he entered and took a seat at the front of the room, he rapped the gavel a few times. “Thank you for coming to this emergency meeting. This meeting is not to decide an issue but to discuss an issue
that strikes to the very heart of our society. For this, the Chief Warlock will not be here. Especially since it concerns some errors made by him. When you accepted the summons, you accepted the secrecy contract inherent in it.” He looked at the room and all the magickal people within. “We are separated. We have different factions, we have different followings. Today… we don’t. Madame Bones.”

Amelia Bones stood up, her iron grey hair glinting in the room’s light. She let her eyes travel over the gathering for a few seconds. “Yesterday, I learned something new about Hogwarts. I know most of you attended Hogwarts. How many of you know the name of the castle?”

Murmurs grew and several stared at her in either pity or disapproval. Elphias Doge stood. “What incomprehensible babble is this?! Hogwarts Castle.”

Fudge leaned forward. “No.”

Several people looked at him now, eyes wide while others spoke loudly of the job finally getting to them.

Fudge once more leaned forward. “The School is Hogwarts, not the castle. We are the Wizengamot. If we were to move to another building, would we not still be the Wizengamot?”

That stalled some people. Bones smiled softly, “Indeed we would. That means the School is not the same as the Castle. Here with me is Clerk Legis. His job and his only job is to read the Charter that is the contract between the School and the Castle. The Government of the Wizarding World has little to do with Hogwarts School but to enforce the Charter as a neutral party. His job is to know the Charter back and forth and sideways. Would it surprise any of you that none of signatories of the Charter is the British Wizarding Government?”

Silence fell like a warm blanket.

“At your work stations are copies of the Charter and the interpretation of the Charter. The deal was between the McGillis family, now known as the McGill family and the Four Founders. The land including the Forest and everything in at least forty miles is theirs. The Castle is actually McGillishame. And Hogwarts has violated the Charter. Brutally, Viciously and Deliberately.

"Those abuses have picked and ripped at the wards. So much so, that the gaps in the wards allowed a possessed man to enter in them. They allowed him to bring in a drugged Upper Mountain Troll. They allowed the Shade of Voldemort to be among the children for months."

Many flinched at the name, some looked scared. Several were furious. One such, Lord Wiley stood up, his red hair and golden eyes appearing to burn. "Madam Bones, please be careful. The world sacrificed much to destroy that monster though none as much as that poor child."

"The Shade spoke, when the teacher turned to ash after having been used up by the possessing spirit. Voldemort is not dead, nor has he been. By some art, Dark or Light, he has preserved himself as a Shade and is roaming bodiless. The Necromancer who cast him out and banished him says that it will take him at least nine months before he can once again possess a body. This is something the DMLE will be investigating as soon as possible.

"Until then, we will be working with the McGills to redo the Hogwarts wards. Apparently Dippet and Dumbledore have violated the part of the Charter that concerns the burials of McGills. Their bones are being used to pin the wards safely to the very foundation of the Earth."

The warders behind her, waved for her attention. "Madam, you brought us here for opinions and
suggestions on how to help repair or redo wards? If I am following you right, the McGills have graveyards on their lands, the same lands that Hogwarts sits upon?"

"Yes."

"And the Headmaster and his predecessor moved bones out of the graveyard?"

"Yes."

"Did they seek any opinions?"

"They asked their DADA teacher and he said they reeked of Dark Magick. Therefore, Dumbledore apparently appealed to Dippet to remove them to 'protect the children'?"

"I see, one moment." He turned to the other two and spoke frantically for a while. "Madam, when you are planning to charge Dumbledore for Desecration and Accessory to Murder?"

The silence was total.

Bones gulped and her voice was harsh and soft in the quiet. "What?"

"By removing the bones, everyone who was a party would gather some of the curse. If so many bodies were removed to the point that it weakened the wards that much, then Dumbledore should be dead. Dippet likely stayed in his position, the wards of Hogwarts strengthening him, for five to ten years before he retired and he died four years later. I would bet everyone else who actively participated is dead or in great pain. It also explains the DADA curse. While Voldemort may have taken advantage of the 'death-anger', it would not have been there without Dumbledore’s, Dippet’s and the former DADA instructor’s interference. By 'thinking of the children',” he used air quotes, "he caused danger to them. The land is angry with him because those bones were obviously doing a very important job. Ella?"

Ella Rawhide stood up, a tall rangy woman, she set her jaw pugnaciously. "I bothered to set Hogwarts on a nodal map. Now for some reason, Hogwarts should be in the middle of a Nodal Sea. When several ley lines cross, they create a node. When the power from the Node sits, it rises up in a sea. Just like any lake, but the power in this case should not be a mere lake but an actual inland sea. Except it's not. It's a lake, a deep one. So, I thought, perhaps that's why Hogwarts is there to use that energy to provide the strength to the teachers to correct mistakes and so forth.

"But the students are no longer taught to utilize that power. So what's draining it? What if someone under a death curse had a huge wellspring of power to fend it off? To replenish what it drained? What if the reason Dumbledore stays Headmaster because as Headmaster, he is part of the wards and has the power to fight it because he can draw on that power.

"That doesn't explain where the power came from. So, I went back, far back to the most primitive maps. Some of which could barely even be called maps. There were two, one from approximately fifteen hundred years ago calling the area a most pestilent fen of the sickest and foulest still magick. A century or so odd years later, it was reported to be an area of stillness that seemed to lay in wait only to spring upon the weary traveler. The next report of the area mentions a town that decided to build there. From then on, the area's... behavior changed. It became less as if it was waiting to attack to the relaxed pace of peace on a quiet day. You mentioned that Lord McGill said that they were using the family dead to calm the node? That makes sense. Moving the bones would cause instability. Instead of pressing equally against 'rim' of power, it's lopsided. Power is running wild and that's dangerous. It creates dangerous places.
"Hogwarts has gotten more dangerous over the years. DADA is a joke. The school wards are a sieve. More than a hundred students have had close calls even if he tried to cover it up. There have been at least thirty deaths in the past forty years. While we can’t say that he committed the murders, their actions allowed these murderous opportunities. It all traces back to those three people. Two are dead, one still lives. His prejudice against Dark Magick, and we all know he does have it, has led to this insane and dangerous situation. So when are you charging him with accessory to murder?"

Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry
Dungeons
Severus Snape’s quarters
8:20 AM

The quiet scratch of quills was a relaxing sound to the room’s occupants. Lucius had left earlier to go to an emergency meeting of the Wizengamot. He had with him Carmus’ proxy, though strangely Dumbledore wasn’t called. Dumbledore had not come back down and most of the students would be relaxing for the next two days. In anticipation for the upcoming holiday last week, most if not all teachers refrained from handing out homework. Since this was to be the first Sabbat Hogwarts students had celebrated in years, the teachers were wondering what kind of reaction they would have.

The Healers and Mindhealers as well as several goblins chose to stay and talk to the children, as well as arranging study groups for those who would be getting new lessons. Narcissa sat on a couch, reading another book. Sitting up, she smiled.

“Douglas?”

Dudley, still with his ‘Douglas’ glamour, turned towards her, “Yes?”

“Come here for a second, I want to try something.”

Dudley walked over, finding all eyes on him. He stood before Lady Malfoy, who pointed her wand at him. His aura started to glow steadily; its dusky orange colored twisted with sick purple cords and vines. She stood up and placed the tip of her wand where the so-called inner eye would be and whispered a short incantation. A loud snap echoed through the chamber, a pained cry and some of those malevolent vines snapped.

Snape lunged forward and managed to keep Dudley from falling to the floor.

“What was that?”

Narcissa breathed out slowly. “That was the first step to terminating that tangle of evil. Lay him down, please, Severus.” Narcissa ran a quick diagnostic. Over the past couple months; it was obvious that the boy had lost fat though his weight hadn’t changed. He had gained muscle to replace the fat. It wasn’t much, but it was a start. Smiling, she looked up at the others gathered around him.

“Dear Carmus, you have him on a better food regimen, yes?”
“You can tell?”

“He’s gaining muscle, losing weight which makes this easier but he will be fine. I must now speak with Lord Wiley and Na-Lady Flanders.” She paused. “Also with Eiche. He is supposed to work on this for St. Mungos.”

Simon stared at his cousin on the couch. “Good. Thank you, Lady Malfoy. I’m… glad you can help him.” He moved back, holding Draco’s hand as they went back to writing.

Ministry of Magick
Level 13
Wizagamot Meeting Chambers
12:44 PM

Amelia rubbed her head. “The facts of the incident at Hogwarts at Samhain when added to all the recent information discovered by Dumbledore, only shows that much we have known is not the truth. I know many people here who just didn’t trust Dumbledore and many of you did trust him without reserve. Yet, this information only proves that we can not abrogate our duty because we like or admire someone. Sometimes we will have to disagree with someone despite the fact we might like them or agree with them on other things. And sometimes we will agree with someone we may dislike personally. The divide between the three parties has become almost toxic. You all know it. Much of it can be traced back to lies, misinformation, or just mistakes. It is time for us to sit down and talk, actually talk. Listen to each other, write notes and exchange them, be honest: if we do not, I am positive that we shall rip the British Wizarding World apart.”

The members of the Wizengamot stared at her in bleak acceptance.

“Thank you. Now, there is one more thing to inform you of. After the Sirius Black Debacle, which was a complete and unreserved debacle, the Department of Magickal Law Enforcement has been reviewing the trial transcripts for all supposed Death Eaters and arrested citizens during and for the year after the war. Yes, we are pretty sure many of them are criminals and deserve their sentences but due to the fact that someone was locked up, a Lord, for almost ten years means that soon others will claim the same. I have informed several of the solicitors who have contacted me that we are doing a review. The audit should be done within two months and then those trials should start around next February. Because we cannot, at this time, admit these sentences as valid, I have ordered restrictions on the Dementors presence around these inmates.

“I will require four persons of good standing and not directly involved from each party. Also, due to the intensely personal meanings of these trials, we have decided to bring in a cadre of French judges who are familiar with our laws to sit as the judges and the potential thirteenth vote. It is vital that we have not only the appearance, but the actuality of impartiality.”

Glances were traded back and forth. Lucius stood. “On behalf of Ovates, I, Lord Malfoy, accept this compromise and will submit our list to your department within a week.”

Lady Ailinn stood. “On the behalf of Scáileanna, I, Lady Ailinn, accept this compromise and will have our list of potential jurors to you within a week.”
Lord Wiley looked to the head of his party, an older woman who had often butted heads with Dumbledore, who was not the head although he did serve as party whip. She nodded to him. Lord Wiley stood. “On the behalf of Awen, I, Lord Wiley, accept this compromise and we shall have our list of potential jurors given to you within a week.”

Amelia nodded. “While we have much to do, I propose we recess until eight in the morning on Monday to give all of use some time to deal with the new information that we have learned. All those who agree, please light a green light.”

A sea of green orbs appeared.

