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**Little Dragon**

by [FCTSyndrome](http://archiveofourown.org/users/FCTSyndrome)

**Summary**

What if when Hagrid first took Harry to Diagon Alley he met someone who would change his life forever? Follow Harry as he learns about love, trust, friendship, and most importantly as he learns about himself. HP/CW Soul Bond Fic. Slash later on. Dumbles bashing. Past abuse. WIP. Open to suggestions. Enjoy!
The Soul Bond

Little Dragon

Authors Note: Hey you guys! So this is the first fanfiction I’ve posted on my new account. This is a Harry/Charlie story. I do plan on making some fanart of this for you guys but I would love it if you would make some too! The first few chapters are the lead up to first year, it may be a little slow but I hope to move things along quickly.

Now, I'm not too sure about certain aspects for this story as it's still a work in progress so leave a review and if I like it I may just include it! ;) Periodically I shall ask for your opinion on certain things so make sure to let me know!

Disclaimer: I am being held at wand point by the unspeakables because... For some reason, not by my own doing... They thought that I was trying to claim the marvelous world of Harry Potter so... Yeah, I don't own it, never did, and I would be in heaven if I did. Not to mention some things would be different... Anyways~! Enjoy! ^_^

Little Dragon Chapter 1: The Soul Bond

Harry could feel his heart beat speed up as they neared the towering snow white fortress that was Gringotts. Ever since he had first stepped foot in Diagon Alley, Harry had felt... Drawn to something. What it was he didn't know, all that he knew was that the longer he stood there the more he began to hurt. As though resisting the pull were causing him physical pain.

Finally drawing up to those large burnished bronze doors, Harry noticed two Goblins.

They were slightly shorter than he was and were wearing scarlet and gold uniforms. Their faces were clever and both had pointed beards and long hands and feet. All in all they were slightly intimidating.

As he and Hagrid reached the top of the steps the goblins bowed them through the doors, Harry pausing to bow back before scampering after Hagrid, completely missing the looks of shock on the goblins faces.

Hagrid paused before the next set of doors, silver this time, and motioned towards the engraving on the wall above them.

‘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.'

"Like I said, Yeh'd be mad ter try an' rob it," Hagrid said with a soft smile as he looked down at Harry.

The process of Harry awkwardly bowing to two more goblins was repeated before finally they reached the main hall of Gringotts.

Harry looked around in amazement at what seemed like hundreds of goblins sitting on high stools behind a long counter spanning most of the floor.

The goblins were scribbling in large ledgers, weighing coins in brass scales, looking through magnified eye glasses at precious stones and a million other tasks.

There were hundreds of doors spread throughout the hall with hundreds more goblins showing people through them.

Harry thought that he could feel spend all day just watching the scene before him and still find more surprises with each step that he took.

With a wry chuckle Hagrid put his large hand on Harry's back and gently guided him towards one of the tellers.

Harry's head continued to swivel as he took in the sights around him when his eyes were drawn to a patch of bright red hair.

"Charlie! Bill! Wa' are you doin' 'ere? I though' you were both workin'"? Hagrid called out and changed their direction to head towards two, rather handsome, men with flaming red hair.

Bill and Charlie looked up at the large groundskeeper with huge smiles on their faces before they noticed the small child that Hagrid was steering towards them.

The child looked to be around nine years of age and looked far too skinny to be healthy. All that could be seen of the child were his hair, too large glasses, and ten like clothes.

His hair was long and an inky black that shone blue where the lights touched it, his glasses were far too large for one with such a small face and seemed to consist of little more than its round wire rims and the duct tape that held them together.

His clothes were the worst of all, however. They looked as though twenty of the boy could fit in them with still room to spare. His shirt, which obviously used to be a short sleeved shirt at one point, hung down past his knees with only the tips of his fingers peeking out past the sleeves. Under the shirt a mound of pant legs peeked out, bunched up as though he had tried to cuff them only for that to prove useless, they themselves covering a pair of worn out shoes that kept folding under his feet as he walked.

The boy was walking slowly and carefully, as though he were aware of how truly fragile he looked and afraid that one wrong move would cause him to shatter.

It was a heartbreaking sight for the two brothers...

"Hello Hagrid," They called out together, they would get their answers soon enough.

"Charlie and I decided that we would surprise the family for the last few weeks of summer, I still
had a bit of paperwork to do but once it's filed we're off to the Burrow," Bill continued answering Hagrid's question as he gestured to the paperwork in his hands.

"Ah, tha's nice. I be' Molly'll love tha'!" Hagrid boomed in obvious pleasure at the plan as a large grin overtook his face.

"That's what we were hoping for at least!" Charlie said with a small laugh as he found his eyes yet again drawn to the small boy currently hiding behind Hagrid. Charlie didn't quite know why, he was just... He felt drawn to this child for some reason.

"Oh!" Hagrid said with a start as he turned to gently guide Harry out from behind himself, obviously having seen Charlies glance. "This is Harry, I'm takin' him to get his supplies fer school," Hagrid said proudly as he gently nudged Harry forward. "Harry these are Bill and Charlie Weasley, they're both good friends o' mine."

"It's nice to meet you," Harry said in a small gentle voice as he held out his arm so that the two brothers could now see a small dainty hand.

Bill was the first to respond as he gently took the offered hand into his own calloused grasp. His tanned skin and large palm dwarfing Harry's own, making it seem as though he were the most priceless treasure that Bill could have found. Being careful not to fracture this delicate creature Bill let go of the small hand and took a small step back to watch as his brother too took Harry's hand.

As Harry's skin softly brushed across Charlie's own before settling into a small pressure against his palm Charlie could feel his magic soar.

The moment their skin had touched Harry's face had shot up and his magnificent eyes locked with Charlie's own mesmerizing him in a way that no veela could have ever hoped to do.

Harry must have been the most beautiful person Charlie had ever seen.

He had large innocent emerald green eyes surrounded by a veritable forest of inky black lashes, his lips were a full plump pink and just begged to be kissed. His features were delicate and his complexion was a flawless creamy white that looked especially delectable with the pink flush that was slowly spreading across his cheeks.

Now with his head held up Charlie could see that his hair was adorably messy with the way that it stood up every which way and curled to frame his perfect face and his sleek pale neck as he looked up at him. Harry was short, probably no more than four foot tall and he was of course far too skinny.

Charlie wanted nothing more at that moment than to take the boy home to his mother so that she could mother and feed him.

For, as gorgeous as Harry was now, Charlie had no doubt that when he got some meat on his bones...

Well, that would be the day that Veela would weep.

Bill watched as Harry took his brothers hand with the same small and hesitant smile that he had given Bill only for it to disappear in a look of shock the moment their skin touched.

Bill watched in awe as their magic reacted, bubbling up until it finally burst out and wrapped around the two.
This was an amazingly rare occurrence! It hardly ever happened and it had certainly never happened with one so young! Usually the bond wouldn’t form until the younger of the two became 17, there were records of it happening at 15 before but certainly never to an 11 year old! And for it to happen with complete strangers... This bond must be extremely powerful.

From the corner of his eye Bill noticed a goblin approaching and, after a quick conversation, Bill called the others’ attention to him.

"Charlie, Harry, you two come with me. Hagrid I’m sorry but we need to borrow Harry for a bit. Something seems to be off with his accounts. How about you go on to the leaky and we'll meet you there for lunch?" Bill asked as he began to usher the other two toward the door the goblin was currently holding open, not really giving Hagrid a chance to reply.

"Ah, alrigh' I'll meet you at noon then?" Hagrid asked, confusion obvious in his voice but willing to trust the Gringotts employee.

"Um, excuse me sir?" Harry asked tentatively as he looked in confusion at the goblin.

"I know that this is confusing for you right now mister Potter, but worry not. All will be answered soon," the goblin said looking Harry straight in the eye.

Bill was shocked to his core. Harry Potter, THE Harry Potter, had just been bound to his brother and looked as though he had never had a decent meal in his life!

"You're Harry Potter!?" Charlie managed to choke out, his eyes bugging much like mine must have been as we stared at the small figure before us.

This couldn't possibly be true! They had all been told that Harry Potter, The-Boy-Who-Lived, had been taken in by his relatives where he was loved and happy and obviously they had been lied to!

"What's wrong?" Harry asked, eyes wide and questioning as he cocked his head to the side. "I'm just Harry. You're making it seem as though I'm special, but I'm not."

Before either of the two Weasleys could reply the goblin that was accompanying them responded instead.

"You are very special mister Potter, do not believe otherwise. We will explain more in depth momentarily, however, the Director wishes to speak to you now," With that said he gestured for them to follow him through yet another set of doors but Harry something that he wanted to know before they continued on.

"Sir, what is your name?" Harry asked with honest curiosity shining in his eyes.

After a brief look of shock that flashed across his face a warm smile, one far softer and more gentle than any Bill had ever seen, spread across his face.

"You honor me with your interest mister Potter," the goblin said as he bent at the waist in a bow, "My name is Griphook."

"The honor is all mine mister Griphook," Harry said with a bow of his own, "And please, my name is Harry, just Harry."

"Well Harry, I can see great things in your future. I hope that this will not be the last of our interactions."
"Me too, it's nice to have another friend," Harry said with a smile containing so much warmth that Griphook could feel his heart melt just that tiny bit more for this odd human.

Yes, this boy would surely continue on to accomplish great deeds. Griphook was sure of it.

"It is my pleasure to call you friend, young Harry. And may this friendship last," Griphook said before leading Harry toward the large doors that lead to the Director's personal office.

"This is the hallway that leads to the Director of the bank's personal office Harry," Griphook informed Harry as they made their way down the slightly imposing hallway. "The Director wants to speak with you about what just occurred on the main floor, what that involves, and he would also like to check into your accounts. Now, don't worry yourself, you are not in trouble. Far from it actually," Griphook explained as they drew to a stop before two imposing doors that towered over even Bill who was the tallest of their group.

Bill Weasley was feeling as though his whole world was being turned upside down and crashing down around his very feet. Everything he had been told since he was 11 was being disproven and torn to pieces right before his eyes.

Harry Potter, Boy-Who-Was-Obviously-NOT-Taken-Care-Of, had bonded to his brother, gotten a meeting with the Director of Gringotts himself, gotten a goblin to give a nice smile, and even became friends with said goblin!

How was this even possible!?

The massive doors, which had been slowly opening as they drew nearer, now stood as an imposing entryway before them. Bill nervously began to make himself as presentable as possible and noticed that Charlie was doing the same.

"Director Ragnok," Griphook said as he entered the large room and bowing deeply, "This is Harry Potter, Charlie Weasley and Bill Weasley."

"Thank you Griphook," The elderly goblin replied, his eyes passing over them before finally settling on Harry and becoming more gentle. "I must say mister Potter it is quite delightful to meet you."

"It is a pleasure to meet you as well mister Director Ragnok sir," Harry replied bowing to the aged goblin as Griphook had.

With a hearty laugh Ragnok stood and moved around the large desk to guide Harry towards one of three chairs positioned before it while motioning to a still stunned Bill and Charlie to follow. Once they reached the chairs Ragnok pulled Harry's out himself before speaking again.

"We've been waiting for far too long for you to arrive mister Potter. Unfortunately until now there have been wards in place that have hidden you, even from us. We have much that we have to discuss and achieve including informing you of what exactly occurred in the main atrium."

"W-why is it that you all seem to think that I'm so important?" Harry asked shyly as he ducked his head in an attempt to hide behind his fringe. "I'm just Harry."

"Mister Potter, you are a very special young man. Your story alone says this, not to mention your actions today," Ragnok said looking directly into Harry's eyes.

"My story?" Harry asked looking adorably confused what with how his head was cocked to the side and his eyebrows were scrunched together.
"Mister Potter, how were you told your parents died?" Ragnok asked carefully. Obviously something was wrong here and Ragnok had caught onto it.

"Well..." Harry began obviously confused on what that had to do with this. "My aunt always told me that they died in a car crash but when Hagrid showed up last night she said that they had gotten themselves blown up. But... I remember a bright green light and a really mean laugh," Harry said trailing off as the others in the room felt a shiver course down their spines. He could remember... Harry Potter could remember the night of his parents deaths.

"Harry," Ragnok began carefully as he reached over the desk and took one of Harry's hands in his own, "Your aunt lied to you... On both counts. Your parents were murdered by a man who called himself Lord Voldemort. They had been members of an organization that opposed him and his followers. They trusted the wrong man with their whereabouts and he betrayed them and they paid the price for that betrayal. You are the only one to survive an attack by him."

"Why did Voldemort attack them?"

"There was a prophecy, I do not know its contents, only that it resides inside the Ministry. Somehow, Voldemort was informed of this prophecy and went after you. Since that Halloween night our world has hailed you as a hero."

"N-no! I-I'm not a hero!" Harry said jerking back in his seat so violently Ragnok lost his grip on his small hand. "I'm Harry, just Harry! I'm nothing but a freak! I'm not a hero!"

"What do you mean you're a freak Harry?" Charlie asked leaning forward to take Harry's small face in his large hands and gently tilting it so that those beautiful eyes were looking into his own.

"That's what they call me at home... I used to think it was my name until just before I started primary school," Harry said with a sniffle, unable to lie when he was looking straight into those concerned blue eyes.

"Harry," Ragnok asked looking at Harry concern shining in his eyes, "Have your relatives ever hurt you? Kept something that you needed from you like food and water? Forced you to do something you were too young to do?"

Harry tried to look away, his face glowing red with shame. He remained silent, refusing to answer and trying his hardest not to meet Charlies concerned gaze.

He would not tell these people what his relatives had done to him, he wouldn't be able to stand if they rejected him too. Especially Charlie.

Harry didn't know why, all he knew was that he felt drawn to the red head and didn't want him to think that Harry was weak. As though he were reading Harry's mind Charlie spoke.

"Harry, no matter what you tell us we will not think that you're weak. If anything, you will be that much stronger in our eyes. You can tell us, and I swear to you that I will make it so that you never have to go there again. But first you need to tell us, we need to know."

Harry knew that he could trust Charlie, he could see it in his eyes but it was still hard. These people were strangers and it had been drilled into him to keep silent...

Taking a deep breath Harry nodded, a simple gesture, but one that sent waves of horror and dread washing through the other three men in the room.

"Mister Potter," Ragnok began gently, "Would you be adverse to a scan? It would tell us of all past
and present injuries as well as any potions and magic that is effecting you as well."

At Harry's small nod Ragnok gave a gentle smile and began to pull the required material out of his desk drawers as he explained the procedure to Harry.

"Each of these three bowls will be filled with a mixture of these potions and then they will be activated with three drops of blood in each bowl. If they glow gold that means that the test has come out as positive and I will put one of these quills into that bowl. The quill will absorb the potion and then write out what the potion has found. If the potion does not change then that means that you are unaffected with what that potion is screening for. If you do not like the idea of giving your blood to activate the potion then I will need to call a healer from St. Mungo's to perform a scan though those scans do not show everything."

"No, I'll do it," Harry said before Ragnok could continue again. Biting down on his bottom lip Harry placed his small hands onto the tabletop where the others finally noticed the small, almost invisible, scars and burn marks that littered his pale skin.

"Very well Harry," Ragnok said with a reassuring smile as he began to combine the potions in the three bowls. Once this was done he grasped one of Harry's small hands in his own and used a pointed dagger to create a small incision in his middle finger before allowing three drops of blood to fall into each of the bowls before healing the small cut and then they watched as the bowls began to glow before settling into three separate shades of gold.

Ragnok then proceeded to place the quills into the now golden mixture where they absorbed the potion and he placed them on three separate scrolls of parchment where the scratching of the quills became a constant sound in the background as Ragnok turned to face them again.

"Now while that is being recorded I believe it would be best to tell you what exactly happened today in the main atrium. Would that suit you?" He asked looking at Harry and Charlie.

"Yes sir," They both replied curiosity shining in their eyes.

"Very well, this morning on Gringotts main atrium floor, you both entered into what is known as a soul bond. This bond in and of itself is extremely rare, however, for it to have formed in one so young is extraordinary."

"Sir," Harry chimed in nervously, "What exactly is a soul bond? Is it bad?"

"No," Charlie said automatically looking back into Harry's mesmerizing eyes. "It just means that we were made for each other... That we were, to put it simply, meant to be. It's the strongest bond that two people can hold and for it to have formed with us only shaking hands is extraordinary," There was such honesty and pure hearted passion in his voice that Harry could do little more than nod in response.

"Now, mister Weasley," Ragnok continued as he pulled out a small stack of parchment from his desk drawer and set them in front of Charlie. "The only legal options that we have in regards to mister Potter would at the moment either be to send him back to his relatives until the first of September, which we all know is unacceptable, or for you to take responsibility. By signing these forms you are stating that you accept Harry as your soul mate and are willing to be his guardian until such a time as the bond is completed. The choice is yours," Ragnok said placing a quill atop the parchment and and then leaning back in his chair again.

As Charlie lifted the self inking quill so that he could sign the forms he was shocked to find them suddenly disappear from in front of them as Harry jumped up and out of his seat only to move a
"No!" Harry cried out his voice a desperate plea. "You don't have to take me in! It's fine. I'm fine. I don't want to be a burden." As he continued to speak his voice steadily got lower until it was merely a whisper.

Getting out of his chair Charlie slowly made his way to Harry's now shaking form before kneeling down and taking his face into his hands yet again.

"Harry, look at me," Charlie said firmly. When those emerald orbs looked at him he continued. "You are not a burden! What your relatives have said and done to you are all lies and they are horrible people. I would love to be your guardian, to take you in and take care of you. I look forward to getting to know you and for you to meet my family. I already know that my mother will absolutely adore you, and I hope that with time you will come to care for me as I am sure that I will for you.

"A soul bond forming doesn't make you a burden to me. All that it does is let me know that I could spend the rest of my life searching the world and would never find someone as perfect for me as you. This bond will also legally let me help you. Will you let me help you Harry?" Charlie asked as he rubbed one of his thumbs over Harry's cheek.