“The motion is passed and thank you, all of you for coming to this workgroup. With skill and dedication, I know we can serve the people of Magickal Britain in the way they deserve. Until Monday, we are dismissed.” The gavel banged on the table and silently, for once, many of the people filed out. Some were appalled about what they found out, some excited but despite their party, they mixed as they left. Many would go to lunch together and that night, each political party would go over what they had learned and decide a new course for their platform.

Hogwarts Grounds
Shores of Black Lake
11:50 AM

Ron stared at the Black Lake and frowned. When that… thing, that shade appeared… he wasn’t very Gryffindor-ish, was he? He ran with everyone else. Of course, considering his whole family had been there, it’s not like he could have done anything. When Quirrell fell to the ground, he felt a big fist grab the back of his robe and pull him over the table. He could see Charlie and the look on his face. He’s never seen Charlie look that hard but then, at that moment, he did. Charlie dragged him over the table and shoved him into Percy’s arms. Who thought that Perfect Prefect Percy, who for the first time seemed to show himself to be somewhat lion-like? Percy pushed him into the twin’s arms who then pushed him behind them. Ginny was there and all he could do was hug her and move her back. He didn’t see much of what happened. Every time he tried to see what happened, someone pushed him back. It wasn’t just him; he could see other students who had been handled the same way. Pressed back against the wall, the older students around them and the parents surrounding them. It…

A hand dropped to his shoulder. “Ron. How are you?”

“Bill. Fine, it’s strange. The Shade… what is it?”

“Part of a soul. Voldemort’s soul. You only get a Shade when it’s part of a soul. Something has happened to him. Maybe when he attacked Harry Potter, some spell or defense caused him to be disembodied and all that’s left is part of his soul. Voldemort, he delved into some Dark Magicks. Soul Magicks. This may be what’s left of him.”

“How could he have done that to his soul?!”

“I don’t know but Dumbledore has ideas, but now knowing what we know about Dumbledore, and
what we keep learning, I have to wonder if he was led to it. In any case, we... the adults... will handle this. Your job, Ronnie, is to grow up and learn as much as you can in case we need your help, but for right now, this minute, you rely on us. Just like you did at the feast.”

Ron nodded. “Yeah…”

“Dreams?”

“No. I… I hid. I’m supposed to be a Gryffindor but I hid.”

Bill reached out to grab Ron’s shoulder and shook him. “That’s the right thing to do! You don’t fight. You are a student, a first year. You. Do. Not. Fight. If you see something, say something and then run to your room. You need to trust us. You can always call me and I’ll always listen to you. Besides, you protected Ginny. That’s how it should be. Do you realize that despite him being nineteen, I still threw Charlie behind me? I did! He’s almost six inches taller than me but he’s my younger brother. So I’ll fight to my death to protect him and he’ll fight to protect Perce who will fight to the end to protect the Twins who will fight to protect you and you will protect Ginny. That’s how it is. Being brave isn’t running into flames soaked in pitch! It’s figuring out a way out and getting the courage to do it despite the fear.

“Would it surprise you to know that we knew something like this might have happened? This was the first year that Harry Potter was supposed to come to school. Do you think Voldemort would pass by Hogwarts this year? Especially when Dumbledore is getting his ass kicked in the papers? We figured that he would try. The Alliance did and they went to HAARP, the Alumni and Relatives. They asked them to come despite the danger and with promises of protection. You didn’t know our plans but we had them. Trust us and learn. Okay?”

Ron nodded leaning to the side, Bill just hugged him and let him think.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

October 26, 1991
Meeting Hall
HAARP Meeting
7:15 AM

“I’m going to be truthful. The main Sabbats are powerful. There is the thought that the terrorist Voldemort is in some way still alive. Right now, one of ours has suborned most of his people. Those people joined Voldemort because he promised to help restore the respect for Wizarding Heritage. And in truth, when he started out, Voldemort did. Unfortunately, whatever he was doing caused mental instability and as leader of it, it fell as he did. A good and useful movement descended into terror. However, because they had given fealty to him, they were bound to obey him. Right now, there are teams of researchers working on how to terminate the fealty link to spare them from being forced back into the insanity.

“The reason I am talking about this is because Dumbledore’s troubles make him a target, especially on the Dark Holy Days. When you add into the common belief that Dumbledore does have Harry Potter and is only allowing these ‘rumors’ to deflect from the advanced training, he is giving the
boy… yes, those rumors are actually circulating. The idea that he would ever allow Potter to be out from under his sight which means he must be in the school, would mean that Voldemort or his more fanatical followers could attack Hogwarts on Samhain. Therefore, if you would rather not come, we understand.

“What I can say is that there will be fully trained Witches and Wizards from all three factions, as well as high ranking Ministry officials and Aurors, our version of police, there. There will be Goblins who have different Magick than our own. The Professors at the school, one of whom is so achieved at dueling that instead of being allowed to compete anymore, he is tasked with refereeing, and another person who will be exceptionally powerful at the time. I don’t want to mention who it is because they are our most surprising weapon. You will be protected. It may be scary but you will see the true strength of the Wizarding World if anything does happen. That I can promise you. So, if you are willing, then we will welcome you.” Amelia Bones sat down and waited for the discussion to start.

October 31, 1991
Hogwarts Guest Quarters
2:13 PM

Remus Lupin sat next to his soon to be Consort, Sirius Black. Everyone already called Remus Sirius’ consort, despite them not going through with the ceremony but that was just a ceremony. Important yes, but Remus’ nature would not allow anything but. Paddy was his mate and he would kill any who tried to take him away. He had denied his wolf before and lost his mate to Azkaban for ten years, his wolf would never allow that again. Remus had to admit that his wolf was smarter than he thought. He ran his hand through the black threads of his mate’s hair. It would be hard for him, to ask for help, to talk to someone that he was so violent to before. Yet, he could not do it for him. He waited for Sirius to make the move.

Sighing, Sirius turned to look at him and whined. Remus just stared at him and Sirius sighed. “It’s the right thing to do. It can’t make up for anything but it’s the right thing to do, isn’t it?”

Remus shrugged. “Only you can decide that.”

Sirius stuck his tongue out.

Remus laid his head against Sirius’ shoulder and remembered the pensive of the earlier conversation with Eos, Sirius’ mindhealer.

Sirius couldn't get comfortable in the chair, though he had always been so. Eos smiled distractedly at him. Finally, she leaned forward, her elbows on her knees and her face cradled in her hands.
"What's wrong?"

"Ummm, I... I need to talk about something. I need to talk about something with Remus, I did something to him and to someone else. My... Harry said that he was disappointed in me, that I was worse than the Dursley kid. And..." Sirius sighed, slumping, "he's right. But, I'm afraid. I mean, if I tell you about this, I could go back to Azkaban!"

"Hmmm, unless it about a future crime, I can't reveal it. If it's something you did in the past, well... the Wizengamot pardoned you from all crimes as a condition of your release due to the time you spent with the Dementors. That sentence you served. It was too long for anything but murder so everything else is paid for."

"Really?" Sirius looked up, through his long hair. "I- I- I didn't know that. It's not murder but it was close. I... I hurt someone because of my anger at my family and betrayed my mate. So, ummm, in my fifth year, I got angry with Snivell- Snape, it wasn't anything he did. I just hated him because my family would have loved him. Muggle raised but proud. He knew plenty of curses, hexes, and jinxes. Studious, Slytherin, Powerful! I hated him. It was worse because his best friend was a beautiful girl that my best friend wanted. So, ummm, in my fifth year, I got angry with Snivell- Snape, it wasn't anything he did. I just hated him because my family would have loved him. Muggle raised but proud. He knew plenty of curses, hexes, and jinxes. Studious, Slytherin, Powerful! I hated him. It was worse because his best friend was a beautiful girl that my best friend wanted. I hated him for no other reason except he was everything I wasn't. I didn't think I did, but I did believe in the whole purebloods are better. How could he be better than me, when I had lived in this world since I was born?

"We harassed him. We abused him and then one day, I let him overhear about our monthly meet up in the Shrieking Shack. I knew Remus was in there, transformed without Wolfsbane. I knew and I led him there. Remus almost killed him. James saved him and incurred a life debt from him. It only made Snape hate us more, James most of all. It didn't help that despite the fact that Snape could have been killed or cursed to be a werewolf, all I got was forty points removed and two weeks of detention. While he got told that Remus’ chance at education is more important that his life. That telling anyone would destroy Remus and basically forcing Snivell- Snape to swear not to tell.

"That's how little Dumbledore cares for the Slytherins. It's appalling when I look back as an adult. If it Reg who had almost been killed, I would have wanted the idiot who did it expelled. I didn't realize how awful they were treated because I wanted to be special. I was redeemed and thus better than all my Death Eater family. I was arrogant and encouraged to be. No wonder Slytherins think that Gryffindors are headstrong idiots who lack the simple power of thought.

"Eos, I deliberately tried to kill a fifteen-year-old boy. I was fifteen. No matter how badly I thought of my family. None of them attempted murder on a child. And... I was angry about it. I knew better. I knew what I had done was more evil than Dark and I hated him for it. I hated Snape because he was right to hate me. Eos, when I spoke to Remus, he said... it's not about the betrayal to him, although he was betrayed by me. It's the fact that I still hadn't admitted my guilt. Harry was angry at me. Because I was guilty of attempted murder. Even now, I said I was upset because of how Remus felt betrayed by me. Because it affects me.

"How do I get forgiven for that?"

Eos sighed, "You already were, at least by the Government. You served a sentence for the murder of your friends and thirteen muggles. You did not kill your friends and you didn’t kill any muggles. The punishment for those charges would bring you to 8 years in Azkaban. You served nine and half. As for your guilt, you need to apologize. You need to go Severus Snape and apologize. With sincerity, without guile and on his turf so he can do whatever he wants to you. I would suggest that you donate, anonymously to the Scholarship fund, not run by Hogwarts which is at the Headmaster's discretion but the one run by the purebloods, donate one-third of your recompense. You do not deserve it. Donate it, in Severus Snape's name."
Sirius nodded. "That... I can do."

"Good. Now, I have a pensive over there, let's look at the memory.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Sirius picked up the quill and started to write:

Lord Malfoy,

In order to right a long standing wrong, I must request your help. I do not know if you know of the history between Myself and Lord Prince as well as my Consort. What I did is unforgivable yet my honor demands recompense. To that I request your help with –

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ↂ

The Golden Dove
Second Floor, Room 3
Hogwarts Board of Governors’ Meeting
Emergency Session

3:27 PM

Andrea Pengel looked at the audience, some of which gave testimony and information to the board; Teachers, parents, students, and Prefects. Most of whom, he recognized. Carmus McGill, Lucius and Narcissa Malfoy and the male Dr. Granger. McGonagall, Snape, and Aurora. Among the students, were the McGill boy, the Malfoy boy, Zabini, Wiley’s youngest niece who was in 6th year, and one who was obviously a Weasley. It also seemed as they brought the entire crop of 7th year Prefects. Even the general public came to view the meeting and that was unusual for very few people actually cared, unless they had a student. Even Black and Black-Lupin were there.

The various perspectives had been interesting, as well as the testimony and the projected pensive memories of the troll hunt. Thrilling, yes; but not proper in a school. Those Governors who had not attended were upset by the dangers. Albus Dumbledore, who attended the meetings as part of the board, was pale with shock.

“I… I had no idea that… that… by Merlin!”

McGill, who was not part of the board but who was here as an expert in several things leaned forward from his position. “And the wards did not sound the ‘endangered students’ alarm?”

“No, if it had, do you think I would allow the feast?”
McGill frowned. “Honestly, Dumbledore, I don’t know what or how you think. After all, there is a Cerebus in the Third-Floor Corridor of the school. You can’t seal everything off from Eilimin. I don’t know what you are hiding in the school but you are doing something. My worry is that if it’s dangerous enough and you received enough alarms, especially with Eilimin asleep as she was, the wards would stop trying to warn you. If they think they are being ignored, they would feel that you didn’t care. I know that I speak as if the wards are sentient and in some ways, they are. They’ve absorbed so much magick, not just from the node but also from the bones that cleanse the node, the ongoing spell that is the filter on the node and the residual magick of those who live, work and love the castle and lands.

“Before the ritual, I had some time to check the third-floor corridor. Do you remember what you said during the welcome speech? ‘The third-floor corridor is out of bounds to everyone who does not wish to die a horrible death.’ These are children! That only makes it fascinating to them, especially since children believe they are immortal. Why would you tell them that? What else is down there and why?”

Minerva McGonagall froze and sighed. “Not much right now, Albus has us enchanting and growing magickal protections for something. I don’t know what. He won’t tell us.”

Pengel looked at the others. Sighing to herself, she knocked on the table. “Obviously something is not right and the Headmaster is at the center of all this. I would ask to vote him out but considering the state of the wards and that the Headmaster holds the wards, we should and must investigate this matter. To this end, three members of the Governors should at all times be in attendance at the school. I understand that there will be an Auror presence but they are not conversant with the school laws and bylaws. Not only that but considering the other testimony that we heard, there have been major infractions of the Charter. Those need to be addressed immediately.

“For now, Headmaster Dumbledore, you are on probation. We, not you or your staff, will disable these… obstacles. We may work with the Aurors but you will have no further input. You will answer, now before witnesses, why they were even necessary. This is a place of education, not…”

A house elf appeared suddenly, standing on the table. He turned towards McGill.

“Dayn.”

“It is readable. Over ninety percent, we can read it.” The elf’s eyes were wide and dilated. “Master, it has been invalidated. The future has changed.”

Carmus stood up and opened the book. As he flipped the pages, certain passages were still blurred. Things that must happen but most of the book was clear, which was proof enough. These things were changeable. The harm did not have to happen. Closing the book, he closed his eyes against the tears. “Thank you, Dayn. Thank you.”

“Yes, Master. Tonight, we have a feast!” The elf popped off.

Carmus looked at the people gathered. “Twenty years ago, a boy named Sean Alistair Hayes Daton met two young boys; me and Severus Snape. We were inseparable unless forced. Sean knew and told us that he would die before he was twenty. One of the few times he was wrong. He held on until he was almost twenty two. He was a seer. A haruspex as he liked to call himself. He refused to go to the Vale. He left me many prophecies, including some of Harry Potter.

“He warned and warned us that prophecies are only ‘potential’ futures. They aren’t written in stone. They are predictions but free will exist. If you choose one path, the prophecy comes true, if you choose another path then it can and will be invalidated. He wrote books, books of adventures… last
night, I thought ‘oh that’s what it is. No wonder he titled it that!’ Knowing what he was now to reveal would throw Dumbledore’s plans in chaos as well as protect the actual source of the information, "Dumbledore, what possessed you to keep Flamel’s philosopher’s stone in Hogwarts?!”

Between the gasps and sharp looks of the Board, Albus Dumbledore learned that he was not too old to squirm in fear of punishment.

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To Lord Carmus McGill:

A couple months ago, you asked me to view a medical record that was cleansed of the name. I have done so and I do believe that I can help this couple with a series of hybrid techniques. If they have no objection, I would also like to examine the woman, due to the research into the ‘Pure Blood’ lines. I am very aware of the degree of consanguinity factor and will take them in account. I would also, if they permit me to have blood samples under oath to destroy them as soon as possible. I am in Briswith, just outside of Carlisle at the University. It is small but it has a well renown lab.

I shall be here until the eleventh of this month. If there is a good time, please send by owl. The local floo is ‘Skeleton Arms’ pub.

Sincerely,

Dr. Phillip Scokey, MD

Director of Fertility Sciences

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The Golden Dove
Second Floor, Room 3
Hogwarts Board of Governors’ Meeting
Emergency Session

Dumbledore lowered his eyes. “I truly did not know that Quirrell had been possessed. I knew he had changed but I believed it was because he had seen something traumatic in Albania. He was always
very interested in Defense and was a good teacher. I believed that it would be an easy class for him to get back into his chosen field. I would not have exposed the children to such evil. Possession is a Dark magick that is dangerous.”

Pengel sighed. “Can you please answer the question, without editorializing on what you believe to be ‘good’ and ‘evil’?”

A tall wizard with grizzled hair smiled and looked at her. “And what would be a ‘good’ way to use possession?”

One of the younger governors sighed. “Maybe to allow a person to give testimony if they were beyond the veil. It has happened before but rarely. Sometimes it is welcomed. Yesterday, when the participants of the ritual asked their families to give them a sign or come back, do you think that wasn’t possession? There is no ‘smell’ or ‘feel’. The spirit uses the person’s own senses to give a message. That is why even though you may smell something, someone else won’t. This is detailed in the lesson of the Guided Ghost Convergence Ritual in the 8th volume of Lovat’s Spiritual Directory. It is a non-harmful possession and therefore even though it is Dark, it is not illegal. If the Ministry should try to make it so, there will be a consequence that I doubt anyone will like to see. Even ‘Light’ rituals use this particular aspect. Anything dealing with death is Dark as Death is the most permanent state we have in this realm. All die.”

The room was quiet. Dumbledore stared at the young man. Pengel nodded. “Please continue, Dumbledore.”

“Ahhh, yes. Well, I had no idea about dear Quirrell and it is actually very distressing. He was always a good young man. The idea that his soul was destroyed is distressing.”

“Possession doesn’t kill the soul.” The same young man piped up. “It basically forces the soul out and since Quirrell was in there with the soul of Voldemort, that means he was a parasite, not a possession.”

“Thank you, Octavio. So, he wasn’t possessed but had a destructive spiritual parasite on him. How was it that you were unaware of such, Headmaster?”

Dumbledore sighed, his blue eyes dimming. “I truly do not know; the wards never gave me any warning.”

“Is it possible that it stopped giving you warnings because you did nothing about the previous warnings it did give you?” Carmus asked softly. The man was wrong and he detested him, especially because of his son, yet there was no real direct proof that he did anything because he took pleasure in pain. Besides the other children weren’t as important to him as Harry Potter, so he should have listened to the wards then. “What about the magick in the halls? I know much of it is small magicks but there have been reports of dangerous magicks being traded. And sometimes, the small magicks may be their own core breaking through. Did you get those warnings?”

Severus and McGonagall sat upright.

Dumbledore paused and frowned. “I have received a few but they are usually when there magick that is very damaging being cast.”

McGonagall leaned forward. “Albus, are you saying that you did not receive the warning when Abigail Carruthers was hit with the tripping jinx?”

Dumbledore frowned. “I don’t remember that.”
Severus stood up. “You don’t remember when Niall Blaziri, a Gryffindor, cast a Tripping Jinx at Abigail Carruthers, a Slytherin, which resulted in her falling three flights and almost being paralyzed?! She was found by three Ravenclaws, who were luckily out of bed. I always suspected that you didn’t care about my House but this time, I know it.”

McGonagall put her hand on his arm, “Severus.” She turned to the Board. “I recommended expulsion. The Headmaster performed Priori Incantatem on the wand and saw nothing ‘serious’ and ruled it an accident. I then sent it to the board, and the recommendation came for him to be kept out of school and wandless for two years, which was approved. I always thought he looked at the details of the case but that he can’t remember it, makes me doubt that.” She turned to Dumbledore, “You are the Headmaster of the School. The entire School, not all but Slytherin. I have heard Severus’ complaints before, but this time, this time, I understand.

“As the current Deputy Headmistress, I will be the one to assess punishments and decide if they are fair. I do not know if you are just getting old and your mind is going or if you are actually making a concerted effort to divide the school, as well as demonize one quarter of the school or punish them for Voldemort! In any case, since you can not be impartial, I shall!”

Carmus nodded. “Thank you, Madam. I, too, can’t tell what is damage to his mind and what is deliberate planning. As a Servant of Magick, I have the duty to not judge without evidence. But that doesn’t mean we can’t collect it. If the Board pleases, can we order the Headmaster to have a full mental and physical checkup?”

One of the older men of the Board nodded, “Aye. I, Robertus Callum agree. Any seconds?”

The hands of all the Board was raised.

“Then, by unanimous consent, he shall have a full assessment. Albus, please present yourself to St. Mungo by Yule.”

Carmus shook his head. “He can’t go there. Headmaster, are you aware of the fact that by moving the bones, being a party to it, that you were cursed. I have no doubt that everyone else who was party to it is dead. You should be dead but you aren’t and that’s because you are sitting as Headmaster, in charge of wards that are sitting on top of a very powerful node. Do you notice that the further you are away from the wards the worse you feel? You are siphoning power from the wards to keep yourself alive. This has the unfortunate added effect of tangling you in the wards.

“We can’t separate you from them yet. During the summer, when we fix the wards, we will be able to untangle you gently. However, the bones must be moved back and you must be party to it in order to cancel the curse.”

Murmurs started, several of the Board stared at the Headmaster with fury.

Albus paled. “No, I had no idea. I knew that as Headmaster, I would be in charge and hold the wards. That it could change me. But I would not take power from the wards!”

“Yet, you have. I have to believe it was unconscious. I have no evidence that you would harm all of the students in the school. Therefore, I can not condemn you for this. You neglect and manipulate Slytherins and do not say you don’t. If you dare, I will bring to mind April 14, 1975.”

Cassandra Wiley covered her eyes. “April 14, 1975?

Marius Zabini, uncle to Blaise Zabini, who held the finance position on the board, frowned. “Can we have an explanation?”
Albus paled then turned up the twinkle. "I'm afraid that I have nothing to say about the day." He turned towards Severus who stood rigid.

A harsh bark of laughter came from the back. "You say that because you bound Snape to say nothing," Sirius Black stepped forward. "I've been advised by my therapist and my lawyer that what I am about to admit to you, was pardoned by the Ministry when I was released. The almost ten years in there is more than any crime I could admit to. And Remus knows what I’m about to say, old man. He is really against keeping this secret."

He turned to the Board. "When Remus was five, he was attacked by Greyback in retaliation for his father’s role in the passing of intolerant and abusive laws against werewolves. And they were horrid, believe me. Greyback thought if John Lupin had a werewolf son, he would be a bit more thoughtful. He wasn’t.