"I won't be a burden?" Harry asked as he sniffed and brought one hand to rub at the back of his eyes.

"Never," Charlie said with such conviction that they could tell the case was already settled.

"Okay," Harry very nearly whispered as he nodded his head.

Charlie grinned and, after grabbing the papers, brought Harry back to the desk and helped him to sit down.

"If I sign these papers," Charlie began as he sat back in his seat, "Will anyone be able to contest my guardianship of Harry?"

"By the time the ministry even notices these papers," Ragnok said with a malicious grin and a twinkle in his eye all to similar to their twin brothers', "It will be too late."

With a grin Charlie signed the papers as the last of the three quills finally stopped scratching and fell useless to the side.

Ragnok quickly grabbed the parchment and began to scan through what they read, an angry scowl spreading across his face with each word written.

"Sir?" Harry asked in concern as Ragnok began to growl.

"What did the potions say, Director Ragnok?" Bill asked hesitantly upon seeing the goblins reaction.

Ragnok sighed as he lifted his hand to rub tiredly at the bridge of his nose. Gathering the three pieces of parchment he turned them around so that the others could read them.

"As you can see by this paper," He began as he pointed towards the longest piece of parchment, "The physical attacks that mister Potter has suffered from far outweigh anything I had expected to find. I suggest either a trip to St. Mungos or to contact Poppy Pomfrey. However this," He said pointing a long finger to an entry near the top of the page which caused Bill to blanch, "Will need
to be treated here. Mister Weasley," He continued as he looked directly at Bill, "As you now have a personal interest in this, I do hope that you do not mind being re-assigned? Of course you will be rewarded for your cooperation."

"It would be my honor sir. This does affect two of my younger brothers after all," Bill replied immediately as he glanced at Harry and Charlie.

"That is what I wanted to hear. For the time being however your leave has been revoked," As Bill went to object Ragnok held up his hand and gave Bill a decidedly mischievous look as he continued. "Your new assignment will be to educate, guard and get a young mister Harry Potter acquainted to the magical world as well as his new family until the time that he attends Hogwarts."

Bills eyes grew to the size of saucers as his body froze in shock. He was, in essence, getting paid to so what he would have been doing anyway. The goblins must really like Harry!

"Now," Ragnok said getting directly back on track, "back to the topic at hand. The physical ailments that you suffer from mister Potter will have to be treated by a healer, however what is listed on these papers will be treated here. For most the procedure would cost around 150 galleons, however we are willing to waive the fees."

That's it, the goblins doing something for free and passing up 150 galleons? Bill was convinced, Harry had some sort of superpower. There was no other explanation.

"Sir," Harry began, obviously curious. "Why would the charges be dropped? After all, 150 galleons is a lot of money."

"The reason that Gringotts is willing to drop the charges is because, through your actions so far today, you have gained the Nations respect," Ragnok said, his voice showing how impressed he was with the young wizard.

"How did I do that?" Harry asked, his confusion only growing.

"Harry, just minutes ago you showed the Nation more respect than any have before you. You bowed back to multiple goblins, including myself, but you also befriended one. None before you have done that."

"Two," Harry said with a slight bit of hesitation in his voice.

"Two?" Ragnok asked a look of confusion spreading over his own face.

"I'm your friend too, if you want," Harry said looking down with a deep blush coloring his face.

"And that, mister Potter, is why you have earned the Nations respect."

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**Authors Note:** I hope you guys enjoyed the first chapter! Let me know what you think and anything else! ^-^

I plan to update relatively quickly but feedback is great fuel! ~wink wink nudge nudge~
The Horcrux

Little Dragon

Authors Note: You guys are amazing! I can't tell you how honored I am to have so many great readers and to have even been added to a community! I hope that you guys continue to enjoy and that you like this super special early update! ;) Now don't expect this every day, I just thought you guys deserved a little treat for being so awesome! (Quite honestly, I'm surprised I got this finished so fast! Reviews are great motivators though!)

Disclaimer: I swear on my prized book collection that I do not and will never own the fantastic world of Harry Potter.

Little Dragon Chapter 2: Welcome Home

After hours of discussion and explanations Harry was finally led to a dark room with a small dais in the center. Ragnok had explained that this would be where they would extract the various potions and charms within his system as well as what was called a horcrux.

Ragnok and Bill had both explained that a horcrux was, in essence, a piece of Voldemort's soul that had taken residence in Harry's body. Charlie had, of course, been furious whereas Harry had merely been curious.

"Now Harry, step up on this dias, all you have to do is stand there, and we will perform the extraction. You may feel funny, do not fight it," A goblin by the name of Sharpshard explained.

Once Harry climbed onto the dais Bill and Charlie were directed to a section of the wall beside the entrance and the goblins in the chamber moved into place. Charlie watched as Harry took a deep breathe and closed his eyes before the goblins began to chant in gobbledygook.

As the chanting continued a purple glow seemed to envelope Harry and it looked as though he had begun to sweat a black substance profusely, especially from his forehead. As the ceremony continued the black substance continued to pour out and Bill murmured something about functioning with all of the impurities but Charlie wasn't sure.

Finally, after what seemed like ages, the flow began to diminish coming only from his head now. Through the whole procedure Harry stood still, not twitching a single muscle. Finally the flow stopped, the last of the black substance seeming to slide down his body, leaving not a single trace behind, until it was finally absorbed by the dias.

The goblins chant came to an end and the purple glow faded. The moment the glow was gone Harry collapsed.

"Harry!" Charlie called out as he and Bill ran forward only for one of the goblins to have caught Harry. "Is he okay? Why did he pass out like that?" Charlie asked in quick succession as he looked Harry over for injuries.

"He will be fine mister Weasley, there were many impurities within his system but they are gone now. He has passed out due to the sudden lack of toxins as well as the removal of all blocks upon his magic. Once he comes to, which should be any minute now, all he will require is a decent meal. His body has become too adjusted to an insubstantial diet and that will have to be corrected,"
Sharpshard explained as he let Charlie take Harry in his arms.

"Come," Ragnok said motioning for them to follow, "You may stay in this room until he wakes, I believe it would be best to take mister Potter home and begin to get him used to our world and his new family. You may return tomorrow to discuss the remaining matters we were unable to get to today," Ragnok then handed Charlie the three rolls of parchment containing what had been done to Harry, bowed and began to walk away. However, before he closed the door behind him he turned soft eyes onto Harry's still form.

"Let mister Potter know that I look forward to seeing him again. Good day gentlemen."

"He really can do it all," Bill said with a teasing grin as he looked down at Harry's small form. "I already like him, and I'm sure that mum's going to absolutely adore him."

"Yeah," Charlie said looking down at Harry's small form, "After finding out everything that's been done to him... I want to kill those muggles. He's never going back there, I'll die before that happens."

"I know you would little brother, I think Harry's going to be good for you," Bill said ruffling Charlies long hair and making both brothers laugh.

"I know he will, I just hope that he lets me get close," Charlie said with a despondent sigh. How could he even hope for Harry to let anyone close after what those bloody muggles did to him.

"I don't think you've noticed yet Charlie, but he already has."

Half an hour later Harry's dark lashes began to flutter before he slowly woke up to the sight of Charlie's slightly worried and Bill's amused faces.

"Mmm, is it over?" He asked groggily as he let out a long yawn and began to stretch almost cat like on the couch.

"Yes Harry, you did very well," Bill said seeing as Charlie was preoccupied watching as Harry stretched his arms out above his head with a small arch of his back. Yes, Charlie was already beginning to love his little soul mate, even if he didn't know it yet.

"So that thing is out of me then?" Harry asked as he finally sat up looking concerned. Ragnok had given a general explanation on just what had been hidden in Harry's scar and was the main reason for the cleansing ritual, if it hadn't been for the horcrux the goblins would have merely used a cleansing soak that consisted of potions and would then turn the removed toxins into energy that was used to fuel Gringotts wards.

"Yes," Charlie said finally moving over to sit on the edge of the couch besides Harry's small form as he gently ran his fingers through Harry's silky tresses. "Yes Harry, the horcrux is gone now."

"That's good," Harry hummed his eyes drifting closed as he leaned further into Charlie's gentle touch a look of utter peace on his face.

Bill smiled at the sight before him and mentally promised to keep a camera on himself from now on. Glancing at the clock on the wall quickly Bill noticed just how much time had passed.

Where their meeting with Ragnok had begun roughly around 7:10 it was now approaching noon and the time that they were set to meet Hagrid at the Leaky Cauldron for lunch. Looking back at the scene on the couch Bill mentally began to hate himself for breaking up this moment.
Charlie was still gently running his fingers through Harry's hair with a look of complete and utter peace that he had never before seen on his brothers face as he looked at Harry as though he were life itself. Harry was softly humming in contentment as he leaned into the gentle touch while letting out small sighs of utter bliss as Charlie's hand merely rested on his head between each stroke. Yep, Bill well and truly hated himself for this and made a silent promise to buy Harry and Charlie both a nice big ice cream sunday at Florean Fortescue's before they headed for the Burrow.

"Come on you two," Bill said regretfully as he watched the pair jerk in shock, "It's almost time to meet Hagrid for lunch."

"Oh yeah!" Charlie said, excitement covering his face as he jumped up and held a hand out to a now blushing Harry. Oh yes, Bill was definitely going to start carrying a camera around with him!

Entering the Leaky Cauldron, Bill quickly steered Charlie and Harry and Charlie towards where Hagrids large frame was towering over the other patrons from his secluded table at the back of the pub. As they drew closer Bill took notice of the large cage sitting on a chair next to him with a majestic and absolutely beautiful snowy owl sitting on top and judging from Harry's exclamation of awe he had noticed as well.

"There you lot are!" Hagrid called catching sight of them as he gave Harry a large grin as he reached out and let the beautiful owl gracefully hop onto his large finger and brought it to Harry where she then hopped onto his shoulder and affectionately nibbled at his ear. "Happy birthday Harry! Something told me that this little beauty would be a perfect gift for you... Blimey!" He breathed looking on in awe towards Harry. Looking down Bill and Charlie were awed at what was happening as well.

Harry had reached up and gently stroked the snowy down of the owls chest feathers as she continued to gently nip at him, it felt right. As though, like Charlie, they were meant to be together. As Harry continued to pet and coo at his beautiful new owl he idly listened to Hagrid's explanation before feeling compelled to look her straight in the eyes.

Looking into those amber orbs Harry yet again felt his magic swell inside of him and vaguely heard the others exclamations of awe as she seemed to nod in acceptance of some untold question that had been somehow answered before quickly leaning in and giving a harsher nip that drew blood but Harry didn't even wince. Instead of the pain that one would usually expect instead he felt an innate sense of right at the action.

With a quick apologetic look she then leaned in and affectionately nibbled at the wound and Harry was shocked to find that it had already healed.

"Well, it looks like Harry's got himself a familiar," Charlie said as he looked on with a fond smile at how Harry and his new owl were still sharing affection to each other as though she were a beloved pet he had not seen in a long time. "What are you going to name her Harry?"

"I'm not sure yet," Harry said with a small blush and a sheepish smile before he looked back to the beautiful owl now resting gently on his shoulder. "I'm going to wait to name her until I have the perfect name," he murmured almost absentmindedly as he ran his fingers through her plumage again.

"Well then, how about we sit down and figure out what we want to eat?" Bill suggested with a grin as he took the seat opposite Hagrid and Harry moved to the one that the cage had rested on and Charlie sat across from him.
Looking at the owl Harry gave a shy smile and asked gently, "Would you mind sitting on or in your cage girl? I'll give you a bit of my food if you do," before any of the men at the table could inform him that the owl may not understand she gave a soft hoot, nibbled at his ear and gently fluttered down to land on the cage where she then began to preen herself under his soft coo's.

Okay, so Hagrid had gotten Harry a very intelligent owl.

Before long Tom the bartender walked over to his newest patrons with a friendly smile and after taking their order, hamburgers and crisps for all of them with glasses of pumpkin juice, he walked back to the counter and returned with the drinks quickly.

"Charlie," Harry began quietly as he looked at the strange new beverage before him, "What exactly is this?"

"That's pumpkin juice Harry, it's a very popular drink in the wizarding world. It tastes a little like... Pumpkin pie!"

"Oh," Harry said cocking his head to the side before taking a tentative sip of it and letting out a content little hum as the taste washed over his tongue and his eyes closed as though to properly savour the taste.

"I take that as a symbol that you like it eh?" Charlie asked as the three older wizards chuckled. "Mnhmm," Harry hummed out as his eyes fluttered open again, "It's sweet! I love sweet things!"

And with that he took another languid sip of his pumpkin juice and offered a small bit on a spoon to the snowy owl who leaned forward and took some into her beak with a soft hoot of approval causing Harry to coo again.

Soon their meals arrived and they quickly ate their fill as Charlie entertained them with stories about his job at the dragon reserve and Hagrid told them all of his various pets, most specifically a large cerberus he had for some ungodly reason named Fluffy.

As they finished with their lunch Hagrid was saddened to see that the time Dumbledore wanted to meet with him was fast approaching.

"I'm sorry I wasn' able ter take ya shopping 'Arry, but Dumbledore be wantin' ta see me soon. Do you think you'll be able to handle yer shoppin by yerself?" Hagrid asked worriedly.

"Don't worry about him Hagrid, Bill and I will take care of him for you! We'll even escort him back home!" Charlie said with a grin and sly wink at Harry who then blushed bright red.

"Thanks! I knew I could count on ya Charlie!" Hagrid cried out happily as he stood up and left a decent amount of money on the table. "Professor McGonagall gave me sommat to get Harry and treat him to some lunch so whatever's left over... Well, put it towards some owl treats for this girl here," Hagrid said before gently ruffling Harry's hair and with one last parting word he was off.

"Alright you two," Bill said turning to look at Harry and Charlie better, "How about we make a quick stop in at St. Mungo's get Harry checked out and then I'll take you two out to Fortescue's before heading home?"

Sitting outside of Florean Fortescue's Bill watched on in amusement as Charlie babbled on about dragons to Harry who hung on to every word as though it were the gospel itself. If they weren't careful Harry might just turn into yet another dragon fanatic like Charlie.

Watching as Harry's small face broke out into a bright grin or as he let out a low giggle Bill
couldn't help but remember the look on the healer's face as he looked over the results himself.

The healer had been understandably horrified and had proceeded to dump multiple large boxes of potions into Bill and Charlie's arms with specific instructions on when to take them, as well as practically demanding they file against the monsters who had done that to Harry, which they had been more than happy to do.

The healer had even given them a very welcome surprise in the form of the potion which would allow Harry to finally be rid of those horrid glasses, his reason being that Harry's eye glasses were merely hindering his healing as they were severely outdated and Harry's own magic had been allowing him to see for years. All the little one would have to do was take the potion before bed and in the morning he would have perfect vision.

"-so then the director of the reserve runs over and asks what's wrong just in time to see the Opal knock Burns into the pile of fresh dung!" Charlies excited voice broke into Bill's reverie just in time for him to see Harry fall into a helpless fit of giggles.

Yes Harry was going to be just fine...

Stepping out of the purple triple decker death machine that was called the Knight Bus Harry could feel his legs, which felt remarkably like jelly, begin to give out below him and was immeasurably grateful when Charlie pulled him into his side and supported his meager weight.

After taking a few moments to catch his breath, which Bill and Charlie found a mixture of adorable and hilarious at the same time, Harry nodded his head and the trio began their slow trek towards what was to be Harry's new home.

As they drew up to the Burrows front gate Charlie drew Harry's attention from the surrounding vegetation and towards the towering, and slightly lopsided, building that was his childhood home.

Harry looked on in awe at the vaguely imposing but supremely cozy home before him. There were chickens wandering around the yard lazily pecking at the grass and soil every now and then before moving on, dozens of old Wellington boots and a rusty cauldron were littering the yard near the small porch and a worn lopsided sign stuck out of the ground and proudly proclaimed this place as 'The Burrow' in a cheery peeled yellow color.

Awe shone clear on Harry's face as he soaked in the utter feeling of 'home' that this place exuded. Looking up at his companions Harry was met with a pair of matching smiles and Charlie pulled him into a light hug and whispered softly in his ear the words that he had always longed to hear.

"Welcome home Harry...

Molly Weasley, as per usual, was bustling around her small kitchen a smile on her lips as she happily hummed along to the tune playing through her head. Percy was currently sitting in lounging chair in the living room reading through his history of magic book yet again while Ron and Ginny were seated on the floor playing a relatively one sided game of chess as Fred and George were whispering conspiratorially to each other on the couch.

These were the moments she cherished. When her children were getting along and peaceful, no arguments, no fights, just peace. The only thing that could make this better would be if-

The chiming of a clock cut off her thoughts and had her pausing in her motions in a moment of confusion. It wasn't 4:00 yet was it? No, it couldn't be. She had just glanced at the clock a moment
ago and it was only 3:32!

Wait...

A million thoughts flew through her mind all at once as she whirled to look at the family clock only for her thoughts to screech to a halt.

She knew that she was being silly but Molly Weasley, nee Prewitt, had lived through too much in the war to not be plagued with the occasional paranoia and this was a time for that paranoia as she saw what had caused the clock to chime.

Bill and Charlie's hands had moved.

As her heart began to race Molly's eyes quickly moved to the 'Mortal Peril' section of her trusty clock only for relief to wash through her like a tidal wave as she found that segment of the clock blissfully empty.

Scanning through the other sectors of the clock Molly's heart began to pound yet again as she finally found where her two sons' hands were pointed and elation coursed through her as she rushed to the window with a beaming smile lighting up her face.

They were home!

Scanning the yard as she had expected them to have merely apperated Molly's eyes lit up as she saw the two large figures of her sons coming towards the house and with an even larger grin Molly rushed outside to greet her beloved sons.

As they drew closer to the house Harry slowly fell back and effectively hid himself behind Charlie in a sudden fit of shyness and anxiety at what was to come. The two brothers couldn't help but to chuckle at the small boys chuckles as Charlie reached back and help Harry's small hand in his own.