"Remus attended Hogwarts by the grace of Dumbledore after spending many years fighting his inner wolf. The rule was that during the three days of the full moon, he was locked into the Shrieking Shack, which is why people think it was haunted. It was horrible, the damage from fighting his wolf did to him. When we were fifteen and sixteen, James, Peter and I became an Animaguses. I am a Grim. James Potter was a Stag and Peter Pettigrew was a Rat. We kept Remus company during those nights. The wolf wouldn’t attack us; it saw us as its pack. He saw Harry as his cub.

"Since the train ride in first year, Potter and I bullied Severus Snape. Remus didn’t participate much but he also didn’t stop us. He’s not an Alpha wolf or rather he wasn’t then. Pettigrew did it because he wanted to fit in. That’s not to say Snape didn’t give as good as he got. But he was our favorite victim and we never got punished harshly for it. Usually deduction of minor points and a couple of detentions. James hated that Lily was friends with Snape and one day we went too far and Severus snapped at Lily. He tried to apologize but we didn’t give her the messages, we wanted to keep them apart. It was wrong and cruel of us to take away his best friend. I wish I could say, ‘we were children’ but we weren’t. At that age, we were young adults. We knew better. We were cruel and we were that way because people found it funny since Snape wasn’t popular. Teachers never really punished us. But when I was in my fifth year, I tried to kill him."

The room which had been quiet, burst into discussion. Black closed his eyes and took a deep breath. He raised his voice. "I did worse than just try to kill him. I knew he was listening to our conversation. He knew we snuck off every full moon. He was determined to catch us and I knew he was listening. I told him how to get into the Shrieking Shack while Remus was in there transformed.

"He was attacked and was almost bitten. James saved him and held the life-debt over his head. He rubbed it in. Told him that he didn’t need to save him but now he had something over Severus and yes, we were that cruel. Remus was infuriated that I had used him to try to commit murder. James was fine for a while but then he got upset. He told me that we had to grow up and the idea that I was almost a murderer scared him. He wondered if I had succumbed to Black Madness, but I didn’t.

"I just hated him for existing. If he had been my parents’ son, they would have loved him. They would have adopted him in a second. He knew curses and hexes. He was cunning. He could learn to be an heir so easily and that just made me hate him even more. The fact that he was friendly to Regulus infuriated me. Reggie wouldn’t talk to me but he would to Snape.

"No matter what, doing what I did was wrong. More wrong than anything else in my life. The sentence for attempted murder is six to eight years in Azkaban. I was there for almost ten but I will never forgive myself for what I did. Worse, I will never forgive Dumbledore for what he did. I appreciated it at the time but I understand now that it was just one more cruelty towards Snape.

"Dumbledore made Severus take an oath to never speak of it. I was there. The rationale was if the
news got out, the Ministry would kill Remus. I don’t think he hated Remus, because Remus did nothing. After Dumbledore’s ‘punishment’ I can understand why he did. My punishment: 30 points and two weeks detention. James, for saving a fellow student, earned Gryffindor 60 points.” Sirius turned towards Severus. “For my crimes against you, I apologize and grant you one boon without limit from myself.”

Several people looked at Sirius with a bit of respect for not only telling about this but accepting responsibility and offering restitution. They did not look at Dumbledore in that way.

McGonagall stepped back, her voice a harsh betrayed whisper. “I don’t know you, I truly don’t know you. How could you do that to Severus? He had every right to get justice! How could you do that and then to bind him from speaking about it? I never knew you, did I? You will release him from that vow and you will never, ever be allowed to do such a thing again. There is no excuse, even if they allow you to stay, I will never allow you to abuse a child like that again!” She spun on her heel and walked over to Severus. “I am sorry, dear Severus.” She hugged him firmly and threw a castigating look at Sirius who stood still and closed his eyes.

When she released him, she turned back to the Board. “I can not deal with him right now. I am returning to Hogwarts. If… when, he returns, the Heads of house will be going over every judgment that he made and restitution will be made to those that he has unfairly judged.”

She spun on her heel and walked out the room. The sharp click of her heels, echoed longer than most would have thought.

Albus sat at the Board table and sighed. There was nothing he could say. He tried to remember the last time the wards had warned him. Then he thought about what McGill had said about the wards. Not that they had judged him for after all, they were just wards but that he was siphoning power of them. If that was true, why wasn’t he stronger? Could the bones actually be cursed? Given the Dark Magick of the location, he should have thought about that. Yet, to stay at the school, the amount of power he could collect… yet it would demand sacrifice. And did he not know the power of sacrifice? The way sacrifice purifies all it touches? His mother’s book spoke of it, the power it contained, the notes she had written; all of which provided him with comfort and the sure knowledge in the righteousness of his path! Sometimes one must lose a battle to win. Finally, he sighed deeply, putting a shadow of regret and shame in his eyes.

“Severus, my boy. Truly I did not realize that it was happening. I never… I don’t know when this happened. I never, they are children. I did not know how you felt about that incident. I thought you were angry because you were scared. I… how did I misjudge you so poorly, my dear boy? Perhaps they are right, I wear too many hats. I fear… I fear that I am too stretched, too busy. Perhaps the wards felt they could not rely on me, that will have to change. I am Albus Percival Wulfric Brian Dumbledore and I have spent most of my adult life dedicated to Hogwarts. It is time to rededicate myself to her. The idea, the concept that Hogwarts believes that I do not care about the children is frightening to me. Therefore, I will have to give up both my Wizagamot and my ICW membership.

“There are no words for the depth of my sorrow, and of course, I will see to a full examination by a healer at Saint Mungo’s discretion.” Dumbledore seemed to deflate, “Mr. McGill, perhaps it is time for us to meet and discuss the changes in progress?”
Revelations

Chapter Summary

New information is found out. Some shocking and some expected. From now on, we'll be skipping some time. It won't be day by day..

redblooddeath: See, Evie came through!

CHAPTER 28: Revelations

November 3, 1991
Azkaban Prison
7:03 am

The heavy metal door groaned as it was opened. Two wizards stood at the doorway, one entering and the other staying out. After a second, yet another wizard entered. He was about five foot ten, with brown hair that had streaks of white despite his young face. His hair was pulled back into a queue. His robes were layered in blue and green and his light brown eyes looked weary. He stepped forward and sat gracefully at the table. He stared at the prisoner, thin and shrunken in Azkaban gray.

"So, I hear that you will be getting out soon. Apparently, the Alliance of Shadows has been behind the push that you and the others get actual trials. I do wonder why that is? Perhaps they need you to help that insane Lord of yours. After all, he did try to kill a child, to spill magickal blood. Even you didn't do that."

"No," his voice rasped, "I'd never kill a magickal child. We never even planned to. We are Purebloods, that is against everything we believe. The parents were targets, of course but never the Longbottom child!

"Then why are you here? You shouldn't be here. Azkaban is not a place for you and I... I have missed you but not so much that you should ever visit here."

"Do you? Do you miss me? I have longed, hungered, missed and cursed you. I..." He turned to face the wall. "I have never married. I couldn't. I was and still am betrothed to you."

The prisoner jerked in shock. "Why?! Your father would have broken the contract."

"I refused to let him. I cared for you at the time, I might have even loved you! Even though I was two years younger than you, you took the time out to take care of me, to help me with school, to court me with all the charm I could ever wish." He smiled sweetly at the memory, suddenly looking younger, "Why would I abandon you? When Father tried to break it, well... it can't be broken without the permission of both of us and he never came to see you. I tried but they wouldn't let me."

The prisoner reached forward, his hands almost touching his betrothed's. "Good. I would never want you to even get close to the Dementors. You should have married. You always wanted to marry, to
work, to have children."

"Oh, my... did you think of me before you did that foolish mission? Did I ever once cross your mind? What about after you were arrested, did my name even find a home in your soul? I refused to break our betrothal. Father screamed and yelled but eventually, he allowed it since I would not agree, after all you are still chaste. You have not violated our contract. There was nothing about Azkaban in it.

"When you first joined the Death Eaters, he wanted to break the betrothal. I refused. It was your politics and I can't tell you what to believe but I did hope you would think of our future before you did anything foolish. Even though my family has been traditionally Light and Father is. I was glad to declare myself to be Neutral and so I had hoped... hoped that you would not risk us. Our future! When you were arrested, I refused to abandon you. When you were locked up in Azkaban, I refused to abandon you. Father was sure that you would be dead in five years and he could bond me to a proper wizard. The son of one of his Light friends but it was too late for me. I... knew your strength, your passion; you wooed me too well. I was in love with you.

"He had hoped for your death. Every year, he had predicted your death. Yet every year, you continued to live. Father finally died two years ago, and I have the job that I never wanted. I am Head of the Family. Even if we married now, do you realize that I could never leave the Family in your hands as I wanted to? They would refuse, they would rebel, and my Family would fracture! I can't be a mouthpiece but I can't give you the Headship either? Perhaps if the trial goes well and you are shown not to be completely irredeemable, then in a decade or so but in the meantime, I'm stuck doing something I never prepared for.

"I wanted a home!" The wizard pushed back from the table and started to pace. "A home! I don't like politics, I hate the lies on their faces and in their eyes. Half the time, I can't trust anyone, and it makes my skin crawl. I despise being the family head and I truly believed you would let me have a home, a household, a job and children. Then you destroyed everything for an insane half-blood trying to kill a child! I'm tired and so tired."

The prisoner saw the tears forming in his beloved's eyes, amazingly the man who was still betrothed to him and reached for him, grabbing his wrist. The guard moved forward but the other wizard waved him back.

"Yes, I failed you. I knew exactly the kind of man you are and that you were never raised to take control of your Family. That was your father's fault. When your brother died, he should have reconsidered the path he had you on and I'm so sorry that I left you to that fate. I am so sorry, but you should have found someone else to take care of you. I am so sorry that you suffered so much." Blue eyes searched him slowly. "You sent the medicines, you kept us alive, you should have let us go because we... I hurt you so badly."

"You always do, remember? Even when you didn’t mean to! I always know where you are, what you feel. I know that one of your worst fears would be that you would never see me again. I knew you dreamt of nightmares where my dead body featured. I know that you love me as much as you love him. I..."

The hand tightened. "The white hair. You felt the dementors!" The guard jumped, eyes widening. "You felt them through me. You never let the link go. Why would you do that?! Why?"

"Because you love me... and you are in love with me. And I finally realized that I am in love with you."

He stood up, still holding his beloved's wrist and moved to kneel before him, his head pressed
against the back of the wizard's hand. "I am so sorry, so sorry. You should have gone to my father, you should have gone to him."

"Why? What could he do? Except attempt to remove the contract that I did not want to be removed. Now that I know they will not hide you from me again, I will go. On the day they release you, I will be here."

Blue eyes stared up at him while his wrist was released.

"Go to my father, he will help you. Please, go to him."

The wizard smiled sadly and left the room.

"I need to speak with Cadmus Lestrange. You can not deny me visitation with him. Get me Cadmus Lestrange!"

Amelia Bones' Office
Department of Magickal Law Enforcement
Ministry of Magic
London
9:45 AM

Amelia Bones sat in her office, hands covering her eyes. Already there were issues; Lord Ferris’ complaint of not being able to visit his betrothed was, handled: hopefully permanently. Now his betrothed demanded to be allowed visitation with his father; for what… she did not know but she was sure it involved their crime and likely something Dumbledore did or his. She could not forget that he had essentially stolen a child. Yet she must prepare to tackle the problem now set before her. She buffed her monocle. Few realized the protection hidden within it, including one for Legilimency, which Dumbledore reportedly used without discrimination. She called Dumbledore to her office and since he had yet to arrive, she thought back to the meeting that day. The words of the Warders chilled her:

"By removing the bones, everyone who was a party would gather some of the curse. If so, many bodies were removed to the point that it weakened the wards that much then Dumbledore should be dead. Dippet likely stayed in his position, the wards of Hogwarts strengthening him, for five to ten years before he retired, and he died four years later. I would bet everyone else who actively participated is dead or in great pain. It also explains the DADA curse. While Voldemort may have taken advantage of the 'death-anger', it would not have been there without Dumbledore’s, Dippet’s and the former DADA instructor’s interference. By 'thinking of the children', he caused danger to them."

Then the revelation at the board meeting. That Dumbledore was entangled in the wards and couldn’t leave them without dying almost immediately. Such things this supposed savior had done. Yet that was just the problem with idolizing someone. They are human and thus can make many mistakes. Unfortunately, his ‘glory’ blinded many to those mistakes. So many people, especially in the
Department of Magickal Law Enforcement, did not trust him. Their finely tuned instincts had caught a whiff of something. Not dark but evil.

She knew that Dumbledore was considering reforming his vigilante order, but she would put a stop to that. It is time.

The fireplace turned green and Dumbledore stepped out with bright purple robes with orange horses running about chasing what looked like green mushrooms. Shaking her head, she pointed to the seat available.

“Chief Warlock, I am here to inform you what decision we made during our closed session of the Wizagamot. Since it concerned you, we could not have you in attendance. The question was whether to charge you with accessory to murder. Your actions both with the removal of bones as well, as the lack of rituals to keep the castle awake which in turn allowed the wards to deteriorate thus opening Hogwarts to many dangers. Our decision is to suspend the charges pending investigation into new evidence. While it may be damning or exculpatory, it deserved to be examined fairly. As of right now, we agree with the Governor’s board. The fact that both these bodies come up with similar determination only proves how obvious your failings are. On one point, we do differ. That is what you will be doing after being untangled from the wards. The Wizengamot will require that you reside in St. Mungo’s under a Mind Healer’s care for a period of no less than two years. There you will seek treatment for your delusion.

“Also, under no circumstances shall the Order of the Phoenix reform unless it wishes to be declared an illegal group for that is exactly what a vigilante group is. It works outside the law and thus is illegal. Any Auror or Ministry official found to be part of your group as of this evening at 8 PM will be fired. You are no longer and never again will be any child’s magickal guardian. You will not use any seats to vote in the Wizengamot unless you can provide a written agreement that is willingly signed by that person and/or their magickal guardian.”

“I understand. Madam Bones, please understand that I had no idea this had been going on. I saw those seats as away to help protect the children. I thought that they could love him. I hoped they would raise him as part of the family, I underestimated her… despise of her sister. I believed that I could help this world welcome him. I thought that if the Muggle born were welcomed into our world then they would stay and help rejuvenate the failing of magickal blood.” He looked at her, weary eyes

Amelia Bones sighed. “That is not your job. You are entrusted with the care of our children and maybe not even then. Have you read the Charter? The Headmaster of the school has limited powers to punish or even interact with the students. Trust me, we have gone over the Charter with a precise eye. Not just me but also the Wizengamot, Fudge and Clerk Legis. That is not his legal name but the name of his post. His job is to read the Charter and interpret it for us. He is required to memorize it and translate it if need to. As such he must have a History OWL and NEWT of Outstanding as well foundation of study of the Founder’s era and language. His office is down to four older people. Because you allowed a ghost to teach out of some sentimental desire. That is not taking care of our children. Your job is to provide support, carry out the Council’s orders, manage the needs of the teachers. The only time you interact with the children is if there can be no consensus among the heads or if they believe that the incident is of such a serious nature that you may have to call the Aurors. You are the connection between the school and the public.

“Hogwarts is a private institution and due to its age, it is free of some restrictions that other schools have to obey. Dumbledore,” Bones sighed, “You can’t fight a war and protect the children from it. You are to provide a place of safety and learning. If only a fifth of what I have been given is true… it isn’t that you can’t but refused to do so.”
Dumbledore sighed, his eyes closing. “I can not express how sorry I am. I have written to the ICW and I have tendered my resignation as Chief Warlock to the leader of the Aven party. What else can I do?

“Well, you already know about the medical requirement….

Azkaban Prison
10:21 AM
Visiting Room

Azkaban was truly a depressing edifice. While it was designed to be effective in deterring the population from ending up there, even the sight of it had an effect on a person’s soul. Today, he braved it to see his son. For the first time in a decade, the knowledge of his sons’ imprisonment was to be reviewed and they would finally get the trials that the deserved. While they were undoubtedly guilty of some things, the lack of trial was an unforgivable and offensive. He smiled at the memory of Bagnold’s death. He didn’t know which Family did it but he was unapologetic when accused.

As the boat approached the dock, he stood carefully. No sooner than it touched shore, he stepped out to the three-man greeting patrol. They nodded because they knew exactly who he was and why he was there. The led him silently into the prison where he had to check in his wand. It was a frightening thing to be unarmed but the desk wizard showed him the oath all Azkaban guards had to swear to and it prevented harm to any person within the walls who did not violate the rules. So, he merely had to remember the rules he had been given when he made his request. An easy thing to do. Their steps echoed on the gray walls. They were not just drab, they suppressed magick as well by absorbing it slowly over the years. And his precious boys are in this miserable place.

His steps sounded muffled by the absorbing stone. Cadmus held the memory of his sons close to his heart to prevent the misery of this place from consuming him. They stopped before a door which they opened. Rabastan sat at the lone table in the room. His deep brown hair lay lank and stringy on his head. His eyes sunk deep into his skull. “Father.”

Cadmus moved quickly to his son’s side. A quick glance to the guards showed that they were not worried about his taking his son in a hug. “My son. My precious topaz. It has been so long.”

“Yes, I did not want you to see me as I am. Yet… there is a rumor spreading through the cells. Trials. Trials for all of us. I do not trust them, but I do you.” His voice cracked.

“Yes, my son. Sirius Black was innocent and now Madam Bones is calling for trials. I fear however… you were caught torturing the Longbottoms and trying to kill their son.” Cadmus choked out.

“We are true Purebloods. We only went after legit targets. Bella however has Fallen.”

Cadmus nodded. “I see.”

“Father, there are two things I must ask you to do. Two things that could save us. First, my fiancée, he… is still tied to me. He feels the Dementors through me. I told him to seek you, but he is so
stubborn. Beautiful, angry, sad and stubborn. Please seek him out since he is so foolish as to not pay attention."

Cadmus sighed. “I knew he looked too aged but he would greet me warmly but still stay distant. I am sure it is his family and not him that who desires it. Therefore, it is through his family I must work. That is not a favor, just a lovely duty. The other?”

“I need you to retrieve Eltanin Lestrange.”

Cadmus frowned. “Eltanin…?”

“Rudolphus’ son.”

Headmaster’s Office
Hogwarts’ School of Witchcraft and Wizardry
10:47 AM

Dumbledore flooed to his office after the discussion with Amelia. It was a surprise to him how much support he was in danger of losing and it wasn’t the Dark families who were pushing for the medical clearance. Even the Light families of his own party were doubting him. The implication that the wards were somewhat sentient… that was a revelation, but he could not doubt the Ministry Ward Masters. If they did have some form of sentence, it could be that was why they stopped warning him. It wasn’t something encoded in the wards but their… preference. Now that was not only interesting but problematic. Who knew if they had memory, what might they have seen and what could they tell the others. Could they ‘speak’ to Elimin? Worse, do they have memory? He knew that allowing the fools to celebrate the Sabbat would backfire on him. He couldn’t even fight the further celebrations because Quirrell, they had framed it as his mistake. His failure.

Noticing several letters on his desk, he looked through them. Moody, Doge, several other. All members of the Order who were part of the Ministry or Wizengamot. Now, he lost one of his main streams of information. DAMN! Not only that but now, even his rooms at Hogwarts were not safe, not so long as that… spirit was awake. And to top it all off, that stay at the Mungo’s they are trying to force him into. It is possible to see if he could find one who was still loyal. Yes, he needed to make plans. Most of this school year and the summer. This would mean a step back for him, for them. It was a blow that would take time to recover from. Hopefully they had enough time. Pulling a sheet of parchment and a quill from a desk drawer he paused before writing.

My dear one,

I fear that I have regrettable news. Hogwarts has awakened. There is a guiding spirit here.

There was a reason not to hold the old rites and the board was fooled into…
Simon rolled over on the bed to face up to the stone ceiling in their dorm. He decided to give Draco some of what he wanted as long as it didn’t make him too uncomfortable. So, Draco was sitting cross legged on his bed, allowing a small bit of his aura to flow to Simon. It was warm and felt… cozy. Simon hummed drowsily.

“Draco, I know they plan to start a Wizarding Culture class and believe me, we need it. Yet, I’ve noticed something else with purebloods, or rather purebloods who keep to the traditions. When you speak of accidental magick, it’s not the same as when muggle-Returnees do it. Usually it’s something aggressive when a Returnee causes accidental magick but all the pureblood or wizard raised tell funny stories. Color changing, floating, and so on.”

Draco frowned. “Magick scares Muggles. The first time they do it, it scares them, and it comes out forcefully. Then they convince themselves it wasn’t them only for it to break out again. With purebloods and those raised here, they see magick all the time, so they aren’t cared of it. Not only that but a child’s first magick is celebrated, the parents and family encourage it. Another reason they should be raised here rather than the muggle world.”

Simon sighed. “Of course, once they are scared, the guardians act differently and the child picks up on it and learns to be ashamed of their magick.”

“Not only that but in many cases the adults are obliviated which mean the next time it happens they get scared again and somewhere under the obliviation they remember the fear so that makes them more scared. It’s a cycle that usually end in fear and abuse. The excuse for the obliviation is that it protects the parents and the child, but it really doesn’t.”

“Then why is Dumbledore so in favor of it?”

“Because he wants it to fail. He wants Muggles to know about us. He believes that they won’t immediately restart the Burning Times.”

“But if they can abuse their own child for having magick, how can believe they won’t want to burn others for having it?”

Draco raised one eyebrow. “That’s exactly why most Purebloods think him a fool.”

“So how do we prevent something like that?”

“Meditation. Every pureblood family who holds to the traditions require their children to meditate at least fifteen minutes a day from the time they are five up until an hour by eleven. This meditation is the basis for Mind Magicks. Occlumency and Legilimency. The Arts of Organizing Your Mind and Entering Another’s Mind. It improves recall, balances your emotions and helps you control your magick easier. So, we start there. Already the people matched up with Sponsors are being taught this these practices, even the adults. It benefits everyone, not just the Magickal.”