Harry held on with all of his strength, drawing comfort in Charlies mere presence and barely peeked his head out from behind Charlies back as the sound of a door being thrown open met his ears. From his new vantage point he could clearly see what was happening with only a small portion of his head being seeable.

Harry watched in fascination as a slightly plump woman bustled out of the house with a large grin on her face as she called out Bill and Charlie's names in obvious delight. Bill quickly jogged forward and scooped the smaller woman into a hug while Charlie stayed at the same pace as he too called his greeting to the woman who was now identified as their mother.

Harry watched in curiosity as she held Bill out at arms length before tutting about the earing hanging down from his left lobe and how long Bills hair had gotten.

Suddenly Harry was nervous. If this woman, who seemed nice enough and obviously loved Bill and Charlie, was criticizing Bill for his long hair what would she do about his appearance? Harry was now hyper aware of his own horrendous appearance.

As if sensing the conflicting thoughts wreaking havoc through his head Charlie gently squeezed his hand and brought him back down to earth just in time for him to see the woman's gaze zero in on him...

"Bill? Charlie? Would either of you care to explain to me why you have a young child with you?"
Molly asked as she took in the small child who was hiding behind Charlies legs, one of the child's dazzling green eyes just barely peeking through the messy black hair that showed from behind her son's leg.

The child couldn't have been more than eight or nine years old at most so what business would her two eldest sons have with the poor dear? Unless...

Molly Weasley's hand slowly went to the hilt of her wand, which was tucked securely inside one of her flowery aprons pockets, as she turned her gaze to glare at her sons, images of an unmarried teenage mother carrying her first grandchild and her sons keeping it hidden from her all of these years.

Bills eyes widened as he realized just what his mother must have been thinking.

"Mom, calm down! He's not our child!" Bill said his hands coming up soothingly as he drew his mother's attention back to himself and away from Charlie. "He couldn't possibly be ours anyway mum. I would have only been 11 and Charlie would have been 9!"

Molly seemed to shut down as she processed what she had just heard. If Bill would have only been 11 then that would mean that the little boy hiding behind Charlie's legs would be Ron's age.

No, that wasn't possible! The little one looked 9 years old at most! But, her children wouldn't lie to her about something as big as this.

Only one thing to do then...

Looking at the shock of black hair peeking out from behind Charlie's leg Molly let a look of motherly affection spread across her features.

"How old are you dear?" Molly asked with a gentle smile.

Taking a deep breath Harry drew together all of his courage and stepped out from behind Charlie, not releasing his grip on Charlie's hand before looking straight into Molly's motherly eyes and said, with all of the manners that Petunia had drilled into him for years, "I am eleven years old, ma'am."

Molly couldn't help herself but to coo at the adorable creature before her. He was so well behaved and polite!

"Oh you little dear!" Molly gushed coming forward and running her fingers through his unruly locks with a kind smile that only grew as his eyes closed and he leaned into her touch with a look of contentment spreading across his face.

"Now," Molly began again as she drew the little one into a gentle embrace and continued to card her fingers through his hair as her gaze turned to her two sons who looked both shocked and pleased at how the encounter had progressed. "Would either of you care to inform me as to the current situation?"

"Well mum..." Charlie began before his eyes drifted down to the little one in her arms and an affectionate smile spread across his face before he continued.

"You are currently holding onto my soul mate," Molly's mind came to a halt yet again as he continued to explain, her hands still working mechanically through the soft raven locks, "I would like for you to meet Harry Potter. He is now under my guardianship, it appears that his relatives were abusive beyond belief. I'll explain to you and Dad more later on after the others have gone to bed."
"Be sure that you do," Molly murmured absentmindedly as she continued to process what she had just been told...

This was Harry Potter, the Harry Potter who was now bonded to her son. He had been abused and neglected. Badly. And he was now a part of her family.

Looking down at the small form in her arms Molly could feel a surge of motherly love course through her. This little one seemed to have some form of special magic that made anyone who looked at him love him...

"Well dear," Molly said kindly as she knelt down before Harry to be closer in height to him while holding him away just enough to be able to look him in the eyes, "It seems that I've just gained another son haven't I?"

Upon seeing the slightly frightened look that flashed through Harry's eyes she continued quickly, "I won't force you to accept, or call me mum, if you don't want to Harry. But that will not stop me from loving you as my son. Of course, I wouldn't try to take your birth mother's place, no one can do that, but I would like to be your mum if you'd let me." Molly made sure to look him straight in the eye as she asked him her last question, "Will you let me be your mum Harry?"

After what seemed like an eternity Harry hesitantly nodded and Molly pulled him into a gentle hug, joy coursing through her.

"Welcome home my son," She whispered into his ear as he returned her embrace.

Upon entering the small kitchen a few minutes later they were all shocked to see Arthur Weasley stepping out of the fireplace in the kitchen, Harry because a man had just stepped out of a fireplace of all places and the others because Arthur wasn't due back for a few hours yet.

Arthur, upon noticing the inhabitants of the kitchen but not yet processing just who they were began to explain the circumstances of his early arrival as he began to discard his overcloak onto the hook beside the mantle.

"Hello all, it appears that today was an extremely easy day. Perkins and I were finished well before lunch and since nothing else came in we were told that we could return home early. Isn't that grand?" Finally Arthur looked up before blinking in shock.

There before him stood not only his two oldest sons but also a young black haired child who he had never seen before.

"Well hello there," Arthur said with a smile at the young one before turning questioning eyes to his wife and sons for an explanation.

A few minutes and a quick explanation later and Arthur too was drawn into Harry's special form of magic.

"Well then," Arthur said as he unconsciously mimicked his wives previous actions and knelt down before the small boy with a kind smile as he gently laid his hand on Harry's too small shoulder. "All that I can say then is welcome home son. Now then, I do believe it's time to introduce you to the others."

Leading the others through to the living room Arthur immediately began the introductions with a grin on his face at his other childrens shock at their sudden presence.
"Harry this is the rest of the family. Meet Percy, Fred, George, Ron and Ginny," Arthur said as he pointed to one of five redheads with each name he stated.

Harry shyly observed the new additions to his impromptu family as he took comfort in Charlie's solid and comforting presence mere inches from his side.

Percy seemed to be the oldest of the five with black horn rimmed glasses perched on his nose and a large tome in his hands, one finger slipped between the pages as an impromptu bookmark as he gazed up at them from his position in a large comfortable looking chair.

Fred and George were identical in every way from the part of their hair to the spacing of freckles across their cheeks and they both had the same mischievous glint in their eyes as they grinned at him from their positions on the couch. Harry made a mental note to stay on their good side as much as possible.

Ron looked to be the same age as he was, though obviously taller, with a kind and slightly shy grin as he shifted from side to side in nervous excitement. Harry wasn't sure why but he had a feeling that he and Ron would be good friends.

Ginny on the other hand... Harry knew that they could be friends but the small red head, though yet again still slightly taller than Harry despite him being older, gave off a... Stalkerish feel. Whatever made her feel that way Harry hoped would go away soon. It wasn't that she felt that way right now but... He had the feeling that she shouldn't be allowed to know his last name. Ever.

Charlie watched on in happiness as Harry interacted with his family. Where he had expected Harry to be too shy and reserved to interact very much with his family for the first few days Harry had taken to them like a duck to water.

He got along well with the twins who seemed to, thankfully, mark him with a nice big 'OFF LIMITS'. Instead they had joked with him and taught him to play exploding snap all while cracking jokes that kept his giggle constant and a grin on his face.

He and Ron were automatically inseparable as well, instantly growing a connection much like the twins', though not as fully fledged, and Charlie could see that Ron would, even now, do anything to keep Harry safe.

Though Harry seemed to be slightly wary of Ginny he got along with her well enough as well and, much to everyone's shock, he was at this moment bonding with Percy as well.

"What is that book about Percy?" Harry asked shyly as he peered at the large tome sitting before the older boy in curiosity.

"This?" Percy asked in mild shock at the fact that anyone was willing to speak with him about the contents of his book, his family usually only listened politely or told him to bugger off when he would try to share the fascinating knowledge that it contained, they couldn't help it though he supposed. They just didn't appreciate history as much as he did.

"Mmhmm," Harry said nodding his head and moving closer so that he could properly see the writing on the page.

Percy couldn't help but grin at Harry's curiosity and so he began to explain to his newest younger brother exactly what it was he was reading.

"This is the History of Magic textbook for school. The class is taught by Professor Binns, he's a
ghost that's been there for ages and tends to drone on and on about nothing but the Goblin Wars and rebellions so I like to do independent study. Otherwise I wouldn't pass any of the exams."

"Oh!" Harry said looking up at him with evident awe shining in his eyes, "That's really smart! I'll have to remember that for classes, thanks Percy."

"Not a problem Harry," Percy said with a small smile as he gently ruffled Harry's hair causing him to giggle.

"Who's that?" Harry asked as he pointed at a picture of a pretty woman in a brown robe holding a young child.

"Oh, that's Saint Hedwig of Andechs, also known as the Duchess of Silesia. She was called the patron saint of orphans, and was a German witch in the middle ages," Percy summarized as he read the caption below the picture.

When he got no reply he turned to see Harry's snowy owl had flown in and was now looking Harry straight in the eyes as Harry smiled at her.

"Well Hedwig," Harry murmured as he reached out and stroked her soft feathers, "Welcome home."

Authors Note: Whoo-hoo! It's done! I've gotta say, you guys rock! I can't believe I managed to write this in a day!

Don't get used to it, but who knows, I may just post again relatively soon. At the most it would be two weeks, but I seriously doubt it would take that long unless some unexpected circumstance came up.

I hope you guys enjoyed this! ^-^ Let me know what you thought~!
Shopping In Diagon Alley

Little Dragon

Authors Note: Hey guys! I am so happy that you're all enjoying this so much! Your constant comments, kudos and following is driving me to type like the wind! In fact, I think the only reason this chapter wasn't up a yesterday was the interference happening with my life. This was still completed WAY ahead of schedule though! Enjoy! Oh, and before I forget! This chapter contains a little treat in the form of a dream. Nothing graphic so no need to skip over it. Enjoy~! ;)

Disclaimer: ~stands in front of dozens of various press reporters~ I would like to take this moment to state that I FCTSyndrome, or Favorite Character Torture Syndrome, do not, nor have I ever, owned nor claimed to own the wonderful world of Harry Potter. Thank you. ~gets onto a helicopter and flies away~

Chapter 3: Shopping in Diagon Alley

Molly hummed as she placed the last bowl of vegetables on the dining room table with a small smile. She was so happy that Harry was adjusting so well to his surroundings. Merlin only knew what that poor boy had been through at the hands of his relatives, her only comfort was in the fact that Bill and Charlie had had the foresight to get him checked over at St. Mungos.

With one last quick scan of the tables spread Molly moved through the kitchen and into the living room taking a moment to happily absorb the scene.

Arthur and Bill were sitting on the couch quietly talking as they watched over the exploding snap tournament that seemed to be happening. Currently it looked like Harry, being aided by Charlie, was playing against Percy much to her surprise. It looked like Harry was able to bring out the more fun side of Percy.

Waiting patiently until the final move of the game was made Molly finally made her presence known.

"Dinner is ready, come in and have a seat at the table. Harry I have your potions laid out in front of your seat make sure to take them before you eat."

"Yes ma'am," Harry said as a blush covered his face. He wasn't used to anyone taking care of him still, in fact these past few days seemed like nothing but a dream to him. But that didn't help the nagging guilt he had at making Mrs. Weasley cook instead of him. Ignoring the feeling for now Harry instead focused on the glowing warmth that spread through him at the feeling of being cared for.

As the family began to make their way into the kitchen Harry couldn't help but be astonished at what had been accomplished in such a short time. A meal that would have taken him all day had only taken the matron a mere two hours!

On the table was a veritable feast, but before Harry could truly take it all in and get over his shock Molly was ushering him to his seat that had two potions sitting before it, one a pale blue and the other a deeper shade of purple, both with labels proclaiming them to be an appetite stimulator as well as a nutrient potion.
As Harry sat down he realized that he had been placed between Arthur and Charlie, both of whom had automatically reached out to uncork the vials of potions.

Passing his over first Charlie made sure that Harry had a decent grip on the vial before letting it go and murmuring the only advice that could be given to one who had to take a potion.

"It's best to just swallow it quickly and get it over with. They're vile enough as is let alone trying to sip one down."

Nodding his head in determination Harry took a deep breath before quickly tipping his head backwards and gulping down the extremely bitter liquid before quickly doing the same with the one that Arthur handed him followed by three large gulps of the pumpkin juice Molly had gently pressed into his hands.

A few seconds passed as Harry let out a shudder before proclaiming in the loudest voice he had managed to muster yet, "I hate potions."

After that dinner proceeded normally, or as normally as could be while at the Burrow.

Arthur was peppering Harry with questions on all things muggle which Harry happily answered to the best of his ability on everything from bath toys to the fundamentals of electricity and airplanes.

"You know Mr. Weasley," Harry began nervously as he looked down at the table, "If you would be willing I could help you get a library card. You can check books out for a set amount of time on any subject you want and then you take it back by the date they gave you or before then you can check more out. You have to be careful about taking them back late though or you could get fined, but they would tell you more than I could and about anything you can think of too."

"That sounds absolutely fascinating!" Arthur began as his eyes lit up with the possibilities, "Where exactly can we find one of these libraries?"

"Well, to my knowledge they're in almost any muggle town but London has the biggest that I know of. I could take you to help you get signed up if you would like?"

"Excellent! How about I meet you three at lunch time and we can go then?" Arthur asked looking at his eldest sons with excitement brimming in his eyes.

"That sounds great Dad! We can have a quick lunch and use the rest of your lunch hour to visit this library," Bill said with a grin at how excited his father was. In all honesty he was looking forward to this as well; perhaps this library would have something on Egypt.

Soon dinner was over and the family moved out to the living room where Ron quickly challenged Arthur to a game of chess, which lasted considerably longer than when anyone else played against Ron and almost ended in a tie with Ron pulling a narrow victory. Percy began to read again, Ginny was playing exploding snap with the twins and Molly was knitting as Bill and Charlie talked quietly about their careers and Charlie's hand carded through Harry's silky black locks.

Harry was feeling sleepy and at peace. For the first time he could remember he truly felt as though he belonged. This was his new family and he couldn't be happier.

So caught up in his sluggish thoughts was he that Harry never realized that he was falling asleep leaning against Charlie's side. That is until he was gently stirred awake a few hours later by the gentle rocking motion of being carried up the stairs in a pair of strong sturdy arms that made him feel completely safe.
Still mostly asleep Harry groggily complied with the order to swallow yet another potion before being laid down on a camper bed and tucked in.

Through bleary eyes Harry just barely noticed Ron climbing into his own bed across the room and the large strong hands that carefully pulled his glasses off before ruffling his hair.

The last thing that penetrated Harry's groggy mind made Harry feel warm and a small smile tug at his lips.

"Good night Harry."

"Now," Molly began the moment she saw her eldest sons enter the kitchen, "Tell us everything!"

"Well, Bill and I were planning on coming home to spend the rest of the summer as a surprise. Bill had to fill out the last of his paperwork and get it filed before he was able to get off though, so while we were at Gringotts, Hagrid walked in with Harry. When I shook Harry's hand…" Charlie trailed off; eyes going cloudy as he thought back to that moment. With an amused chuckle Bill continued instead.

"I could tell what had happened immediately and apparently so could the goblins because one of them came up and told me that the Director wanted to see us immediately. So I told Hagrid that the Director wanted to discuss Harry's accounts with him and that we'd meet him at lunch.

"We were lead back to the Directors office and he explained to them what had happened before performing a full scan on Harry when he indicated he had been abused. These," Bill said as he pulled the rolls of parchment baring the official Gringotts seal from his robes and handed them to his father who then began to scan them, obvious disgust growing with each word, "Are a copy of the results."

"After that we talked about his accounts and discovered that there was in fact some discrepancies, hence our going back tomorrow, and then took care of that." Bill finished pointing at a line of text very close to the top of the longest roll of parchment causing Arthur to blanch and a look of confusion to settle on Molly's face.

"What exactly is a horcrux?" Molly asked in confusion as she saw the dark looks the three men were sporting.

"A horcrux is a piece of someone's soul that was split off and is being housed inside of an object. There has never been a report of a human horcrux," Bill said gravely as he watched the look of dawning horror on his mother's face.

"And one of these things were inside of him!?" Molly all but screeched as she stood from her chair so suddenly they were surprised it didn't tip over, five seconds later and Molly collapsed heavily into the chair with a long shuddering breathe. "How did they get it out of him?" she all but whispered.

Getting up from his seat and walking around the table Bill wrapped his arms around his mother in the only act he knew that could calm her down.

"The goblins have a ritual that can purge all magic and such in a person's system that is not meant to be there. It is completely safe and Harry underwent it before lunch time. The only effect it had on him was making him a little tired is all. He had a little nap and went happily about his day. Harry's fine mum. And," Bill trailed off pulling back slightly so that he could look into his mums eyes. "The good news is that because of the horcrux the Director has decided to reassign me. I'll be
home a lot more now."

With that, the breath was knocked out of him as Molly hugged him to herself fiercely.

"Oh, that's so wonderful!" Molly began to gush before suddenly stopping and looking worried. "What did the healer have to say though? They must have been upset with all of this?"

"Oh, he was!" Charlie finally said as he shook off the pleasurable fog that occupied his mind at the mere thought of his mate and Bill resumed his seat. "He swore that he would do all of this as discreetly as possible, we lucked out with being seen by one of the upper ranked healers so there were less channels to go through not to mention the fact that he has some form of a connection with a higher up in the DMCW and he said that he would start a file against the Dursleys. We're supposed to get an owl with the time for the meeting tomorrow some time."

"Alright, so there's that settled. What about the goblins? They certainly aren't doing all of this for free are they? And what about the goblin behind the discrepancies? What is going to happen to him? Certainly nothing pleasant," Arthur asked as confusion bled into his face yet again.

"Director Ragnok was furious with the goblins transgressions of course. I can guarantee that there will be one less goblin at Gringotts tomorrow; the Nation does NOT take kindly to this sort of thing. I would almost feel sorry for the poor fellow if it weren't for the fact that a mere beheading is lenient in light of all that's happened." Bill said with a sigh as he leaned back in his chair and looked up at the familiar ceiling above him.

"Yeah, it seems that Harry has a way with the goblins… It's kind of scary to watch actually," Charlie said as he too leaned back in his chair the day beginning to catch up to him. "Anyways, tomorrow we're going to Gringotts to get everything settled and then get Harry's school supplies before meeting dad for lunch and the library visit. After that I was thinking about staying in muggle London and completely re-doing his wardrobe. The minute we get home I plan on burning each and every last piece of clothing that his relatives gave him."

"Yes, that's been bothering me all day. Why is it that you didn't at least shrink those horrid clothes?" Molly asked incredulously. When they had first shown up Molly was far too shocked to have truly done anything about it. She had not only gained a new son through a soul bond with Charlie but that new son was Harry Potter, the boy who they had always been told was safe and happy but, as it turned out, was actually abused and miserable. Then, when she had went to ask if Harry would like for her to shrink those horrendous rags, Bill had pulled her aside and told her that everything was going to be handled and not to mention it.

She wanted to know what was going on!

"Well, since everything had happened so quickly Harry's clothing was at the back of our mind for a while," Charlie explained tiredly, his head lying down in his arms. "Once everything had settled Bill and I were working on getting him comfortable with us and talking about how horrible his clothes were would have been counterproductive."

"I asked Ron why the others hadn't said anything," Bill continued for Charlie who had turned to incoherent mumbling, "He said that they just didn't want Harry to go back in his shell and figured that it would be settled soon enough," Bill looked up at his parents and saw the proud smiles on their faces at the maturity their children were showing.

"Alright, that's that then," Molly said as she stood up with a motherly smile on her lips as she bent down and kissed Charlie's forehead before kissing Bills cheek. "Now, both of you head on up to bed, you've had a long day and you have another one ahead of you."
Ron woke to the sound of pain filled whimpers and ragged breathing coming from the cot across the room.

Sitting up quickly he jumped out of bed and flew across the room to his friend's side, worry evident on his face.

There on the cot lay Harry's small form, curled in on himself and shivering like a leaf. Worry wracked through him as Harry flinched and whimpered in his sleep, pulling himself into a tighter ball than before. Whatever nightmare his friend was suffering from it must have been horrid.

Making up his mind quickly Ron sprinted from the room as quickly as his legs could take him and down to Bill and Charlie's room before throwing the door open and racing across the room to frantically shake Charlie awake.

Merlin only knew why Ron had gotten Charlie instead of attempting to wake Harry himself, but for some reason he just knew that this was the right course of action for him to have taken.

"Ron?" Charlie asked groggily before shooting up in his bed as he noticed his brother's panicked expression, "What's wrong? Did something happen? Where's Harry?"

"He's having a nightmare," Ron panted out as he moved back so that Charlie could get off of the bed. "I don't know why, but I thought it was best to wake you up," Ron said before he stared in shock at his brothers quickly retreating back as Charlie flew from the room and up the stairs.

"You did the right thing Ron," Bill said pausing in his pursuit of Charlie briefly to look into his brother's slightly panicked gaze. "Now c'mon. We need to go wake Harry up and keep Charlie from mothering him too much."

With that both brothers began to make their way back up the stairs to Ron's room, both mentally cursing at the distance.

When they finally managed to reach the top of the stairs they weren't as shocked as they should have been to see that both Charlie and their mum cooing over a scared and still drowsy Harry.

Looking at each other they allowed a brief look of amusement to pass over their faces before they too crowded inside the room and, instead of crowding Harry as well, sat down on Ron's bright orange bed and watched the two overprotective Weasley's fawn over a clearly bewildered Harry.

"Charlie dear I think it would be for the best if Harry was to sleep with you tonight. We have no idea what the bond does when it's established at such a young age. I know that for the youngest case, before now, the pair felt uncomfortable being apart from each other for extended periods of time... Perhaps it would be best for him to sleep with you until it's time for him to start school. If need be after that we could try to contact Albus or Minerva to see if a solution can be reached," Molly murmured softly as she watched her second eldest hold the precious bundle in his arms.

"You mean you haven't told the Headmaster yet?" Bill asked from his seat across the room next to a dozing Ron, eyes going wide in shock.

"No..." Molly began as a confused expression passed over her features. "I'm perfectly fine with Minerva knowing but... I don't think the headmaster should be made aware of this bond. Or even that Harry is staying with us at the moment. The thought of him finding out..." She trailed off as a shiver coursed down her spine at the very thought.
Nodding in understanding Charlie carefully stood up with the practically asleep Harry safely cocooned in his arms. He had the exact same feelings regarding the Headmaster and, though he couldn't fathom why, he felt as though telling Dumbledore about any of it would result in Harry being hurt in some way. And that was NOT something that he was willing to risk.

"Alright mum, I'm going to go put Harry back to bed then, we have a long day ahead of us and if we're going to revamp his, well... Everything. We'll need all of our energy."

"Night mum," They chorused softly together, ever mindful of the two sleeping eleven year olds.

Charlie followed Bill carefully down the stairs and, upon reaching their room, waited patiently for Bill to open the door before slipping in without jostling his lightly snoozing mate.

Moving over to his bed Charlie attempted to set Harry down and move away only to find that Harry's small fists, even in sleep, were refusing to relinquish the hold that they had on his night shirt.

With a fond smile Charlie carefully moved Harry's small form to one side of the bed and carefully slid in beside his young mate.

Hearing the soft chuckle accompanied by the creaking of a bed as Bill climbed into his own Charlie chose to ignore it in favor of focusing on the warm bundle lying beside him as he too slowly succumbed to slumber.

Charlie Weasley was dreaming, of this he was certain. Another thing he was certain of was that this kind of dream shouldn't have happened until the one it was focused on was older and that if his mother found out about this she would castrate him.

Even with these thoughts screaming at him his body refused to listen. Charlie had no control over this dream and stronger men than he would have found themselves unable to resist its allure.

There in front of his eyes was Harry, slightly older and with a healthy amount of meat on his bones creating curves in just the right places that were only accentuated by the clothing he wore which consisted of little more than far too short skin tight shorts and an almost see through flowing top.

These however, Charlie could have ignored if it weren't for the position he found himself in with this little minx. Charlie himself was reclined on his back on a soft mattress with his young mate straddling his waist and looking down at him with sparkling emerald green eyes and a mischievous grin playing about his face.

The part of Charlie that was aware knew that he shouldn't be having this dream and yet couldn't pull himself to care at the moment. It wasn't like the dream was that erotic... Yet.

"Charlie," Harry all but purred as he leaned down closer and pressed a light kiss to Dream Charlie's grinning lips.

The kiss that had begun innocently enough was quickly morphed into something more devious and erotic. Dream Charlie flipped them over so that he was positioned squarely in between Harry's long legs causing him to gasp which quickly turned into a moan as his mouth was infiltrated by an insistent tongue.

Breathless and muffled moans managed to escape from Harry and soon the part of Charlie that was aware began to lose himself in the scene. The dream continued on autopilot but now he was allowing himself to truly enjoy it...
A whimper escaped from Harry as the kiss was ended before turning to a breathy moan as a mouth quickly attached itself to his neck and began to suck.

"Ch-Charlie," Harry gasped as his lips traveled further down and to his now exposed shoulder. "Charlie, please!"

"Please what Harry?" He asked, his voice amused as he looked down at Harry's flushed and panting form. His lips swollen from the kiss and a small trail of saliva at the corner of his panting mouth, his eyes half lidded and pupils blown wide.

"Take me."

With a jolt Charlie's eyes snapped open and he vaguely noticed his labored breathing... As well as the tell-tale constricting in his groin.

Making to get up from the bed with a sigh Charlie was further startled when he noticed a comfortable weight settled on his chest.

Looking down he was greeted with a nest of messy black hair fanned out over his chest as Harry snuggled against him, using his chest as a pillow.

With a groan Charlie fell back onto his pillows desperately trying to ignore his affliction and its cause.

Hearing a chuckle from across the room Charlie felt his heart stop.

Looking at his older brother with wide shocked eyes Charlie could feel shame course through him. Of course Bill would be awake to see him like this!

"What's wrong Charlie?" Bill asked, eyes alight with mirth as a wicked grin spread over his face. "It looks like you've got a little... Problem."

And so it begins...

Charlie had been subjected to Bills teasing for hours before Harry finally began to stir and Bill fell blissfully silent apart from a teasing wink.

With a soft moan Harry attempted to snuggle himself further into Charlie's chest before beginning to stretch in cat like motions. His hands stretching out across Charlie's chest, his back arching and causing Charlie to let out a soft groan as Bill chuckled at his brother's misfortune. A few agonizing moments later Harry finally settled down before blearily blinking his eyes up at Charlie only to flush scarlet as he noticed his position draped across his chest.

"Oh God, Charlie!" Harry gasped as he back pedaled away from him only to sit in a pool of blankets. "I'm sorry! I didn't mean to take over your bed!"

"You didn't Harry," Charlie said with a bright smile as he looked at Harry's adorable form. "You had a nightmare last night so we decided you should sleep in here with me. I rather enjoyed it, the extra body heat made me nice and warm," He teased and reveled in Harry's crimson blush. Oh yes, Bill may be able to tease him, but he was going to enjoy Harry's reactions to his own.

"Oh, okay... Well, um," Harry began as he looked down at his lap while chewing on his lower lip. "W-would it be okay if I made breakfast? You've all been really nice to me and I'm used to doing
it! I actually really like to cook."

With a grin at Harry's newfound enthusiasm Bill decided on the next course of action.

"How about we go down in the kitchen and wait for mum. Then, when she comes down, you can her if she'll let you help."

"Okay!" Harry said as he jumped out of the bed and waited patiently at the door for Bill and Charlie.

When they finally entered the kitchen they were met with the sight of Molly calmly peeling potatoes at the table.

"Good morning you three," She greeted with a smile as she noticed them enter. "What are you lot doing up so early?"

"I always wake up early ma'am," Harry said as he took a seat beside her. "I was wondering if you would let me help cook? I always prepare meals back with the Dursleys and I really enjoy it."

With that and the answering grin from Molly the attention was completely diverted from the two older brothers who were standing there in shocked silence.

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After a spectacular breakfast, which Charlie was positive tasted better than any he had had previously, the group of three began to prepare for their long day.

Within thirty minutes Molly had managed to coax Harry into some of Ron's clothes which, though still far too large for Harry's slight frame, were far more suitable than his cousins old castoffs. After getting ready Harry had decided to spend the time it would take for Bill and Charlie to shower and prepare for the day by instead talking with Percy about all he would need for the school year.

By the time they were prepared to leave Harry had a decent list of extra books which would prove helpful with his course work.

"How are we getting back to Gringotts?" Harry asked as Charlie pulled him along and into the kitchen. "We aren't taking the Knight Bus again are we!?"

Harry's eyes were wide and panicked at the mere thought of the triple decker death mobile.

"No Harry," Charlie said soothingly as he wrapped his arm around Harry's far too skinny waist. "We're actually going to be travelling by the Floo Network. It's a system of connected fireplaces that-

"You go through the fireplace!?" If anything Harry was even more panicked than before.

"Yes Harry but it's completely safe," Bill interjected upon meeting Charlie's slightly panicked gaze. "In fact, you saw Dad come out of the floo yesterday. All that you do is take a bit of this powder, throw it down and say where your going. Try to hold your breathe though, otherwise you'll inhale some of the ash and that would be bad."

"Don't worry Harry, I'll be taking you through myself. We don't want you to get lost in the network," Charlie said as he smiled down at him, tightening his hold on Harry's waist in a pseudo hug.
"Okay," Harry said warily as he stared at the kitchens fireplace as though it would come to life and swallow him whole.

With a chuckle Bill stepped into the empty grate, grabbed a fistful of the sparkling green powder and through it down with a call of "Gringotts!". In a roar of emerald flames he was gone.

"Ready Harry?" Charlie asked as he led him toward the once again empty fireplace.

Drawing a deep breath Harry nodded and they stepped into the fireplace.

As Charlie took a handful of the powder Harry quickly gulped down another breath as he firmly attached himself to Charlie's side.

As Charlie threw down the powder and called out their destination Harry clenched his eyes shut as tightly as he possible could.

With a dizzying combination of being spun like a top and the green tinged flickers of the flames they were off...

"Mister Potter and misters Weasley," Director Ragnok said the moment they entered his office, "I am glad that you managed to arrive early. Last night, as we were attempting to make sense of the mess that was your accounts we discovered two rather shocking pieces of information."

Drawing an old and worn roll of parchment from his desk Ragnok placed it before the three and waited until Bill finally unrolled it so that they could see the neatly scrawled words at the top.

'THE LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT OF JAMES CHARLUS POTTER AND LILLIAN EVANORA POTTER NEE EVANS'

With a gasp Harry looked up and met Ragnoks studious gaze.

"The fact that a will was made is not the most shocking information mister Potter," Ragnok said as he leaned back in his seat yet again. "One, the will was sealed away and never read, most didn't even know that one had been made. In fact, the only ones who knew were the witnesses, one Albus Percival Wulfric Brian Dumbledore and the other one Sirius Orion Black," Ignoring the gasps of shock and horror from the Weasley brothers he continued.

"Now, Sirius Black was your godfather and, before today, we believed him to be guilty of betraying your parents. As such, he was imprisoned for his 'crimes'. Now however, we know that he was framed."

Harry's mind was in utter turmoil. His parents left a will that no one knew about, he had a godfather, said godfather was in jail and had been framed. But wait... That was only one thing... What was the other?

"What is the second thing sir?" He asked cautiously as his heart pounded.

"The will was sealed by Albus Dumbledore."

Authors Note: Dun dun duuunnnn~! Cliffhanger! Sorry, couldn't resist!

IMPORTANT! PLEASE READ!
Okay guys so in the next chapter its finally time for Harry to get his new clothes! (Not for the full chapter though, just a bit at the beginning). However, I need your guys' opinion on something!

Now, I'm not sure if it is going to be added but it just may despite your guys' opinions if I feel the situation calls for it.

What I need your opinions on are these: crossdressing (mild, nothing too drastic like a dress or whatnot), and mpreg.

I had originally planned on including both of these later on but I wanted to get your guys' opinions while I still could. I'll let you know the decision in the next chapter~!
Authors Note: You, my lovelies, are absolutely amazing! I can't even begin to tell you just how much I have been honored and blessed with your guys' support, encouragement and just all around love! I am so happy that you guys have enjoyed this so much and I hope that you continue to enjoy! ^-^

Now, I hope that you are all prepared for a massive burst of chapters! I'm talking 4 chapters, thousands of words and hey, maybe a few laughs along the way? ;)

Enjoy!

Disclaimer: I own nothing, not even these chips I'm munching on. I'm afraid to say I stole them from my dad. Hey, no judgment! He just left them right there on the table, they were begging for me to take them!

Chapter 4: The Healers Contact

Previously on Little Dragon…

"The will was sealed by Albus Dumbledore."

To say that Bill and Charlie were shocked would be an understatement. They had grown up with dumbledore being the good guy, a man who could do no wrong. For this to have happened... It was unthinkable.

Harry however was furious. This man was the headmaster of a school, what right did he have sealing his parents will? In fact, why would he seal their will? Unless...

"Sir?" Harry asked as he met Ragnok's gaze. "Why would he have sealed their will? If he had been one of the witnesses he would have definitely been granted something, if he hadn't it would have been a slap in the face, but he must not have agreed with something then right? Something in my parents' will must have been detrimental to his plans so he locked it away. And since the only other person who knew about it, Sirius Black, was thrown into Azkaban no one would be the wiser... And if he had a goblin who obviously helped him... What else has he done?"

"Precisely, mister Potter," Ragnok said as he continued to meet Harry's unwavering gaze. "After looking into the matter further when we too came up with the same conclusion we found that Albus Dumbledore has been embezzling funds and removing Potter family heirlooms," reaching into his desk Ragnok pulled out a scroll of parchment. "This contains a complete list of all transactions that have happened since the deaths of James and Lily Potter. For the Past ten years there has been a monthly allowance of one thousand muggle dollars transferred directly into the bank account of Vernon and Petunia Dursley, we are already filing against them and working on getting that money back since, judging by your expression, they never spent a single cent on you. Other than that there has been a periodic withdrawal of two hundred galleons on the first Saturday of each month, these withdrawals being done by your 'guardian' which, upon further searching, we discovered that Albus Dumbledore has been claiming himself as your magical guardian which, due to the contents of your parents will, he is not."
"How was he able to do that with no one finding out?" Bill asked as his shock finally wore off. "Surely those withdrawals would have raised a red flag or something?"

"Unfortunately not, mister Weasley," Ragnok said as he leaned forward and slid the paper across the desk so that Bill could read it. "As you know as per Gringotts policy we do not require a second check of all minor transactions due to our clients wishes for privacy. As such, since each of these transactions were relatively small, they were able to be handled by the head of the Potter accounts, which I am shocked to say, was also changed the day before the deaths of Lily and Potter. I spoke to the previous account manager and he said that he had received an official letter of release from James Potter with the request that the current goblin be put in control of the accounts. During the interrogation of the traitorous goblin we discovered that James Potter had been pressured by Albus Dumbledore."

"Who was the old account manager? What happened to him after he was released?" Harry asked curiously.

"He was reassigned to the carts," Ragnok said with a sigh before looking back up at Harry with a mischievous twinkle in his eyes, "In fact, you met him yesterday mister Potter."

"Griphook?" Harry asked with wide eyes as understanding dawned on him immediately. "Can he have his position back? He already knows what to do and I trust him."