“Soooooo… since there are plans to start meeting with Returnees at a younger age, perhaps we should have a Magickal primary for them, one of the first classes should be Meditation?”

“Definitely.
Remus Lupin’s Quarters
11:00 AM

Binns floated down the hall towards the room given to Remus Lupin. There was no way for him to knock. Frowning, he stared at the door. A cool breeze floated down the hall towards him. Tristam smiled as he moved down the hall. “I felt your need. How may I help you?”

“I wish to speak with Remus Lupin concerning my Final Lesson.”

Tristam nodded and knocked firmly.

A muffled voice announced Lupin’s arrival. His honey colored eyes widened at the sight of Binns not in the classroom. He opened the door to allow them into the room. “Professor Binns. Tristam. Can I help you?”

Tristam entered the room as if he was walking on ice.

“Mr. Lupin, is it true that you passed your History NEWT?” Binns asked softly.

“Yes, sir.”

“I see, so you did well despite me.” He held up one ghostly pale hand, saddened. “I have been made aware of the fact that I have failed my students. They see my class as a time to catch up on sleep. It is a mockery of everything that I ever wanted to be. Therefore, I shall be doing a Final Lesson, a true teaching and I was hoping to ask you for help. I wish to use magick to show certain things but as a ghost, I have no magick to use.”

Tristam smiled. “Let your student be in the audience. I can do any magick you need.”

Binns opened his mouth.

“You forget that I am over a thousand years old. I have had plenty of time to learn. Mr. Lupin was also your student and deserves to see your Final Lesson. I will also make sure that a Lessoning is made. It wasn’t really your fault, you know. The Magicks of the castle was failing. It was the lack of the Sabbat Celebrations. They are used to fuel much of the magick. With the weakening of the wards, it only accelerated the failure. Do not let this fact, make you accept blame that is not your own.”

Binns floated silently before turning back to Lupin. He turned towards the door and drifted through. “I have heard excellent things about the new curriculum and believe that I have several resources that you can use. I collected them on my journeys when I was younger and used them often in my classes before my death. I have no idea what Dumbledore was doing by allowing me to teach when it became obvious that I was stuck but he always was foolish, especially when it came to muggles. Always believing that they were the blameless for everything. Likely because of his blasted father and his muggle born mother didn’t help anything!”

Tristam looked at Remus as the werewolf perked up. “Really? I always thought Dumbledore was a
No, he’s a Half Blood. His father, Percival was a Pureblood. I went to school with him. I always found him to a reserved fellow but when he attacked those muggle boys for attacking his daughter, then you saw his fire. Apparently, Ariana was practicing the mild wandless that most magickal children in our world do but the foolish child was doing so in a mixed village. Mould-on-the-Would. I lived the next town over, so it was big news. Apparently, they wanted to see more magick. She refused, so they beat her. Held her down; punched and slapped her.

“Her mother and father heard her cries. He attacked them while Kendra took her home. Soon rumors started about loud noises and smoke. Most assumed that she lost control of her magick. It’s a shame, being afraid of your own magick. They were afraid she was going to become an Obscurus, not that they knew the term. Stupidly fearing St. Mungo’s finding out, she ran with all her children to Godric’s Hollow where she attempted to ape Pureblood manners, but it was obvious that she was no pureblood.

“That’s the problem with some of these Muggleborns. They enter this society and dismiss all that they don’t agree with. I know about the belief of lunacy among Muggles. They imprison some of them in horrible situations, but we are and have been more advanced. She could have been helped. Instead, nothing was heard of her until she died in 1899. I think part of the problem is that Kendra was raised as a Christian in England at that time. They had some strange ideas of what they considered to be madness. The society hid those who were thought to be insane; worse than that many sects hurt, hid, or thought that the affliction was a punishment from God. I know Albus did. He said as much at the funeral. It’s why Aberforth hit him.”

“It must have been horrible.” Tristam frowned. “But a Christian?”

“It was, ‘At least she no longer has to endure God’s punishment for her mistake.’”

Remus’ voice flattened as if you could see his wolf ears folded back. “What?”

“As I said, the Christians, whatever sect she was, had strange ideas. I know for a fact that she taught them her religion from the time they were old enough to attend.”

“I know Christians currently and they are much divorced from that.”

Tristam sighed. “I bet it was a more fundamentalist section. Early learning stays with us. I know many children were kicked out of their homes for being demons or Satan spawn since they had magick. Want to bet that is what happened to Kendra? So of course, she taught them to make sure that they knew the right path. Christianity as a whole, isn’t a bad religion, but some of those sects… they are scary.

“I think she feared magick, not just her own but magick in general. She assumed that since this world could be no better and must be worse than the Muggle one simply because we rely on magick. She likely was a good woman, but her fear led her to not only make the wrong choice but foolish ones.”

Binns nodded. “A trap too many muggle born magickal people fall into. It’s a shame that there are no longer the introductory classes. It’s not just Christianity that does such foolishness, but they are the largest presence in England and the United Kingdom over all. Ahhhh, here we go.” He stopped in from of the door. Tristam stepped forward and touched the door. It swung inward. The room was larger than the history classroom and lined to the roof on three walls with bookshelves, labeled and full to the edge with books. A stairway and walkway gave the appearance of three floors. A table sat in the center of the room with several metal plates. “There we go. I collected these on my journeys. They go all the way back to Atlantis. Some in other languages such as Avestan, Sanskrit, Old
Persian and even Malto. This could help you with your lessons, yes?"

Remus stood in shock and turned to Binns.

“You should be in the audience. He was your teacher as well.”

Remus looked up as Tristam spoke. “Hello. I don’t mind helping him. Professor Flitwick often mentioned his classes with affection. It would be good to see him enjoying himself.”

“Yes, but this is his Final Lesson. You should attend it. You were his student as well. Besides, I have a plan. Well, I and Elimin. You don’t really know the tradition of Final Lesson, probably because there has been no McGill or McGill trained teacher here in too long. Attend the Lesson, let me handle everything else.”

Remus smiled softly, “Thank you.”

“Good; now, shoo.”

Tristam leaned against the wall, this would be a lesson for the records!

Great Hall
1:00 PM

The students filed into the Great Hall, the seating once again was changed. Stone risers ran along the floor creating amphitheater seating. In the front where the main table usually sat was a stage, a podium and a honey colored crystal. Binns stood on the stage and watched as people entered. The teachers and some of the adults were down front. Once everyone was seated the lights dimmed and Binns stepped forward.

“I am Professor Cuthbert Elias Binns and this is my Final Lesson.

“History is not a set of dry facts or times, it is how we became and a signpost to where we are going. Many of you have heard this before but many have not, therefore let’s start at the beginning.

“In the beginning, there was nothing, no space and no time. Then something burst through in a flash of light. What it was, we don’t know but that light caused darkness. It split the nothing and thus difference occurred, it is then that time started.

“Billions of years and ages went by before our sun ignited, born from other suns who died in blazes, burnt out quickly from the original spark. In time, our own sun formed and then the planets with their airs and graces and slowly life. Life was born here and for a while there was unity but Life tends to bend towards one element or another. Birds to Air and Fish to Water but still there are Birds who
love the land and Fish who reach for the sky. These elements in addition to Fire, Spirit, Wind and Magick were the elements that inspired all things.

“Now Fish swim, that is their joy and so they are allied to the Water Element, that doesn’t mean there are no other elements they can take part of. Humans take part but they are mostly aligned towards Spirit. Yet we use Earth and Water to mix clay. Fire and Air to create ovens. Together we create something useful but also of our Spirit. Elements combine to form secondary Element. A phoenix is Magick but also Fire. A human is Spirit but can also be Art. This is life in all its forms.

“So, it is with life here. When life developed, when humanity developed, Magick developed as well. Magick has little to do with human themselves. However, life evolves to suit purposes so it’s not odd that there are lion shapes that are magickal and those who are not. So too, there are human shapes who are Magickal and those who are not. They are even close enough to breed and in some cases, did. The mixing of these elements did not always occur through relations, sometimes they came about via essences. When a being’s personal relationship with an element focuses down to a concentrate of themselves and emanates to another. In this manner, blends via magick began.

“As mixing of blood occurred, there came about several distinct separations into types and breeds. There are few half-breeds. Now it is rare but it was considered a blessing, as they were examples of magickally ordained birth. Several mixed with humans and by that humans came to partake in active Magick. It is from those whom we call creatures today that we have magick. They were the first teachers and the first leaders. To make sure it was handled correctly, they had strict rules…”

Amelia Bones’ Office
Department of Magickal Law Enforcement
Ministry of Magic
1:49 PM

Madam Bones stood as Lord Lestrange entered. His face was drawn and grey. He held a magnificently carved rosewood box in his hands. He bowed.

“Madam Bones, this should not take long but recently a crime was revealed to me and I must… it must be acted on. It may be the hardest thing I have to say but…”

12 Grimmauld Place
London
Formal Drawing Room
2:30 PM
“Welcome to this meeting of the Alliance of Shadows. I am Lucius Malfoy and many of you either attended or know what happened at the Samhain Celebration. I lead it with a simple remembrance ritual so as to be as peaceful as possible. Unfortunately, a troll was let into the castle. The wards were not triggered. The troll was disabled and once we realized it was a diversion, we went back to the Great Hall which was sealed to protect the students and others within. There the Defense Against Dark Arts teacher, Quirinus Quirrell, was recuperating.

“Simon McGill approached him and hugged him for protecting them. At that point, Quirrell’s flesh began to powder before his body collapsed entirely. A vapor rose, deepest black with red eyes. A Shade. Apparently, Quirrell had been playing host to the Dark Lord. Now shed of his shell, he his menacing aura permeated the entire Great Hall.

“Carmus McGill approached him and told the Shade that he would Outcast him. Apparently, the McGill is a Necromancer of the Tenth Degree, which is apparently a very low level. The Wraith attacked him and drew blood but the blood that was shed only increased the power he could call. He repeated one line three times while his power rose intoxicatingly. ‘In this hour, in my Place of Power; I command, I outcast, I banish you from this place. In this hour, in my Place of Power; I command, I outcast, I banish you from this place. In this hour, in my Place of Power; I command, I outcast, I banish you from this place.’ As the third recitation ended, a howl echoed through the room. The Shade stretched, its clawed hands trying to reach McGill but it was pulled backwards through a small upper window to disappear in the distance.

“As we have learned, while the school is Hogwarts, the castle belongs to the McGill family. This is why he was powerful enough to do so.

“The next day, he was weak but able to answer question and we met… and this I can speak of because it happened at Hogwarts. It was revealed that Hogwarts has a Guardian Spirit who was weakened due to the lack of Rites. She revealed something that answers many questions. The so-called curse on the Defense position and how it could have been applied, the dangerous situation at Hogwarts. Several of the foundational wards are missing. These wards were held by the bones of the McGill family buried there and some of those bones under Dumbledore’s direction were moved.