"Then it shall be done."

Bill was yet again shocked with Harry's handling of the situation. He must not have realised it but he had just done Griphook the greatest honor possible. To be dismissed from a position with as much honour as being the Potter family accounts manager was the epitome of disgrace. To be forced to work in the tunnels which was basically ground zero for goblins was public humiliation and ostracism all its own. For first to have gained Harry's friendship and trust and then to regain his position... That was the greatest thing that could possibly have happened to the goblin.

As they rose to leave Harry had one last thought he wished to know the answer to.

"Sir? If Dumbledore was able to steal from my accounts could he have stolen from others too?"

"I will be sure to look into it mister Potter," Ragnok swore as he saw the trio to his offices doorway. "I shall owl you and keep you informed of any further findings. ENjoy the rest of your day mister Potter."

Minutes later the three exited Gringotts, Harry with a brand new Gringotts card which acted just like a muggle credit card and would work in the muggle world as well, and Bill and Charlie with pouts on their faces. Ragnok had certainly enjoyed the small argument that had happened between Harry Bill and Charlie over who was going to buy what Harry would need.

Harry had been insistent that he would purchase whatever he would need and had simply glared whenever Bill or Charlie would try to say otherwise. Finally, after several minutes they had been able to come up with a compromise.

Harry would buy what was on his school list and whatever else he wanted and Bill and Charlie would buy anything extra that they wanted to get for him. Both Weasley men were not pleased.

"It's almost ten," Bill said in shock as they made their way down Gringotts' marble steps and towards Diagon Alleys bustling streets. "How about we split up for now and meet up at Ollivanders in an hour? You two get the robes and I'll get everything else and meet you at
"Okay," Harry said with a little pout. He should have known that they would have found a way to pay for some of his stuff if the satisfied looks on their faces was anything to go by. At least he could still buy all of his new clothes himself.

After giving Bill his supply list, as well as the extra list of books Percy had recommended, they parted ways with Bill heading towards a store called 'Flourish and Blotts' and Charlie leading Harry towards a cozy little shop with a cheery sign proclaiming 'Madam Malkin's Robes for All Occasions.'

Upon entering the quaint little shop they were met with the owner herself, Madam Malkin, a squat and cheery witch who had a kind smile and was dressed in plain mauve robes.

"Hello dears, Hogwarts?" She asked as the door swung shut behind them. "Got the lot here, another young man being fitted up just now, in fact."

In the back of the shop a boy with a slightly round face and an adorably shy expression was standing on a footstool while a second witch pinned up his long black robes.

Madam Malkin stood Harry on the stool next to him and slipped a long robe over his head while Charlie moved to stand along the wall next to an elderly witch he knew to be Augusta Longbottom and began polite discussion as they both watched the interaction before them.

"Hello," said the round faced boy shyly as he glanced over at where Harry stood on his own stool while Madame Malkins began to pin his robes to the correct length, "Hogwarts, too?"

"Yes," Said Harry shyly as he gave the slightly taller boy beside him a small smile.

"I'm here with my Gran," The other boy said with a smile of his own. "She's just over there. After this we're going on to get my school books. You?"

"That's Charlie, He and his brother Bill are taking me shopping today. Bill's getting my other supplies now though because we're running late. After this we're going to get my wand."

"That sound nice, I don't think I've introduced myself yet. I'm Neville Longbottom. It's nice to meet you," Neville said as he turned to give him a more confident smile than he'd shown yet.

"I'm Harry, Harry Potter,"Harry said watching as Neville's eyes grew wide in shock and his mouth opened to reply.

"That's you done dear." Madame Malkins said with a smile as Harry hopped down from the stool.

"That's you done dear." Madame Malkins said with a smile as Harry hopped down from the stool.

"I guess I'll see you later Neville, bye!" Harry said with a friendly smile and a wave before he and Charlie, after saying his own goodbye to Neville's grandmother, followed Madame Malkins back to the front of her shop to pay for his purchases.

Exiting the small shop they chatted about nonsequential topics as they made their way towards a narrow and slightly shabby shop that lay further down the street. A sign hung over the door and proclaimed in peeling gold lettering that held a magic all their own 'Ollivanders: Makers of Fine Wands since 382 B.C.,'

In the window lay a single wand on a faded purple cushion that seemed to pull you forward with a gentle nudge in the back of your mind as though calling you home.
As they entered the sound of a tinkling bell rang out from somewhere in the depths of the shop. It was a relatively tiny place, empty except for a single, spindly chair that was shoved up against the wall leaving a small stage like area that was surrounded by rows of colored boxes and the desk that seemed to act as a service counter.

The air within the shop seemed to hum with its own secret magic that both soothed him and made him feel uncomfortable.

"Good afternoon," A soft voice said suddenly causing Harry to jump and let out a squeak of surprise.

There before them stood an older man with wide, pale eyes that shone like twin pools of moonlight through the dim lights of his shop.

"Hello," Harry murmured shyly, unconsciously moving closer to Charlies comforting warmth as he watched the man's eyes focus on the air around them.

"Ah yes," He said finally as his gaze finally focused back on Harry. "I was wondering when I'd be seeing you mister Potter. You have your mother's eyes. It seems only yesterday she was in here herself, buying her first wand. Ten and a quarter inches long, swishy, made of willow. Nice wand for charm work," He began to mutter more to himself than to Harry as he slowly made his way forward. "Your father, on the other hand, favored a mahogany wand. Eleven inches. Pliable. A little more power and excellent for transfiguration. Well, I say your father favored it - it's really the wand that chooses the wizard, of course."

Mr. Ollivander had come so close that he and Harry were almost nose to nose. Harry could see himself reflected in those misty eyes and feel the warm weight of Charlie's arm settle around his waist in a comforting gesture.

"Hmmm," Ollivander hummed as he rocked back on his heels. "Well, now mister Potter. Let me see." He pulled a long tape measure with silver markings from the breast pocket of his shirt. "Which is your wand arm?"

"I'm right handed sir."

"Hold out your arm. That's it." He encouraged as he measured Harry from shoulder to finger, wrist to elbow, shoulder to floor, knee to armpit and even around his head.

"Every Ollivander wand has a core of a powerful magical substance, mister Potter. We use unicorn hairs, phoenix tail feathers, and the heartstrings of dragons. No two Ollivander wands are the same, just as no two unicorns, dragons, or phoenixes are quite the same. And of course, you will never get such good results with another wizard's wand."

With a start Harry realized that the tape measure, which was now measuring between his nostrils, was doing this on its own as mister Ollivander flitted through the shelves, and took down multiple boxes, seemingly at random.

"That will do," he said, and the tape measure crumpled into a heap on the floor.

"Right then, mister Potter. Try this one..."

From there it soon became a blur as wand after wand proved to be wrong and were quickly discarded. However, with each new wand Harry went through mister Ollivander became more and more excited.
Sometime during the wand testing Bill had entered the store and struck up a quite conversation as they watched the proceedings with amusement.

"Tricky customer, eh? Not to worry, we'll find the perfect match here somewhere," Ollivander said as he turned to grab another wand only to pause when he saw one particular dark red box, "I wonder, now... yes, why not... unusual combination, holly and phoenix feather, eleven inches, nice and supple," He said as he almost reverently handed Harry the next wand.

Harry, upon taking the wand noticed the small wiggling feeling of warmth in his fingers. It felt positive, but not quite right. Raising the wand above his head Harry brought it swishing down through the dusty air and... A fizzle.

Ollivander however, seemed more excited than ever and quickly rushed to an almost hidden room in the back of his shop before returning with arms laden with even more wand boxes.

"These are my most rare and powerful wands mister Potter, I'm positive that one of these shall be yours. Now, instead of trying them all, I want you to focus on them and try only the ones you can feel a connection with. Well, go on."

He seemed far too excited, as though he had made the scholastic breakthrough of a century or had won the million galleon lottery.

Harry looked at the boxes and could feel that same pull that had led him to Gringotts not twenty four hours ago. Moving forward Harry carefully sifted through the various wand boxes until his fingers finally brushed against a plain black satin box that was tied closed with a delicate emerald green ribbon.

With shaking fingers Harry carefully lifted it up and unwrapped it, his heart pounding in his ears as his magic reached out to the wand inside. The sudden stillness within the shop didn't register as though magic itself were holding its breath.

Finally the wand was revealed, it was sleek and delicate yet powerful, and was a strange yet beautiful mixture of colors. The main color was an inky black with glittering green rings.

Taking a deep breath Harry picked the wand up and immediately felt that same rush of warm magic swell up inside of him, swishing the wand through the air a warm breeze seemed to swell through the shop before circling around Harry and ruffling his hair before finally settling down.

"Curious that that particular wand would choose you when you have soul bonded with a dragon handler," Mister Ollivander said in that same soft voice as he moved about putting the other wands back in their places with swift efficiency.

"Why do you say that?" Harry asked. He already had a few guesses as to how it was he knew what with how he had studied the air around him and Charlie earlier.

"That particular wand is very special mister Potter. It contains a dual core of both phoenix feather as well as dragon heart string but the wood itself is also very special. The wood being from a blackwood tree that was lit on fire by multiple dragons but never burned. The wood turned from solid black to black with those marvelous green rings."

"The heart strings are themselves from an extremely rare dragon, rumored to breathe blue flames that many call 'ice fire'. They dubbed the dragon the 'Ice Wielder' for its almost crystal colored body. The last one to be found was over 80 years ago in the Fagaras Mountains – the highest mountains in Romania. Since then they've all but disappeared though they're still out there, just
unable to be found. It's lucky that I was granted one of the heart strings... In fact I believe that I was the only one who has made a wand with such a core."

Finally arriving at the Leaky Cauldron a few minutes after noon they were just in time to see Arthur exiting the floo.

"Ah! I see you boys are here already," Arthur said with a grin as he began to dust himself off. "Well then, would you three like to eat here or eat on the way?"

"Well, there's a really good Fish and Chips truck called 'Bernards FC' parked between here and the library. We could eat on the was and have more time to browse if you want?"

"That sounds wonderful son," Arthur said as they made their way to the exit.

Entering the vast and magnificent London library the quartet took a moment to just take in the sight before them...

The walls of the library were lined with towering book cases and, scattered strategically throughout the hall, were clumps of tables and comfortable looking leather chairs. As they followed Harry up to the large desk, and the rather imposing woman behind it, the three Weasleys continued to look around in awe. This place was so very different from the library at Hogwarts.

"Hello ma'am," Harry began as he smiled shyly up at the imposing woman before him, "These three and I were wondering if we could get library cards and possibly check out a book or two?"

"Of course dear," The woman said as her face morphed from stern to friendly with a single soft smile as she saw how well mannered Harry was.

Within twenty minutes the four exited the library each with an armful of books and a brand new library card in their pockets. After the typical paperwork had been filled and filed Harry had walked the three through the various sections of literature, loosing Bill in the world travel section and Arthur in the one for electronics, finally he and Charlie found themselves immersed in the fiction section. They could have stayed there for hours if not for Bills habit of checking the time.

Ducking into an side alley not far away from the library their books were shrunk and placed securely inside of Bills jean pocket along with Harry's school supplies.

"So what do you have left to do today?" Arthur asked curiously as he saw that he still had a few minutes until he had to leave and return to work.

"We plan on getting Harry here a nice new wardrobe to go with all of his nice new things," Bill said with a chuckle as Harry blushed scarlet.

"Well then Harry," Arthur said as he grinned down at his youngest son, "I want you to make sure that each and every piece of clothing is one hundred percent you alright? When I come home tonight I hope to see my son in all of his glory."

"Alright," Harry said with a slightly watery smile as he surprised himself and pulled Arthur into a hug.

With a kiss to Harry's forehead Arthur was off and the remaining trio were off to the shops.
A fluttery movement in the corner of his eye caught Harry's attention. Slowly turning so that he could better see the garment Harry was struck speechless.

Raising a shaking hand Harry gently caressed the material. The fabric was a beautiful light green color with designs in a dark green thread, the fabric was cinched in at the waist before flowing out and ending around mid thigh level.

Harry was lost in the simplistic beauty of the article, so much so that he didn't notice Bill coming near him.

"Do you like it Harry?" He asked with a soft smile. Of course Harry would be drawn to something so cute, it fit him.

"Yes," Harry said absently as he continued to look at the top. "But its for a girl, I can't wear it."

"Whoever said that? If you like it, and you feel comfortable in it, then you should get it. Remember what dad said, one hundred percent you. He wouldn't care if that meant you went around in nothing but a garbage bag as long as you were happy. Why don't you go try it on?"

Biting his lip Harry glanced between the shirt and Bill before finally looking over at Charlie who was grinning at him. Upon meeting his eyes Charlie merely nodded and grabbed the hanger.

With a blush Harry took it and walked into the changing room. With a quick glance at his reflection Harry quickly turned away.

For as long as he could remember the Dursleys had told him he was nothing, that he was ugly and a waist of space, he didn't know when it had happened but at some point he had started to believe them.

In his eyes he was hideous. His skin was way too pale, his body far too skinny and his hair was something a rat would be ashamed to call its nest. Harry, no matter how much he liked the top, was afraid to put it on. He was afraid that the moment it touched his skin it would be ruined.

But, he really wanted to know what it would look like...

With a deep breath and trembling fingers Harry shed Rons old shirt from his emaciated frame and carefully pulled on the object of his distraction.

The fabric felt like water as it slipped across his skin, so light and smooth yet, at the same time, it clung to his shape as though it was made just for him.

With a deep, steadying breath Harry turned to examine himself and gasped.

For the first time he could remember Harry felt beautiful and strong, something that he had never felt while wearing Dudleys old clothing.

With a confident grin Harry stepped out of the changing room and, for once, reveled in the positive attention that he was receiving.

Flooing back into the Burrow Harry was immediately overwhelmed as Molly began to tell Harry just how adorable he was in his new outfit. Harry had decided to wear the light green shirt he had found first paired with a pair of black slack and new flat black trainers.

"Oh, you three arrived just in time. The healer and a member of the DMCW just came through a
moment ago. Their in the living room now, I'll be in in a moment with some tea," Molly said before she bustled around getting the tea tray together.

Moving through to the living room Harry couldn't help but blush as he caught sight of the two visitors.

"Healer Smythe," Charlie said in shock upon seeing the healer who had treated Harry the day before sitting on the couch next to a woman he had never met before, "I didn't know that you were coming. I thought it would only be a representative from the DMCW."

"Yes well, I thought it would be a good idea to check up on Harry here and perform a proper introduction," Healer Smythe said with a grin as he looked at the little one standing beside Charlie, the changes that he saw in Harry within just twenty four hours were amazing. "Harry, this is Elizabeth Smythe, head of the DMCW and my wife..."

Authors Note: I had planned to include more than this but I think it was getting a little too long. I hope you guys enjoy this chapter, even if its mostly information.

Let me know what you think!

Prepare for the chapters!
**Authors Note:** Okay guys, so a few things about this chapter... I've been reading a lot of memory fics lately (love 'em!), so when I was plotting out this chapter I couldn't help but do a little homage to the great genre! Anyways, **WARNINGS** include: scenes of child abuse, single scene of child molestation (not too graphic), talking about said abuse and molestation, typical Harry adorableness. You have been warned.

**Disclaimer:** I only own the sequence of the words. The words themselves were invented by others (did you know Shakespeare invented many terms we use today such as assassination?), the focus of this word sequence belongs to a genius (bows to my JK Rowling shrine), and this site that they are posted on belongs to an unknown genius (bows to my computer screen). Thank you!

this = normal story

this = memory

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**Chapter 5: Life at the Dursleys**

"Harry, this is Elizabeth Smythe, head of the DMCW and my wife..."

Harry took a moment to study the couple sitting on the couch, Healer Smythe looked much as he had the day before apart from his outfit. Where yesterday his sandy blond hair and chocolate eyes were offset by the traditional, and slightly atrocious, lime green robes that served as St. Mungo's uniform, today they were complimented by rich cream colored robes. She however had dark hair which was pulled back into an elegant twist away from her face and bangs that framed her dark blue eyes which were highlighted with her dark grey robes.

Harry had already met Healer Smythe before and knew him to be a nice and seemingly trustworthy man. So much so that he couldn't see him marrying someone cruel.

Making up his mind Harry stepped forward holding out his small hand to the woman in front of him.

"It's a pleasure to meet you misses Smythe, I understand that you require some answers from me?"

"Yes, indeed I do dear," Misses Smythe said taken aback, yet pleased, with the polite boy in front of him. "I will try to make this as quick and possible but that would work best if we were all to sit down and try to get comfortable?"

"Of course," Bill said with a smile as he watched Charlie guide Harry towards the chair before proceeding to lean on its side.

"Now Harry, here is what is going to happen right now," Misses Smythe began as she looked at Harry's nervous form. Usually a case like this would be pretty open and close, the only difference now was the fact that if a reporter were to get ahold of this story all hell would break loose...

"First I am going to ask you a series of yes and no questions, after that I may ask for details on specific instances and finally I need you to provide a few memories as proof. All you will need to do for that is to think about the times I will tell you and I will extract a copy of the memory and
place it into a pensieve, which is like a television for memories. Do you understand?"

"Y-Yes ma'am," Harry said nervously and with a deep breath as he leaned into Charlie's side for comfort. While he hoped that she wouldn't ask him if certain things had happened he knew that the Dursleys wouldn't be brought to justice otherwise. While he was scared he trusted the Weasleys and the Weasleys had said that they wouldn't care what had happened. That no matter what he was family. The least he could do was be honest and that's what he was going to do!

Looking up at Charlie's encouraging grin and then at Bill's Harry knew what he had to do. If he had to tell the truth they couldn't get angry!

"You two have to promise that you won't get angry!" Harry said suddenly and with determination as he looked steadily into both sets of blue eyes. "No matter what. No yelling!"

Seeing the hard look held within Harry's usually gentle eyes both brothers gulped before nodding solemnly, a tendril of dread unfurling deep within their guts.