“A McGill family Necromancer was called to fix this problem and he is still working on it. My full memory of these events will be offered for viewing later. The most important parts are these:

- Voldemort has been Outcasted for at least six months,
- The Muggles were impressed and happy to see that we worked together so quickly to protect the children,
- Vital wards at the castle have been shredded and will need to be repaired, which is what the Necromancer is doing now,
- Those wards should have warned the Headmaster about many things in the school but he ignored them and as such, the wards no longer alert him;
- The removal of the bones placed on the removers, a death curse which because Dumbledore is headmaster, is feeding on the wards.”

A large stone pensieve drifted to the table, as Lucius Malfoy raised his wand to his temple. A long thick silver mist followed the wand from his temple to the pensieve and he sat down. Several people approached and touched the liquid.

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Two hours later, the last person had exited the pensieve. There had been no discussion of the events transpired at Hogwarts… McGillis Castle. They looked at each other, frowning.

“This… knowledge has been lost, erased from our history. Yet what can one expect when that history is not being taught? How could we allow him to have such control over what our children learn?!” Pythia Trelawny asked softly.

A muggle rapped on the table. “Look, I know that Hogwarts has a charter, has anyone actually READ it? There has to be something about what is to be taught. The Headmaster has discouraged rational and critical thinking and that has cost you and your children quite a bit. If nothing else, what about the Board of Governors or McGill, it’s his family that allows Hogwarts to exist there?

“I think you should look at school systems around the world and not just magickal ones. How many of the professors there have a Mastery? I know among teachers, they must recertify by taking classes to update their knowledge every five or so years. Your professors can do that during the Summer. What about publishing, our university professor does that. It shows they are keeping current on their knowledge. Just because they learned something forty years ago doesn’t mean it’s still true. New evidence and research may have come up.

“These are just a few ideas. How about three governors each spend time at different schools. You can do it in shifts. What about starting primary schools so that they all have a basic standard of education, at least at the minimum. Not just magickal classes. If I remember right, you don’t let them use magick until age 11, so why not start them on theory and history, science and maths, reading and writing? Magickal theory will help them understand their lesson. Maybe leave that for the upper years. Same with Muggle science. Both use method of rationality, experimentation, theory to understand the world. History would be upper years as well because it uses critical thinking skill they need to develop in the younger years. Yet, Maths, Reading and Writing can start in Reception. They can start with numbers and small books as well as markers; and as they level up, they will refine their skills which means they will come to Hogwarts knowing how to write with a quill, ready for Arithmomancy as well all the reading they will have to do.

“Now, not every child will be at the same level, but it gives them a basic foundation.” Cereus shrugged. “Not everything Muggle is useless.”

Trelawny nodded. “Indeed. Very well, let’s start there. Starting in January, the board will elect three members to go spend at least two week observing other school systems, both Muggle and Magickal. Is this something you can put forward, Lord Malfoy?”

“Yes, and I will. I also have accepted the Sponsoring of a First Generation Returnee. I will ask her parents about her previous schooling.” He bowed and sat.

Lord Wiley addressed the table, “And what is happening with Dumbledore and the bones?”

Lord Malfoy looked at them. “As I mentioned a McGill family Necromancer is investigating. He will likely move the bones back and reinter them with appropriate ceremony. It is interesting to note that without his cloak, he does not have that intimidating aura. He looks like a young man of early to mid-twenties. He is cheerful and caring towards Lord McGill. And,” he paused for a moment, “the brother of the Hogwarts spirit. He is apparently one of the highest ranked Necromancers. His cloak which is called ‘Belovéd’ is somewhat sentient and can move apart from him. Last time that I saw it, it was examining the wards and foundation. He has also agreed to help the older students move on Binns finally.
“While the experience has been rather… alarming, most of the parents were happily asking to come back again. There will an investigation into this matter. The DMLE is not happy about this and the reason for why this is happening.

“Also, be aware that there are other investigations ongoing, including those who are imprisoned during the last war. Doubt has been cast by Dumbledore’s actions. Much he said and did during his time there is also being questioned. Sirius Black,” he nodded to the man, “did not get a trial despite Dumbledore being able to grant him one, so now there are questions that others also did not have trials or proper trials.

“Lady Longbottom, I do apologize for raising such person information but the Lestranges are also included in that. There has been doubt, some doubt, raised by Lord Cadmus Lestrange and Lord Heryr Ferris about testimony that either did not make the record or was withheld. Lord McGill brought up the timeline of events with Madam Bones. Many of this alliance once hearing of this, pushed for this course of action. There is more, perhaps you can meet with Lord Lestrange, Lord Ferris and Madam Bones tomorrow. They have some new information for you.”

“You can meet them here, Lady Longbottom, if you wish.”

Augusta nodded. “A neutral place should do us well, eleven in the morning, Lord Black.”

Sirius nodded.

Lucius bowed. “Now to turn to lighter topics, the next holiday is Imbolc, which will be handled and planned by the students. The seventh years have been doing research in…”

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Hogwarts’ School of Witchcraft and Wizardry
Great Hall
Dinner

Severus was glowering at the growing mass of misty cloak as they sat at the head table. Carmus was still a bit pale and was eating dinner as if it were a mission. His face had the look as someone who had to complete a task.

Filius looked at the young lord and smiled. “Hogwarts doesn’t set too bad a board, does it?”

Carmus sat up a bit. “Of course not, but right now, my sense of taste is somewhat deadened which makes it hard to eat. Yet, I need energy which means I have to eat even I don’t want to.” He lips turned up slightly, “And it doesn’t help that Severus has one fearsome scowl going on tonight.”

Filius nodded, “Yes, he does. You wouldn’t happen to know why?”

Several of the other teachers were paying attention.

“Belovéd. It likes him.”

Flitwick looked curious for a moment before smiling. “The cloak. Does it truly have a will of its own or do it merely respond to how Tristam feels?”
“Both. It is a manifestation of his power, like a building that soaks up magick, it has a will of a sort but since it is his power and it came from him, his actions and beliefs can influence it. Right now, it is crawling and covering him when it’s not drawn to me. Would you like me to call it, Severus?”

Snape glared and continued to eat.

Hogwarts’ Ritual Room
Seventh Floor
11:05 PM

Binns stood in a large room, a circle with arcane symbols was on the floor. The sixth and seventh years stood quietly and beside him in the circle was his sister. Dear Camellia. He could remember her so young but she wasn’t this time. She was old. “Are you ready, dear heart?”

“I have been so for years. I only awaited you. Tristam?”

He stepped forward. “Yes?”

“Thank you.”

Binns nodded. “Indeed, thank you. You have been kind during all this.”

“That’s my purpose, to be kind. Laying a spirit to rest, allowing it to move on… should always be given with kindness and love. Peace most of all. This is a blessing. While necromancy concerns itself with other things, this too is good.”

Binns looked at him. “What other things? Sorry, it doesn’t matter now.”

“Other things such as healing; people, plants, animals and the world. What is dirt made of?”

One young woman gasped. “Dead animals and people and plants. They decompose and becomes dirt or they are eaten and the waste products from those who consume it become dirt.”

“Yes, a true Necromancer can make the Earth ring! While the name Necromancer means knowledge of the dead, it is actually a mistranslated concept. It is more that we hold the knowledge of death, which is also the knowledge of life. If you know how something can die, you can make it live. It is not just physical death, death too is mistranslated. If you study the Tarot, you know that the Death card doesn’t mean that, it means transformation. The word ‘death’ in the context mean change, conversion, evolution and process. That is what our knowledge is of. We change states of things, we can speed up processes, we can slow them down. We can see what things and people will become and if necessary change that but we also learn what must never be changed. Does that answer your Final Question?”

“Yes, thank you. We’re ready.”

“Two boys on the east and south, two girls on the west and north, let’s start this!

Twenty minutes later, the ritual was finished. Binns no longer appeared in the circle and only
Camellia’s body was left. The shadow cloak that usually surrounded him now cradled her body three feet above the floor. With a twitch of his finger, Tristam was now wrapped in a black and silver cloak.

“Thank you for attending and I hope you have learned something. Right now, I have another duty. I must bring Ms. Camellia to Gringotts, as you are of age, you may attend to learn the proper respect and rituals for the dead. Most of the attendees agreed and were surprised when they too were garbed in simple black cloaks with silver trim. Slowly, they left, Tristam in the lead with the Ms. Binns body floating behind him. The students in a line three rows across behind him. Ghost appeared to line the sides of the corridors and as if summoned, the teachers and the remaining adults approached, bowing their heads.

Tristam stopped to touch a hand to Severus’ cheek. He nodded to Carmus. Both of whom stepped forward to stand on either side. Belovéd despite its burden let a tendril stroke them. The Malfoys stepped up, he bowed while Lady Malfoy curtseyed.

“May Magick grant her family peace.”

“Old words. Tradition. May Magick never leave you in distress, Lord and Lady. Lady Camellia now goes for her last crossing.”

Ahead of them, Flitwick and McGonagall stood, their wands raised and lit. Lights rose down the hall as the traditional words had been spoken and response given. Sprout stepped forward and laid two camellia blossoms on her chest. A deep purple of admiration and a pale pink of longing. Dumbledore stood at the end of the hallway, solitary as he bowed and with a wave of his wand, opened the doors of the castle. A shimmering light moved ahead of them, opening each door, allowing the procession to proceed. Once across the moat, Tristam stopped and before him, in the very air appeared a tunnel. At the end of which almost like a spyglass appeared the steps of Gringotts, large and slightly distorted. The cortege moved forward and disappeared

Hogwarts’ Grounds
Near Courtyard

Dumbledore stared after the funeral procession with Cuthbert’s sister’s body disappeared. He turned towards the teachers. “Minerva, I thought they were just to escort him to the portal?”

Flitwick shook his head. “No, they are an honor guard for dear Camellia. He offered to show them the Old Ways to honor the dead and care for them. Now, I doubt any of them will ever rank higher than a low 11th rank but that’s not the point. He wants them to know enough to lay ghosts, reasonably clear a residence or location, honor the dead and perform a funeral in the proper manner. Since she died without any of her family here, her body will be escorted to Gringotts, to confirm death as well as that her spirit is departed completely but also to find out what she decided as the disposition of her remains. Camellia followed the Old Ways, and this is how she would want it. I believe that this will be remarkably educational for our students. Not to mention, he only took those of age and they may leave with permission.”

“Which I gave, Dumbledore.” Minerva stood tall and proud as any Scottish mother. “Too long have we ignored our traditions. The rituals were conducted with respect and kindness. You could feel the
love in the room.” She smiled softly, her hard voice even softening. “She was ready and so was he. To have such peace at the end of life. Far too few of us who died during the war had it. Yet it is time for us to teach our students not just what magick can do but what it is. To greet Death with respect and love. To feel our magick under our skin and understand it with ease.