"Okay," Harry said with a deep, settling, breathe, "I'm ready."

"Alright Harry, just answer honestly to each question, even if you're embarrassed. Just nod or shake your head if you want..."


And so the questions went on including if he had ever been kicked, punched, slapped, etcetera until finally she asked the question they had all been dreading...

"Were you ever touched, or been forced to touch, Vernon Dursley in an inappropriate way?"

With tears brimming in his eyes Harry looked down and nodded his head. Beside him Charlie and Bill's faces morphed into looks of pure fury as their bodies stiffened and their hands clenched into fists.

""Were you ever touched, or been forced to touch, Petunia, Dudley or Marge Dursley in an inappropriate way?"

Finally Harry was able to shake his no, much to the others' relief.

"Alright Harry, you're doing very well so far. Now I need to ask a few more questions, just to clarify a few details so as to be prepared for the memories. Are you alright with that?" With another nod from Harry she continued.

What did Vernon Dursley do when he touched you or forced you to touch him? You don't need to go into details you just need to point okay? Where did he touch you in that inappropriate way?"

With a trembling hand Harry pointed to first his mouth then chest and then to his crotch and thighs before letting his hand drop much to the others' relief.

"You're doing very well Harry. Now, where did he force you to touch him? Just point."

Harry's hand lifted so that he could point a single trembling finger at his crotch before letting it fall again as he curled into Charlie's side yet again, reveling in the affectionate hug that he received.

"Alright Harry, you've done very well. Now, I'm going to have you think about three specific
memories for me alright?" Upon receiving Harry's nod Elizabeth Smythe smiled encouragingly before continuing, "Alright Harry, I want you to think about one of the times you can remember them leaving you alone when you were in pain, the first time Vernon touched you inappropriately, and one of the times you remember being hurt the worst. We will go in and view these memories before we come back and copy the rest alright?"

"W-why do you need to see those three here? Why can't you just take them and watch them somewhere else like you're going to do with the others? Do I have to watch them?" Harry babbled out as he looked at her with wide panicked eyes.

"It's alright Harry," She said gently as she leaned forward to pat Harry's hand soothingly. "The only reason we're going to be watching them here is so that we can ask you some questions in case we need anything cleared up. If we do this now then it's all over and done with, the sooner it's done the sooner you can move on. Now, you don't have to view them with us dear, you can stay out here and read if you would like?"

"Alright," Harry said with a nod and a small smile, "As long as it helps to end this sooner I'll do it. But I don't want to see them, I'll just stay out here and read. Would you be able to take all of the memories now though? Put the rest in a jar or something? I don't think it's a good idea to wait until after."

"Of course dear."

A few minutes later and they were ready to enter the pensieve. Harry was nervous of course but he trusted them to not judge him. Since meeting them Bill and Charlie had been nothing but caring towards him and the Smythes were only trying to help him so, with a slightly nervous smile, Harry grabbed a book and attempted to lose himself in it. With a chuckle Charlie leaned down to press a soft kiss to Harry's forehead to which he was rewarded with a blush that only deepened as Bill ruffled his hair.

As Harry desperately tried to immerse himself in his book the other four placed a single fingertip each into the silvery liquid of the pensieve...

~Within the Pensieve~

One, slightly dizzying, fall later and the quartet were greeted with the first memory...

They were in a spotless kitchen that was full of the most modern and top-of-the-line appliances and what seemed to be an ever present underlying scent of bleach, before them in front of the stove stood a young boy, no older than four but who was obviously too small for his age. His hair was an inky black mess from where it was tucked behind his ears in a futile effort to keep it out of his eyes, He wore nothing more than an overly large grey shirt that hung around him as though he were wearing a tent and ended mid calf.

The little one was standing on a small stool just high enough to bring his eye level just above the skillets. The stove was full of pans, one with sausage, another bacon, one with eggs and the last containing hash.

They watched in worry as Harry stood on the tips of his toes as he reached his thin arm back to flip the strips of bacon over. Just as he's about to flip the final strip, leaning heavily against the stove front to balance himself, he didn't notice the stool tipping over and as such wasn't prepared for when it came out from under him.
As he fell backwards his arms automatically began flailing in a futile effort to catch himself only to catch onto the edge of the egg pan and pulling it down with him.

As his small body hit the ground with a deafening 'thump' the hot oil cascaded down and covered his fair skin in blistering burns.

As a piercing scream tore through the young throat Vernon and Petunia entered the kitchen with equal looks of disgust and horror. For one split moment the quartet thought that they were at least concerned for their nephew before their words of shock finally processed.

"My breakfast/kitchen!"

These monsters were more worried about their precious food and kitchen then they were their own nephew!

The next few minutes were spent watching as Harry curled up into a ball while he was continuously berated by his so called relatives, his screams of pain morphed into whimpers.

Suddenly Vernon Dursley broke off from his blustering and instead chose to sink his stubby fingers into Harry's hair before hauling him to his feet, Harry's scream of pain was subdued however, as though he had been expecting it.

Without another word Vernon began to drag Harry from the room and down the small hallway to the front room and the stairs. Thinking that he was going to take Harry upstairs to a bedroom they were horrified to find that he opened instead the cupboard door nestled below the stairs.

Throwing Harry unceremoniously into the tiny room the others took the chance to look inside. It was small, smaller than any cupboard they had seen and was cramped. The walls were lined with shelves filled with various cleaning agents and the main floor space was taken by a vacuum cleaner and various brooms, mops and buckets. However, squeezed into a corner of the small room sat what looked to be the mattress from a baby's crib and on top of that mattress lay Harry's sprawled out form.

"Now listen here boy," Vernon began with a growl, his mustache quivering and face turning purple, "Since you saw fit to ruin this family's breakfast, I see fit that you not get any. For a week! Now, I'm taking my family out for breakfast and you are to stay inside your room. If I find that you have snuck out or done anything freaky you will not have anything to eat for the rest of the month. Am I clear?"

"Yes uncle Vernon," Harry managed to whimper out as he attempted to pull himself into a ball on the small mattress.

"Good!" With that Vernon Dursley slammed the door and, much to the others' horror, proceeded to lock the various padlocks and deadbolts they had failed to notice before.

With that the first memory ended and the next began to fade into view.

Once again they were in the kitchen. Harry looked to be just slightly older than the last memory and seemed to have grown just slightly taller. He was wearing the same shirt as he had the last time and now it fell to just below his knees. As opposed to cleaning this time Harry was on his hands and knees manually scrubbing the floor with a mixture of harsh cleaning chemicals. A few minutes pass and they begin to wonder why Harry had included this memory, that is, until Vernon stumbles through the entryway, a bottle of brandy in his hand and a stagger in his steps.

Harry attempts to avoid him, he knows what happens when his uncle is drunk. He gets more
violent than ever before, it's best to just avoid him...

Vernon just stands there looking at Harry as he continues to scrub at the floor before suddenly he spoke.

"Boy! Get me a glass for my brandy!" His voice is slightly thick but strong.

"Yes uncle Vernon," Harry said quickly as he stood and grabbed the step stool from beside the fridge before carefully placing it before the appropriate cabinet and climbing up. As he stretched to reach the glasses Harry could feel Vernons gaze burning into him but shrugged it off as drunken paranoia.

The four viewers watched in growing trepidation as the shirt began to slowly rise up to mid thigh level and Vernon began to stare hungrily at the young boy.

Harry, upon successfully grabbing the preferred glass hopped down from the stool and brought the glass to where Vernon waited at the kitchen table. As Harry came closer Vernon struck, his hand shooting out and grabbing onto Harry's wrist, his narrowed eyes looking straight into Harrys shocked and nervous ones.

Vernon pulled Harry closer with one strong tug of his arm, Harry's small body collided with Vernons side as his other arm wrapped firmly around his waist. Harry's eyes widen as he begins to panic, this is different than what he usually did and Harry didn't like it!

Bill and Charlie looked ready to kill and the Smythes weren't much better, they knew which memory this was then and they already wanted to look away as Vernons hand slid down to fondle Harry between his legs and Harry let out a short scream only for Vernons other hand to clamp down on his mouth. Charlie felt ready to die as he saw the tears well up in his little mates eyes before finally spilling over.

As this torture continues they can tell that Vernon is whispering horrible things to Harry but luckily they can't quite hear it all over their own screaming, be it out loud or in their heads.

Vernons breath came quickly as he continued to touch Harry, his hand now removed from Harry's mouth so that he could hear his sobs better as his other hand now trails over Harry's chest.

"That's a good little freak," Vernon says as Harry finally goes limp against him, his small body going into shock. Vernon pulls his hand away from Harry's groin and grabs his hand forcing it to lay against the obvious bulge in his trousers and Harry's vision begins to fade around the edges.

Sanctuary comes in the sound of the front door opening and Petunia's call of 'Honey, I'm home~!'

Harry had never been more thankful towards his aunt then he was at that moment as Vernon let him fall to the kitchens floor as he stood to greet his wife.

With an absent command to Harry Vernon left and Harry was safe... for now.

Elizabeth Smythe had never hated her job more than she did at that moment. They had only gone through two of the memories and already they were in tears. Though her companions were the lucky ones. She would have to watch the other memories that Harry had provided, the innocent looking vial now weighing heavily in her pocket. With tears still streaming from her eyes she turned towards where the last memory was starting, swearing with all of her being that Harry Potter would see justice...

This time they were in the living room, pictures of a baby whale of a boy covering every available...
surface with not a single picture of the raven haired child whose memory this was.

In the middle of the room stood four people, Harry who looked to be around seven years old and was now wearing a pair of far too large pants to go with the shirt stood with his head down and his hands behind his back as the boy from the pictures, whose clothes they obviously were, was wailing at Petunia.

"He kept stealing my answers mummy! The teacher asked me and he made me get them wrong just so that he could look good!" Dudley Dursley screeched as fake tears ran down his face.

"Oh my poor little Dudders," Petunia cooed before throwing a glare at Harry as she enveloped Dudley with a hug, "Come on, mummy will get you a nice big bowl of ice cream while daddy deals with the freak. Doesn't that sound nice dearest?"

With that she began to lead the now happy Dudley towards the kitchen as Vernon advanced forward.

With a resounding SMACK Harry was sent to the ground holding a hand to his glowing cheek. Fingers dug sharply into his skin as beefy hands fisted into raven locks and Vernon hauled Harry back up and onto his feet before proceeding to punch every bit of him that Vernon could reach. Moving faster and with more power than one would think possible he rained blows down onto Harry's small form. After what seemed to be an eternity he finally allowed Harry's small form to fall to the ground.

His pale skin is now marred by the beginnings of bruises, his bottom lip split and his eye swelling in the start of a black eyes. Harry attempts to curl in on himself, breaths coming in hitched but before they could process it a barrage of kicks were being aimed at him.

Vernon now had both hands planted on the wall in an effort to anchor himself in place as he continuously brought his foot back and rocketed it forward with as much power as he could.

The Weasley brothers watched with snarls on their faces as this madman continued to torment their little raven. If this woman didn't get Vernon put somewhere where they couldn't find him they would kill him!

With an audible CRACK and a sharp cry from Harry misses Smythe finally stopped the memory. She didn't know when she had begun shaking nor when her husband had held her against his strong chest, all she knew was that this little boy would get justice. Now more than ever Elizabeth Smythe was going to do her damnedest to see these monsters put behind bars!

With a steadying breath she spoke, her voice still holding an obvious tremble and tears still streaming down her face as the others looked at her. Oh how she dreaded watching the rest of these memories...

"I... Believe that we have viewed enough. I will take these to Madame Bones and have the Dursleys arrested immediately. I will do my best to keep Harry out of the proceedings but his testimony may still be required. I will keep in touch. Oh, and mister Weasley," She said as she turned to look Charlie in the eye with a small smile and a glimmer of happiness in her eyes, "Congratulations on finding your soul mate."

With that they exited the pensive and looked around themselves at the living room for any sign of the young boy whose past they had just witnessed and had caused their hearts to break not two minutes ago.
Upon catching sight of him they couldn't help the smiles that broke out over their faces. Harry had fallen asleep curled up on the arm of the couch where Charlie had been sitting, one hand smushed under his cheek and the other holding his place in his book.

"We shall be going now but give Harry our best," Healer Smythe said as he guided his wife towards the door. "We shall be in touch."

Ragnok, the goblin in charge of Gringotts, had been constantly working to right the wrongs done under his nose.

The goblin responsible for all of these wrongs had seen justice done in the form of his head on a spike deep within the caverns. If it had not been so important for the matter to be settled quickly he would have seen him in the pits battling for his family's honour before being fed to the dragons hidden deep below the banks floors. But this goblin had been a coward and his family was as well, they were perfectly content to wallow in their despair and had happily accepted the dishonour he had bestowed upon them as their inheritance. Not one had denied their new position so not one would be spared.

Countless hours had just been spent sorting out just what had been done with the Potter accounts and what had been put aside even before Griphook had been removed from his place.

During the war James Potter had, essentially, decided to put everything on hold. The investments still drew revenue but little else had happened, no new investments, no new inheritance or bequeathments, nothing.

Ragnok had kept a very detailed record of all that could be gained and, as such, the traitor had been able to see all that could be claimed and taken. And so it had been taken, though none of them had known that until they began to sort through the accounts of Albus Dumbledore.

It appeared as though Albus had been taking from more than just the Potters, though how he had managed none knew, though what had been interesting to find was that each account belonged to a line that was either dead or that had all but ended.

That is, all but one.

Ragnok looked at the parchment he had been presented in absolute shock.

The tale of the Weasley fortune was like a muggles brain teaser for the goblins. In the past they had flourished, invested wisely and bought even wiser, they had been very fortunate indeed. That is until around seventy years ago when everything vanished.

Some had concluded that it was lost to gambling and debts, others to drink, but Ragnok knew better. As a youngling he had started by apprenticing to the goblin in charge of the Weasley accounts, he had been awed at their goblin esque intellect when it came to wise investments as well as their ability to create profitable connections.

They would not have wasted their money so carelessly. And so, this report was vastly welcomed.

It appears as though the two families Albus Dumbledore had wronged the most were now irrevocably joined. That same connection was also allowing for both families to see justice done.

No, this would not end Albus Dumbledore, but it would surely mark his fall...
Authors Note: Okay, a little shorter than usual but I didn't want to keep you guys waiting for much longer! I hope you enjoy this latest chapter my lovelies~! ^-^

So I got my first flame in the last chapter, LOVED IT! If you want to make me laugh go ahead and send a flame! ;) I literally find them hilarious! Especially when in ALL CAPS! It makes me picture a little chibi character throwing a fit. Comedy gold!

PS. I apologize to everyone who reviewed last chapter. I absolutely ADORED all of your feedback and had intended to reply to it but I kept getting side tracked. I would like to let you know that its appreciated and EVERY review spurs me on to write quicker!

Happy reading my dear lovelies and make sure to let me know what you thought~!
The Dursley Fallout

Little Dragon

**Authors Note:** Now, this chapter is written a little differently, my bad, but I hope you'll still like it! Enjoy~! ^-^

**Disclaimer:** I own nothing! ~sobs~

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**Chapter 6: The Dursley Fallout**

The next few days were spent in a constant flurry of activity that both exhilarated and, at times, overwhelmed Harry.

Each day was spent with conversations, laughter, jokes and the occasional explosion from the twins room that the rest of the house seemed to be used to yet still kept Harry on edge. Whenever he would ask the twins about it however they would just laugh, give him a brotherly hug and keep going with what they were doing.

Somehow, through some absurd burst of luck, Harry had found a family. The little orphan boy now had more than he had ever dared to hope for. Now he had a mother in Molly, a father in Arthur, brothers in Bill, Percy, the twins and Ron, and something even more in Charlie.

Somehow, he knew that Charlie would be whatever he needed him to be, and he was. At night when nightmares tormented his and shivers of fear racked his small frame, Charlie was an ever present comfort. He would hold him close and whisper assurances in his ear as Harry sobbed into his chest. Even in his moments of torment he found undeniable comfort in Charlie's arms.

In a single day his world had been flipped upside down, and every day after that it had just gotten better! Harry was positive that his family, his *real* and *true* family, was the best in the world. Yes his parents were dead but Harry was sure that they wouldn't mind him being happy with someone else. He knew that now...

The Weasleys had been a blessing for Harry. They didn't judge him based on what he wore or how he looked, they just saw Harry. That first day shopping, when they had seen him and his new choices in clothing all they asked if Harry liked it, and when he did they liked it too. Harry finally knew the truth behind Bills words that day in the shop. He could wear a diaper made of rocks and as long as he was comfortable in it they would not care.

Here Harry was liberated. Here he had a home. A *family*! And he couldn't be happier.

That is, until he was...

The news had come early in the morning. So early in fact that only Molly and Harry were up.

Bill and Charlie had quickly gotten used to Harry's habit of waking early and Harry had quickly gotten used to heading down stairs without them.

Helping Molly prepare breakfast had become habit to Harry as of late, it was one of the few times during the day that he and his new mother could bond. While Harry would occasionally slip into the habit of calling her ma'am still he was growing more and more used to calling her mum, and
each time that he used that simple three letter word her eyes would go misty and her smile wouldn't fade for hours at a time.

The twins had noticed this and used it to their own advantage of course. When they knew that their latest trick would get them into trouble all they had to do was hide behind Harry and get him to call her mum and ask for a snack. Worked every time.

Of course Molly had realized this, but she was happy to play along. After all, it was a bonding moment for Harry and the twins along with a way for her to fatten Harry up a bit without any complaints.

While Molly and Harry were happily cooking breakfast for the household they were slightly shocked by the arrival of two official looking owls. Upon letting them in they discovered that the owls were from Gringotts and the Ministry of Magic respectively. With a glance at each other they quickly a letter each and read aloud what they contained...

The Dursleys had been arrested and their trial was set for noon today, and Harry would have to testify.

Elizabeth Smythe hated herself at that moment, she knew that she had tried her hardest but it appeared that that just wasn't enough this time around.