“I’ve forgotten how it felt. How rituals rejuvenated magick. He used no wand, no knife, no object. He asked if they were ready. He reached forward and bade them lay on the floor. For the first time since his death, she could feel her brother’s hand in hers. He took their free hand and between one breath and the next, Cuthbert disappeared, and Camellia stopped breathing. There was a light, two actually. They didn’t shine like the sun, they were softer. A sound of wings or bells and then nothing but peace. We didn’t want to disturb that peace but he stood and his voice when he spoke did not shatter the peace but enriched it. He declared the ritual at an end but not the peace. He opened the circle and commanded all four doors be opened for nothing to linger but to allow the peace to be felt by all.

“I do not know if you felt it, but you are often behind strong wards. It was Dark yes; most Necromantic rituals are but it wasn’t evil. No… it was loving. During the war, we chose expediency, we felt we could not spare the time. Truly, that was a loss.”

She turned and walked back to the school, most of the others following.

Diagon Alley
11:44 PM

As they walked down Diagon Alley; there were whispers, stares, and gasps. He could hear one mention the words Necromancer and Shade. Another spoke of how Dark and Evil a necromancer was only for another to inform them in a brusque manner how wrong the first one was. They did not pause, their steps echoed despite the soft footfalls. The elders and those raised with knowledge of tradition moved out the way, heads bowed, and hands placed on their chest at the proper angle. The hands created a triangle pointed up.

A woman stepped forward. She was dressed in shiny red blouse with a purple trim, blond and with oval lensed eyeglasses. She held a lime green quill and stepped into the street. As she approached, the entire cortege stared at her from under their hoods.

Rita Skeeter looked at the line of cloaked and hooded people. All except two wore black and silver hoods, on the right side of the leader was Professor Severus Snape, known and supposedly reformed Death Eater and the infamous Carmus McGill. He was never directly involved with anything, yet he seemed to know everything and have a hand in everything. Making suggestions, dispatching the members of his family to ‘handle’ matters. Everywhere she looked there were people watching or suggesting or just assisting and almost all of them led back to the McGill family. True, sometimes it
was obscured due to generations of breeding but eventually there was a McGill relative. In fact, it seems as a McGill married into each pureblood or established family at least once every five or six generations. Something was going on and she would find it out!

Tristam turned and looked at the crowd before flicking a finger towards some of those waiting. Carmus walked over, pitching his voice to be heard well. “This is new to you, isn’t it? Everything you hear about Necromancers and how they abuse corpses is going through your mind, right? Returnees?”

A woman nodded. “Yes, but all those articles and such we’ve read… even if it is strange to us, there is something we don’t understand.”

“Yes, do you see the gesture they are making? Hands with palms against their chest, thumbs pointed up, pinkies touching and making a right angle like peak? That is a gesture of respect. Are you familiar with a pentacle? The upright point is representative of spirit. Starting under the left hand, you have the points of east of air, south of fire, west of water and north of earth. You can read each point as either coming down from the point, being receptive, to the center hexagon. The hexagon is a cauldron, it is the lip of a cauldron in which all the elements combine. Sometimes you mix the elements and send it to spirit, sometimes you are asking spirit to come, mix, and send it to an element. So, by doing the gesture, they are both wishing her soul to join with spirit as well as asking the peace of the Spirit to be welcome about them.

“So, when you make the gesture, you do as they do in the Muggle culture; bow your head and meditate for or pray for or merely respect the soul of the one who has died. This is something many magickal folk learn as a child. Hopefully, you will avail yourself of some of the new wizarding culture classes. It will help clear up some confusion for you. Blessed be.”

Tristam watched as the woman stepped back slowly. It wasn’t a retreat of fear. That glare had nothing of fear in it. It was solely strategic. She was someone to watch. Turning from her, they walked in procession up the marble stairs of Gringotts. Two warriors stood outside, their gleaming spears flickering in the torchlight.

“Ser Goblin, Ser Goblin, how may I address you?”

The left-hand Goblin spoke. “I am Hangspear, my fellow is Longspike.”

Ser Hangspear, Ser Longspike. I am Tristam, second level Necromancer and I bring to you the vessel once known as Mistress Camellia Aurora Binns. She passed on this night with her brother, Cuthbert Adonis Binns. I have come to find out the disposition of the vessel as well as any attendant duties thereof.”

They bowed and Longspike spoke into a spot on the wall before he and his partner flung open the doors. They bowed.
Tristam led the way into the bank where several Goblins stood on either side of a path that led to one office. A well-dressed Goblin stood outside the office. “I am Poleax, and I greet you, Necromancer. We have prepared a Place of Rest for the vessel.”

“Is it a place where none may disturb her vessel? May it be sealed and protected?”

“Yes, Necromancer. It is secure, there you may place her vessel until such a time as you pick up the duty once again. It shall be guarded by five warriors who know the rites. None shall lay finger nor magick upon her vessel.”

“Then I accept and gratefully.” Tristam bowed solemnly. As soon as he did, he stood up and relaxed. The change in his demeanor was quick. He gestured to the goblin and they walked quietly and calmly down to a cavern. The group of students waited as the body settled and then left. The requested guards waiting outside. Tristam turned to them.

“As a necromancer, I show reverence for the dead. Since I do not know what rituals she wanted, I showed the utmost reverence. While you can show too little, rarely can you show to much. The words I spoke were ritual and Quickstrike responded properly. He is actually a Necromancer as well. Not second level but last I knew fifth?”

“Third.”

Tristam grinned and placed a hand on his shoulder. “Wonderful! So now she will lay there until her funeral, which I will also conduct. If you wish, you may return to Hogwarts. I will instead stay here for a while. Quick and I will talk.” He winked.

Quickstrike shook his head. “Do not imply something that you are not doing, you impertinent child.”

“Impertinent child?! I’m older than you by a good 450 years! Besides, who said I wouldn’t? We are necromancers. We care not for the outside but the soul. And you my friend have a very particular soul. If you refuse, then let it be so but that is up to you. I… however do not do shame. It’s hard to feel any after a thousand plus years.”

Carmus rolled his eyes. “Stop shocking the children. We’ll go back to the school. We will apparate from the free zone. Come, let us leave Tristam to his… night.”

Carmus led them out of the back, chuckling.

Severus Snape’s Quarters  
Hogwarts’ School of Witchcraft and Wizardry  
1:25 AM

Severus checked the parchment that showed the location of all his students. All had returned from settling his students into their rooms; if they were not asleep, at least they were in the right place. Sighing, he stretched and headed for the shower.

Fifteen minutes later, warm and clean, he dried his hair. Carmus had already retreated to their bed…
well his but whatever bed they shared was theirs. Even their contract said so. A bolt of warmth filled him at the thought of Abraxas negotiating the contract on his behalf. The terms were generous and simple, with his best interest in mind. His contract to that man in their bed. A way to freedom with the man he loves.

“Are you going to watch me sleep all night?”

“No, just wondering what Abraxas saw in me. What you saw in me. I am so lucky that you fell in love with me.”

“I hate your father. I despise James Potter and Sirius Black. You did nothing, except be yourself. You are an admirable person and worthy of every bit of love that I can give you. If I did not then I would be ashamed. I love you because you are Severus Tobias Abraxas Malfy Prince Snape. Though I would dump your father’s names. I love you, now get over here and snug up.”

Severus nodded, slipping into bed and letting Carmus sprawl over him. Their breath slowed. Before he slipped into sleep, he had to know one thing. “Tristam isn’t really going to sleep with that goblin, is he?”

“He wouldn’t be the first. Where did you think Filius came from? You do know that he’s adopted?”

12 Grimmauld Place
November 4 1991
11:15 AM
Formal Sitting Room

Sirius Black looked at the people sitting in his newly redesigned sitting room. Cadmus Lestrange, Augusta Longbottom, Amelia Bones and of course his beloved Consort, Remus.

Madam Bones sat with a teacup in hand and looked at the group before lowering the cup to the small saucer. "Well we are all here, Black, perhaps we may start?"

"Yes, it’s about the Lestranges We all know they were Death Eaters but... the effect of a Dementors on someone who is innocent is very different from one who is guilty. The guilty scream their crimes. Rudolphus and Rabastan never mentioned Neville, nor Frank and Alice. Some people who are in that foul place might be innocent as I am as well. Most of us were thrown in during or right after the war when 'everybody knew' we were evil. I want them tried with Veritaserum. You can do that Madam Bones and I want you to ask specific question of the brothers Lestrange.”

Madam Bones looked at him with a considering gaze. “Very well, what questions in particular?”

“Why they joined Voldemort, details about the Longbottoms. Recently, after putting together some information, I realized that the Longbottoms would have been tortured after Voldemort’s death. After their mark faded. After they felt him pass on. The given reason was to kill the prophecy child but if Voldemort was already destroyed then it was obvious that Neville wasn’t the prophecy child, in which case… why torture them? It would only lead to their capture.
“Bellatrix is mad, but it is no secret that Rudolphus doesn’t love her and he would not have risked capture for no reason. He’d more likely abandon her than get caught, so why was he caught? Why did he stay?”

Madam Bones frowned, taking off her monocle to clean it for thinking time before replacing it. “I do not know. You are right. They are some of his most intelligent followers, known though not proved to be vicious. In fact, the only thing we have them on is torturing the Longbottoms. However, if we let them out, if for some reason they are freed they would get away with all their other crimes.

Sirius shook his head. “No, they didn’t. Trust me. Ten years isn’t getting away with anything.”

Madam Bones nodded. "Very well, I will inform you of when the trial is scheduled."

"Thank you."

Madam Bones looked at the various people at this meeting. “Why? You, Black, proclaimed all hatred of your family and their practices. Yet you sit here with a Dark Wizard and a Light Witch whose only bond is that one’s children is accused of torturing the others. So why?”

Augusta Longbottom sighed. “Because it is Just. For all the pontificating that Dumbledore and his cronies spout, they have been careless with their duties and traditions and I, myself, must hold to our traditions. My Frank and Alice were fighters, they chose to fight but my grandson was not. No true Pureblood would attack a child. No real Wizard would try to kill a child. Now, Lord Lestrange claims that his children were raised properly. So why are they accused of trying to murder my grandson? I need this answer. If they are not guilty of that, then they do not deserve Azkaban. Use of an unforgivable is not a life sentence and in certain situations may be retroactively approved. I will not get those answers without a trial. I can not seek them from a trial transcript because there is none. It is time that the Ministry returns to what it is supposed to be. A place to meet and listen. Let us listen to them. Not just hear, listen.”

Madam Bones nodded, standing, she bowed to the Matriarch. “Very well. We will get started. Lord Black, Lord Lestrange, Lady Longbottom, Consort Black-Lupin… I will see myself out. Good day.”

They waited until she left and the other three turned to the Lestrange Lord.

“Well, we have received the word of an honorable Witch that they will get a trial, perhaps now you can tell us more about this plan?” Augusta asked.

Cadmus smiled softly. “Yes, you will get your answers; I will provide Lord Black with a legitimate way for Bellatrix to be excised from the family and you both will receive this truth: I have a grandson as well and I just found out about him. His name is or rather was Eltanin (head of the dragon). And he was murdered in the name of Voldemort.”

Sirius stared at him.

Remus whimpered.

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