Harry Potter would have to take the stand. Her only consolation is that Amelia had assured her it would be a mere formality. Amelia, after all, had also seen each and every one of those horrific memories as well.

When Elizabeth had first taken this case to Olivia she had been both horrified and furious. Immediately she had sent several aurors to 'quietly' take the Dursleys into custody, Elizabeth could only hope to see the memory of the event.

Amelia had been the most vocal for a quick trial as well. She and Elizabeth had shared the burden of watching Harry's memories and as such had done it together. Within three memories Amelia's usually strict countenance had crumbled and the two women had been quick to draw comfort from each other. She and Amelia had been friends for years, ever since they had both become heads of their departments, and as such they had been through many hard situations. But none had effected them like this...

For days they had been heartbroken due to the atrocities they had witnessed done to poor Harry at his own relatives hands. How anyone could do that to an innocent child was beyond her and quite honestly, she supported the punishment that Amelia was pushing for.

"YOU HAVE NO RIGHT!" Came the thundering voice of one Vernon Octavius Dursley from within the ministry holding cell, "I DEMAND THAT YOU RELEASE US IMMEDIATELY!"

For hours now he and his family had been locked within this blasted cage. Those freaks had had the gall to come to his home and arrested in front of the whole bloody neighborhood!

~Flashback~

The sound of sirens tore through the otherwise silent community of Little Whinging, rousing its inhabitants from their peaceful dreams. It was just after midnight when the cars pulled to a screeching halt outside the house of number 4 and the first heads peeked through their windows blinds.
When the other occupants of Little Whinging saw just where the police had parked they quickly rushed outside for a better look.

"We know your in there Dursleys!" Came a magnified voice through the crackling speakers of a megaphone which a tall bald black man with broad shoulders was holding. His voice was deep and slow and, though many could say it sounded reassuring at times, at the moment it held nothing but cold authority and anger. "Come out with your hands up!"

"What's going on?"

"Did that Potter boy finally manage to get arrested?"

"What happened?"

"Why are the police here?"

The whispers and murmurs rang out through streets as a crowd of pajama clad inhabitants began to crowd behind the police cars in order to have a better look at the scene playing out before them.

The front door of number 4 was thrown open with such force that the echoing BANG resonated throughout the streets and quieted the watching crowd.

"WHAT IN THE BLOODY BLAZES ARE YOU ON ABOUT!?" Came the mighty roar from Vernon Dursley as his face began to strobe quickly from red to purple to a sickly white to puce green before beginning again.

"Looks like he's having a conniption," came a voice from the center of the crowd as they watched on in sick delight as the other three Dursleys crowded around Vernon's blustering form.

"Vernon Dursley, Petunia Dursley, Marjorie Dursley, you are each under arrest for crimes ranging from theft and embezzlement to abuse and attempted murder. Dudley Dursley you are also being taken into custody until we can find suitable housing for you," The same officer said, for some reason still into the megaphone as though he wanted to make sure that the whole street heard.

"Excuse me, coming through, pardon me, move!" Came the voice of Candace Eggerbee, the local newspaper columnist as she weaved her way through the crowd and to where the police were, a pad of paper and a pen clutched in her hands like they were her own child. "Sir, sir!" She said attempting to get the police officers attention.

"Yes?" He asked as he finally lowered the megaphone as his companions wrestled with Marge and Vernon attempting to handcuff the mammoth beings. "What can I help you with?"

"My name is Candace Eggerbee, I'm a columnist with the local newspaper. Could I ask you some questions about just why this arrest is taking place?" She asked breathlessly as she fumbled with a recording device, "If you could speak into this I would be grateful."

"Certainly," The man said with a gleam in his eye as he took the recorder, which was already on, from the flustered woman and held it up so that he could speak clearly into it.

"Thank you, now start with your name and then tell me why you're here."

"My name is Kingsley Shacklebolt, I am the lead officer in this case. A few days ago one Harry Potter was taken to a hospital by a concerned individual and it was found that he was being abused in this household. Further investigation shown that the abuse was brought forth by each of the Dursley family and that there were several instances in which mister Potter could have died. Also,
we found that Vernon Dursley was not only stealing and embezzling the funds given to him for mister Potters care but also from his own place of business among other things. Now, if you'll excuse me it's time to take our leave."

With that he climbed back inside one of the three cars which had arrived, one holding Marge, one Vernon and the other holding Petunia and Dudley.

Not even a minute later they were gone, the sounds of Vernon and Marge's yelling carrying back to them on the wind...

~End Flashback~

Vernon was incensed. How dare that little freak run off and tattle on them!? He should have drowned the little freak as soon as he could and be done with it!

What had he been thinking to listen to that damn note!? No one else knew of the damn whelp staying with them, no one had come to check on him in any case. He could have easily gotten rid of the brat and no one would have been the wiser! He could have kept the money too, that damn fool Dumbledore certainly never came around to check on the freak so he could have done it.

The only thing that brat was good for was cooking, cleaning, and pleasure. Be it the pleasure of feeling skin tear and bones break beneath his hands or the forbidden pleasure of his young body, teaching the brat the only things he would ever be good for. Yes, Vernon had taken particular pleasure in letting the freak know what would happen if he ever truly disappointed him and he looked forward to that day.

His own little secret, one that not even Petunia knew. He had hoped to share it with his son in time, after all his son was so very like him and his hormones would be kicking in soon... Yes, he was going to teach his son everything he'd ever need to know with the boy. How to take for himself and give nothing, how to find pleasure in those pitiful whimpers and sobs for mercy. After all his son already knew the pleasure he could get through physical force and Vernon knew without a doubt that they could have fun with the freak in even more ways then he already was.

Vernon had yet to truly rape the pitiful freak yet, he was saving that experience so that he could share it with his beautiful boy. Teach him the difference between used goods and what was just right for the picking.

But somehow the damned freak had slipped his bonds! Even after all the effort he had put in to keep them from finding him, those damned freaks!

"What is the meaning of this Amelia!?” Albus Dumbledore said angrily as he stormed through her office doors completely ignoring her assistant and the stares he was receiving from the aurors he had stormed past.

"I'm afraid I don't know what you are talking about headmaster Dumbledore, but I do know that you have no right to speak to me on such familiar terms nor to barge into my office unannounced,” Amelia said coolly as she leveled a stern glare at the man she had just recently lost all respect for.

After everything that she had heard this man had done she was determined to see justice done. Just this morning she had sat down with Arthur Weasley and discussed in depth all of the wrongs this man had done and was still doing, currently she was working on finding a way to take this man down. For now she would have to settle for taking out his key basis' which seemed to be his
money, which Gringotts was currently handling, his ally's, which seemed to be falling to Harry Potters innocent charm, and his social standing.

During today's trial she hoped to begin her own role in crumbling his political foundation. They weren't fools, Albus had spent countless years building himself up as the hero, as the leader of the light and a pillar of their very foundations. If you spoke against him without complete and irrevocable proof you became a cast off, ostracized from the community at large until you finally gave in and went crawling to him for forgiveness. After that, you became little more than a pawn.

Yet somehow their community had failed to notice this! Albus Dumbledore's word had somehow become law and Amelia was ashamed to say that she too had fallen for it. After all, when was the last time she had questioned him?

It appeared that this was exactly what Albus was thinking as well if the look of utter shock were anything to go by.

"Amelia, what is the meaning of this?" Albus asked, his face seeming to age before her very eyes in a way Amelia now recognized as a sign for you to back track and apologize but she would have none of it!

"You are to call me either Director or Madame Bones, you hold no professional nor personal connection to myself which would grant you a single modicum of familiarity Headmaster. Now if you will excuse me, which you shall seeing as to how you have so blatantly intruded, I shall be taking my leave to prepare for this afternoons trial. I trust that you can remain professional? Good, I shall see you there. Good day," And with that Amelia Bones, head of the DMLE, left her office in a swirl of emerald flames leaving only Albus Dumbledore's gaping expression.

"The trial of one Vernon Octavius Dursley is about to commence," Amelia Bones' voice rang out through the utterly silent courtroom. Somehow her voice managed to reverberate in the densely packed space and granted an edge of finality to the reality that this had truly happened.

The wizarding world was in an uproar, they obviously did not hold the full story, nor would they, certain aspects of the trial had already been done. The evidence viewed, the testimonies given, no this was merely a formality in order to prevent a rebellion. This 'trial' was set to include a mere three questions and the sentencing itself, vaguely anticlimactic given the circumstances but it was enough to appease the wizarding population.

Harry, his role having been finished during the private trial a few hours ago, was now comfortably sitting between Bill and Charlie in a lonely corner of the courtroom. They had told him that he could leave when his testimony was finished but... He needed to see.

He needed to watch this. To see it through to the end. Only then could Harry truly move on and he knew it.

Watching as the person who had tormented you for as long as you can remember, who had done more damage to you than any other alive, was sentenced brought about a different reaction than merely hearing about it later on.

If he didn't see this through he would never truly believe it.

The occupants of the courtroom waited with bated breath for the outcome of the trial.

Vernon Dursley would be the last of his family to receive sentencing, the other Dursleys having
already been tried and sentenced quickly.

Dudley Dursley, being a minor and the lesser aggressor in this case with a chance at changing his ways, was to be obliviated and sent back to the muggle world where if no other family members could be found he would be placed within a foster home.

Marjorie Dursley, being ignorant of their world before this would be obliviated and sentenced to seven years in a women's correctional facility in the muggle world.

Petunia Dursley, being neither a child nor ignorant was not granted such immunity however, nor did it help her case that she was well aware of the horrors Vernon Dursley had inflicted upon her nephew. She was sentenced with little to no mercy from the wizengamot, receiving thirteen years within Azkaban's lowest security level. Once those thirteen years were finished she would be released and allowed to return to the muggle world. Few were fooled with this seemingly 'merciful' ploy, none believed she would live to see the end of those thirteen years, and very few found that they could care.

Vernon Dursley received the harshest sentence due to the extent of his crimes, even if not all were publicly stated. Vernon Dursley was sentenced to spend the rest of his natural life within the confines of Azkaban prisons lowest security level. Upon the end of his natural life the court justified that his soul would then be given to the dementors.

Vernon and Petunia Dursley would never see the light of day again. Dudley Dursley would soon become yet another statistic lost within the system and Marjorie Dursley, upon release from prison, would become a recluse living only for her beloved bulldogs. She would die alone with only her dogs for company and the Dursley name would end. The line would continue in blood only as Dudley would never find someone whom he could truly love. The violence which he had learned all to clearly from his father would see him in and out of prison, his line being carried on by a woman who quickly forgot about him and moved on.

His son would live under another name, another identity, and the only time he would hear the name Dursley was when his father was mentioned for his latest misdeeds on the television.

In truth, the woman would soon forget all about Dudley Dursley, their time together being little more than a memory...

Harry could not, for the life of him, explain the complete and utter relief that flooded through him as that gavel fell, sealing the Dursleys sentences and ending his torment once and for all.

As the echoing BANG of the gavel rang out through the courtroom and the cheers of strangers assaulted his ears Harry found he could pay them no mind. He was suddenly filled with the strange sensation as though a story had ended and he was struck with the reality that it was.

The Dursleys were gone, out of his life forevermore and Harry could finally move on. This was his new beginning, a new start, and he was going to make the best of it.

Looking to his sides he could see Bill and Charlie looking at him in concern and he couldn't help but grin. Grabbing one of their hands in each of his own Harry stood and led them out of the chamber turned courtroom the grin never slipping from his face as they began to joke and make their way up to Artur's office to let him know the good news. They would have a few hours until he could leave the office so the three decided to head home and let Molly know the news as well, blissfully unaware of the pandemonium that was ensuing down in the very same courtroom they had minutes ago exited...
When the cheering showed no sign of waning Albus Dumbledore instead stood and waited until the crowd finally quieted down so that he could speak.

"In light of recent evidence and the coming school year I request that Harry Potter be placed within my custody for the time being. There is neither sufficient time to find a suitable family for mister Potter at the time nor is it prudent, he shall be under my watch in less than a months time anyways," He said confidently as he turned his attention to his fellow Wizengamot members, confident in their approval of his plan.

Unknown to him, he had just happily walked himself into a trap.

"I contest," Amelia Bones said as she stood, fire flaring in her eyes as she took in Dumbledores flabbergasted appearance and the shocked countenance of her fellow Wizengamot members. She couldn't blame them really, if it weren't for what she knew she too would be just like them. However, she knew that she couldn't give in in this moment, not a single modicum of slack or else he would be able to flee. She would have to play fast and hard and make sure she didn't hold any punches.

"I formally contest against Albus Percival Wulfric Brian Dumbledore on the basis' of fraud and embezzlement from a minor, fraud and embezzlement from several others, breaking several sovereign vows, overstepping his bounds by sealing an official document, preventing justice by the sealing of said document, causing unjust suffering to said person, manipulation on multiple counts and preventing several different familial lines to end through inaction due to a cover up scheme, and leaving the rest open for further investigation."

The silence that followed Amelia's charges was deafening. The calm before the proverbial storm as all eyes turned to look at Albus Dumbledore only to see the look of rage which adorned his face.

"You have no proof," The 'benevolent' headmaster all but snarled as his face began to redden.

"You mean..." Amelia began, eyes alight in amusement and a smirk firmly placed on her lips as she held up a thick packet of parchment, "This proof?"

With that, with four simple words, Albus Dumbledore's political foundation began to disintegrate.

After a fabulous celebratory dinner, and several disgusting vials of potion, the Weasley family settled themselves into the living room and spent some time together.

The twins joked, Arthur and Bill were talking, Molly knitting, Percy reading and Ron and Ginny were playing chess on the floor. Harry was curled into Charlie and watching his family with a look of pure and utter contentment as Charlie continued to read his library book on muggle myths about dragons. It seemed as though he was finding it amusing if the snickers that kept escaping him were any indication.

Looking around the living room then Harry could feel the now familiar glow begin to build inside of him and couldn't help the smile that bloomed across his face.

Here Harry was liberated. Here he had a home. A family! And he couldn't be happier.

That is, until he was, and it was all because of the people surrounding him now...

Authors Note: O.O Sorry guys, got a little... Off, writing style wise. This is what I get when I write
this while listening to Lindsey Stirling (excellent music) and watching Django Unchained (Anyone else notice that Samuel L. Jackson looked like a monkey?).

Anyways~! Here is the next installment! Hope you like it! There is a LOT of humor in the next chapter I think you'll like! ;) If you ask nicely I'll tell you what one of the scenes deals with!

Oh! I'm starting a poll: What house should Harry be sorted into? I'm leaning towards Hufflepuff for reasons I can't tell you yet but I can tweak them to work for the other houses as well. Let me know!

^-^ !-Happy reading my lovelies~! ^-^
The Special Talk

Little Dragon

Authors Note: So, I've decided to start learning Russian, fascinating language! I hope to move on quickly to German, Bulgarian and Romanian. Yes, the last two due primarily to my obsession with Harry Potter. No judgements.

I currently have the alphabet down and am working on the numbers now! Only two days in! ;) WOOT WOOT!

Edit: Now I have the alphabet and the numbers 1-19! Woot woot! Hoping to move on to phrases soon!

Disclaimer: If I owned Harry Potter I would not have ended the series, nor paired my dear Harry with Ginny. Plus, you can probably tell by now that I would have included some... Different scenes lol.

Chapter 7: The Special Talk

"You mean..." Amelia began, eyes alight in amusement and a smirk firmly placed on her lips as she held up a thick packet of parchment, "This proof?"

Shouts of shock and outrage rang out through the courtroom as they took in the two standing before them Amelia confident, cool and collected, Albus looking as though he were trying to refrain from screaming.

"What exactly are those Amelia?" Cornelius Fudge asked as he leaned forward, eyes narrowed. It was not like Amelia to do things without good reason so he wanted to know just why his head of the DMLE seemed to be waging war against Albus Dumbledore.

"These, Minister, are official documents on the crimes previously stated. They consist of official documentation of all 'alleged' crimes. I would also like to take this time to formally request a trial for a prisoner in Azkaban who was never granted a trial previously and who, I have proof to prove, is innocent."

"And who might that be?" Fudge asked feeling slightly panicked. If someone had been done wrong it could be potentially catastrophic to his career! He could only hope that whoever had been wronged had been wronged before he took office!

Yes, that would actually be beneficial... Minister Cornelius Fudge rights the wrongs done by his predecessor... Yes, it had a certain ring to it!

"Sirius Black," The name rolled off of her tongue easily, with a ring of sure finality that showed just how confident in his innocence she was.

The noise level that met these words was deafening, people screaming in panic and outrage and the very walls causing these voices to echo until they became a cacophony of illegible words. In the midst of all this confusion Albus struck.

He could play off of these peoples emotions and bring himself back into public favor! All he had to do was...
"I highly doubt that Sirius Black is innocent!" He called over the chaos, his voice amplified and becoming the prominent sound in the room. "I myself am the one who cast the Fidelius charm that gave him control of who could find the property in Godrics Hollow. So-

"So obviously you would have also known that the secret keeper was in fact Peter Pettigrew," Amelia cut in sharply as she unrolled a single scroll of parchment and held it up for all to see. "Deny it if you will Dumbledore but your signature on this document proves that you would be lying. For those of you who do not know what this is that I hold in my hand it is the will of James and Lily Potter which was signed by both Sirius Black and Albus Dumbledore. This will was also illegally sealed and hidden away, it also being the only concrete proof of Sirius Blacks innocence."

"Order!" Minister Fudge screamed as the room was yet again thrown into the chaos of reverberated screams. He was outraged at just what Albus Dumbledore had done and had been getting away with for so long. This was the man that everyone had thought could do no wrong and this is what happens? Well no more!

"Albus Dumbledore, upon reviewing the evidence provided by Amelia Bones, head of the Department of Magical Law Enforcement I feel compelled to grant her wish for an official enquiry and trial into all of your affairs. For the time being which will span from now until an official sentencing is given at said trial you will be stripped of all of your titles bar your position as Headmaster of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. It would do you well to realize that the only reason you still retain this title is because of the acts of Quentin Trimble. You are hereby dismissed of your stations. So mote it be."

Albus Dumbledore was incensed! How dare they treat him this way after all he had done for them! Could they not see that this was for the greater good?

Sometimes laws had to be broken for the greater good! Sometimes people had to suffer, good or bad, and there was nothing that anyone else could do to bring that same consequence about!

Yes, Sirius Black was indeed innocent and yes Albus was going to let him rot in that hell hole that they called Azkaban. The man was too strong, too sure of himself and since nothing Albus did could break that annoying habit of his he had to get rid of him.

That of course came with the added benefit of breaking Remus Lupin. The man, though timid, was strong as well. He would do anything for his 'family' and Albus couldn't have that. No, once Sirius was out of the way Albus was able to safely chip away at the man's self esteem until he believed he owed Albus! How else could he have convinced the man to infiltrate the pack of the monster who had created him? To leave behind the last member of his so called 'pack' willingly?

Yes, Albus had broken Remus Lupin and it was all for the greater good.

Of course once Sirius was released Remus would return and all of his hard work would be for nothing! The only thing that kept Sirius in Azkaban was the fact that Crouch had been corrupt and didn't care to give a 'Death Eater' of Sirius' calibur a trial so that had worked in his favor.

The only thing he had to do then was seal the will which was excruciatingly evil. Having his accounts managed placed in charge of the Potter accounts as well? Genious!

It had been all too simple to do in fact. A few well timed compulsions and James would do anything he asked of him and he had.

But now, now all of his hard work was ruined! Someone had to be digging, trying to bring him
down but who? It couldn't be Harry. He had heard and seen first hand just what the Dursleys had done to him. That had all gone perfectly... Well, almost perfectly. Perhaps if the whale Vernon had acted on his desires more and actually raped the brat he wouldn't have squealed.

Hmm, now that's something to remember for later!

Yes, Harry was in, out and had gotten his supplies just as planned with Hagrid back right after lunch as scheduled. There was no time for a detour so that bumbling oaf had done his job to a 't', one of Albus' better investments if Albus did say.

Hagrid was naive enough to not question him, stupid enough to not realise if something were against the law and loyal enough to die for him or at his own hand if he told him it would help. It certainly didn't hurt that the fool was a half bred giant that owed him for his testimony all those years ago.

Yes, Hagrid would have kept Harry from asking questions so it certainly wasn't them...

But then who could have been behind this? Amelia wouldn't have had the slightest inclination to look so that must have been handed to her. Yes, it was someone else but who?

Oh, well. We'll come back to that later Albus, for now let's think about what all this has caused shall we?

He was now barred access from Gringotts, vaults or otherwise. Yet, that wasn't too much of a shock. After all, he did exploit the holes in their systems.

No, instead of entrance Albus had found an expanded sack thrown at his face with a simple note proclaiming that he 'STAY OUT!'. Inside of that sack held only his possessions, all of his well earned stolen items and funds gone!

If that wasn't bad enough he found that the same thing had happened at his manor as well as his office!

Where once the walls were cluttered with various silver and gold instruments as well as priceless tomes and scrolls now they were mostly bare. All his hard earned and prized knick knacks gone!

Albus knew he was lucky. If it hadn't been for the previous Headmaster Trimble he would surely be out on the streets and fully disgraced.

Yes, Quentin Trimble had been vastly paranoid, one of the things that made him such an accomplished Defence Against the Dark Arts teacher. In his paranoia over his family dealings, with the head of his house being politically shamed, he had pushed forward a law that would prohibit any Headmaster from being sacked for political reasons unless the Board of Governors reached a full consensus during their annual meeting and not an emergency one or if the Headmaster was directly involved with the injury of a student.

And neither was the case now. Yes, Albus Dumbledore would not be knocked down from this! He would make his way back to the top, it was the only way for the world to continue down the right path and if people had to get hurt to see it done then so be it!

And so, with thoughts of how to regain his status running through his mind, Albus Dumbledore began to plot. There was much to do for the coming school year and less than a month to prepare...

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A few days later...
Today was a rare and special day in the Weasley household. Today was Arthur's day off and, almost all of, the family were milling around the house. Both Bill and Charlie were out for some reason or another that no one really knew about.

Harry was currently sitting at the scrubbed table in the kitchen talking to Molly about his parents. When Harry had found out that the Weasley matron had known them he had practically pounced on her for information.

"So they were part of this... order thing too?" Harry asked in awe as he stared into Molly's amused gaze, he had never thought that she would have known them! If he had he certainly would have asked about it earlier.

"Yes dear, in fact I remember the first time they ever brought you to one of the meetings. You were so very cute!"

"You knew me as a baby?" Harry asked his awe growing even further.

"Hey," Ron said happily as he came into the room followed closely by a pouting Ginny. Harry had no idea why she kept playing chess with Ron! After all Arthur was the only one who could beat him most times with Bill being just as good as Ron with their matches usually ending in a draw. "Mum, do you mind if I get some pumpkin juice?"

That was yet another thing that seemed to have changed with Harry's addition to the family. Ron's manners had grown exponentially once he noticed how uncomfortable his behavior had made Harry and he understood. For someone who was constantly berated and had manners drilled into his head mercilessly it made sense that he would be uncomfortable around someone as lax as Ron was.

No one could really say that they minded really.

"Of course dear," Molly said with a smile as Ginny took a seat beside her. "Now, back to the story. Yes, your parents had brought you in to meet the others and I swear you were one of the cutest babies I had ever seen! You had such big green eyes and you smiled at any and every single person in the room, why I do believe that Mad Eye even held you for a while. You seemed fascinated by his eye."

And so conversation stayed along that track even after Arthur had come in from his shed and joined them at the table, that is, until one question...

"Hey mum," Ron began with a look of pure confusion on his face. "You never did tell me, where do babies come from?"

With that everything came screeching to a halt from the people sitting at the tables to the very wind outside.

Panicked looks were shared by the parents as the curious gazes of three adolescents bore into them.

"Well Molly," Arthur began with a slight cough, "We probably should tell the boys at least. They are going to have to attend the mandatory course before winter break after all. We might as well send them in prepared."

"Yes you're right Arthur but... Oh, alright. Come along you two," Molly finally said with a sigh and a heavy heart as she stood from the table.

"What about me mum? I want to know too!" Ginny said as she stood and looked at her parents with
big pleading eyes.

"No!" Came the panicked answer from the two parents as they quickly started to shoo her away, "Why don't you go play with the gnomes Ginny dear? You'll get this talk next year."

With that Harry and Ron were quickly led from the room by the two flustered parents. They walked quickly, not knowing where they were going only following the gentle nudges that helped to direct them until finally they entered Ron's room and were directed to sit on the bed.

Shifting nervously Harry couldn't help but glance over at Ron's confused face. Surely this was a bad thing? After all Harry had never seen the two parents so flustered before.

Molly and Arthur were currently sitting on top of the camper bed that was pushed against the opposite wall of the room for Harry, though more for options sake seeing as he slept with Charlie and Bill.

"Alright..." Arthur began as he rubbed at the back of his neck nervously, "Well, I suppose it would be best to start with the... differences. There are, as you already know, men and women and they are built... Differently. But, there are also two different versions of men. Now, I'll only give you an overview for now. You'll learn more about it at Hogwarts, so I'm, we're, just going to um... Tell you the basics. Well, Molly?"

By now Arthur looked desperate, his eyes wide and pleading as they stared at Molly until, with a sigh, she finally gave in.

"Oh alright. Now, There are men and there are women but there are also what we call carriers which are men who can have babies just like women. Harry, you just so happen to be a carrier. Which means-"

"You mean Harry's a girl!?" Ron asked suddenly with wide eyes as he looked at Harry's shocked form. "Then why don't you force him to share a room with Ginny? Wait, if Harry's a girl that means that he's a she right?"

Harry looked panicked at the very thought of being forced to move into Ginny's room, he could still remember her reaction to learning his last name, the sound of squealing still hadn't faded from his ears...

"No Harry is not a girl!" Molly said as she lightly slapped the back of Arthur's head. Honestly, now was not a time for laughter! "It just means that of the two of you only Harry can have a baby-"

"So Ron can't have kids?" Harry asked in horror.

"No, no that's not what I meant!" Molly said quickly as she tried desperately to figure out just how to explain this delicate topic. Perhaps they should have just let them wait until they were at Hogwarts! "What I mean is that only Harry could carry a child-"

"So I wouldn't be able to hold my baby?" Ron sounded almost heart broken.

"No! I mean yes, you will be allowed to hold your baby but of the two of you only Harry could get pregnant."

"Oh!" Said Harry and Ron at the same time as they finally realized what Molly had been attempting to say as Arthur tried desperately not to laugh.

"Wait!" Harry said suddenly and Molly wanted nothing more than to go and hide in a closet so that
she wouldn't have to go through that again. "How would I get pregnant?" He sounded so innocent, so naive and suddenly Molly took it back. She would much rather try to explain what a carrier was than explain this. Wait a second...

"Arthur dear, your turn," Molly said smugly with a grin as the boys' eyes zeroed in on Arthurs now panicked form.

"Um, well..." Arthur began as he began to look around before inspiration struck in the form of tissues. With a wave of his wand the tissues became a pile of plastic plugs and outlets which he then picked up.

"Now, um well, the outlet is the female and the plug is the male. When they want to have a baby they will join like this," he began as he fumbled slightly to connect a prong and an outlet before he continued, "Now, in your case Harry you would have both but most carriers don't really like to use their prongs to go into outlets, no... Well, um, molly?"

"What your father is trying to say is... Well, lets put it this way. When a bird and a bee want to have a baby the bee will... 'Sting' the bird and the bird will then lay an egg-"

"We're bee birds!?" Ron shouted at the same time Harry firmly proclaimed, "I don't want to lay an egg!"

"No, that's not what your mother is trying to say... Ah! I got it!" Arthur finally said happily as he remembered how his mother had phrased it for him oh so long ago.

"There is a magical bird called the stork who, when he determines two people who are in love are ready for a child will deliver a baby to them and-" Yet again he was cut off by Rons confused shout.

"So we are birds!? So is that why we can fly? But then why do we use brooms instead of wings? Wait! Can I fly without a broom? I wanna try!" And with that he began to run from the room towards the stairway only to be caught in the surprisingly strong hold of his fathers arms as both parents yelled 'No!' over and over again.

"Alright fine!" Molly said exhausted, "Babies come from two people. One gives the other a very special hug meant just for them and the other returns it and gets pregnant. The end. I'm going to go start lunch."

With that both parents fled the room quickly, desperate to leave the conversation behind them in the hopes that the two eleven year olds would let the subject drop.

Bill and Charlie came through the kitchen fireplace just in time to greet the family before lunch began.

After dusting the soot from their robes they had quickly made their way with hugs for each of their family members before heading towards their seats beside Harry.

Bill was the first to give Harry a hug before playfully ruffling his hair and taking his seat as Charlie then moved forward and enveloped Harry in a hug while saying the exact wrong thing.

"And here is a special hug for you Harry!"

Before anyone could so much as move Harry was up and running towards the stairs his words echoing in the shocked room long after his footsteps had faded...
"I don't want to have a bird baby!"

Authors Note: Shorter than the others but I thought that was a good end point!

Now, I couldn't help myself with 'the talk' yes another (different) one is planned later on near winter in the story that will explain my ideas for mpreg but for now I just couldn't get over that last scene. Can't you just see Charlie's face?

Alright, now. What house do you see Neville in as well? Everyone else's houses have already been decided!

So: What house for Harry and which for Neville?
Meeting Sirius

Little Dragon

Authors Note: You guys love the bird baby! ^.-^ I must admit, I got sooo many odd looks when I kept suddenly squealing and doing my happy dance while reading your reviews! I'm glad you guys liked it! I will admit, I was nervous about what you would all think, anywho~! Enjoy the next chapter! We finally get to Sir! I hadn't planned for him to come in for a while but I could deny him no longer! Yet again a little shorter than usual but if I continued I'd be cutting into my plans for the next chapter. ;) Enjoy!

Disclaimer: Yeah, I don't even own the Harry Potter books, my sister stole them a while ago and I don't have the money to replace them so yeah. I definitely do not own the Harry Potter series. Except for in my dreams...

Chapter 8: Meeting Sirius

Nearly eleven years he'd been here with nothing but the constant screams and cries of terror or insane ramblings and the crashing sound of the waves to keep him company.

The chilly air, while horrid on its own, was only accentuated by the sea spray that somehow made it inside of every cell. You could never quite get used to this cold...

Especially not when it was accompanied with the bone deep chill that seeped its way into your bones with every rattling breath of the dementors or how the quick showers which they were forced to take, a mere illusion of warmth as you stood beneath a steaming spray of water, prevented them from truly acclimating to the temperature.

It was worse during the winter though, when the freezing water became so cold a single drop made it feel as though you were being stabbed.

This truly was hell on earth and a stronger man would have broken long ago. With each patrol of their fiendish guards you were forced to pay penance for your crimes. To mentally berate yourself for every single wrongdoing in your life. Even if you were innocent...

Which he was.

As the sound of his fellow inmates wails of self pity and hatred grew louder Sirius could feel his dread heighten and his cells temperature begin to plummet.

The dementors were drawing nearer. The memories of his past which were an ever present constant began to grow louder and demand his attention away from examining the thin layer of frost which grew over his skin.

Drawing himself further into the ball he had taken to sitting in in a desperate bid for warmth Sirius couldn't help but dread these times. While usually he would simply transform into Padfoot and be done with it it was exhausting. Three days a week he was forced to remain in his human form because of 'shower day'. The transformation took a lot out of him anymore but those four days he was able to retain his other form were a blessing.

The screaming was growing louder now, closer, and if he listened he could vaguely make out the
rattling of a dementor. Almost time.

Preparing himself for the onslaught of guilt and pain Sirius drew further into himself and buried his head into the tattered fabric that covered his knees...

Another rattle, different this time, almost as though someone had opened his cage...

The sound of footsteps grabbed his attention and he found himself looking up and towards his cells door, the echo of hope blooming deep within his chest only to find...

Eyes. Another persons eyes. A woman, a familiar looking woman who wore Ministry robes.

No...

Hope bloomed fully fledged now as his heart began to pound in his chest.

This couldn't be happening...

The woman moved quickly across the cell and swung a heating charm laden coat over his malnourished shoulders before kneeling down and placing her warm palms on either side of his hollowed cheeks as she grinned at him.

"Sirius Black," She began, her voice warm and full of joyful passion, "It is my absolute pleasure to inform you that you have been granted a trial in front of the Wizengamot to take place as soon as possible. It is my privilege to inform you that this is a mere technicality and, as of now, you are a free man."

"What?"

Sirius couldn't help but look back.

He and Amelia were on the rickety boat used as transport to and from Azkaban and he was happy to see that it was quickly speeding along towards the shore which was still too far away to see just yet.

He would say that he was dreaming if it weren't for the fact that dreams couldn't survive in this place. Only nightmares. The further away they got from the obsidian tower and its wraith like guards the lighter his heart felt.

"How are Harry and Remus?" Sirius asked suddenly as his mind finally managed to get passed its daze. "What's been happening, what have I missed?"

"Well..." Amelia began as she tried to figure out just how to explain everything to him. "We'll have time for all of your questions later. For now though I can tell you that Harry is safe and happy and, I do believe, anxious to meet you. He's actually the reason we were able to discover your innocence you know, you should be proud."

And he was. Sirius was so proud and happy and anxious as a grin spread across his lips. He didn't even mind when his chapped and dry lips cracked and split with the now unfamiliar expression.

With one last look back towards the frosted and rock strewn shores of Azkaban, Sirius Black could feel a certain level of peace settle over him before he turned back around and left Azkaban behind him.

Yes, Sirius couldn't help but look back, but that didn't mean he wouldn't keep moving forward...
A few days later and Sirius was finally deemed healthy enough to attend his trial.

His diet now consisted mainly of chocolate and a veritable smorgasbord of potions ranging from nourishment to magic boosters and his range of motion was growing steadily as well. That was one good thing with the guards requiring you to walk from your cells to the showers, it prevented muscle atrophy.

His trial was to be small with only those deemed necessary allowed to attend. These people included a small handful of reporters, his cousin Andromeda and her husband and a few others who he didn't recognize though he was interested to find out who the small three person group was in the far corner with their hoods raised and faces cast into shadows...

Well, time for that later, for now he just wanted to get this trial done and meet his godson.

He was quickly led to the front of the room where he was seated before the entire Wizengamot, minus one old goat, and he waited praying that this was not some elaborate rouse.

"Sirius Black, recent evidence has been uncovered proving your innocence in the cases that were held against you. In order to prevent any further misunderstandings we ask now that you consent to the use of Veritaserum. Do you consent?" Minister Fudge asked after a moment of shuffling paperwork.

"Absolutely," Sirius said immediately, this was it! His name was going to be cleared!

"Very well, the Veritaserum will be administered immediately and further questioning will be done by Amelia Bones."

With that a ministry healer came forward flanked by an auror and quickly dropped three drops of the crystalline fluid onto Sirius' waiting tongue before backing away and allowing the questioning to proceed.

"What is your full name?" Amelia asked once she saw Sirius' muscles relax and the dim fog enter into his eyes that showed the potion had taken effect.

"Sirius Orion Black," Sirius said in a monotonous voice without second thought.

"And your age?"

"Thirty one years old."

"The Veritaserum has taken affect. I will begin the questioning now," Amelia said as she drew a piece of parchment containing the questions towards her. "Were you the secret keeper for James and Lily Potter?"

"No."

"Who was?"

"Peter Pettigrew."

"Everyone believed that you were the secret keeper yourself, why was that?"

"We made it look that way, I was the logical choice so I was made the decoy. We figured no one would even consider Peter."
"Are you now, or have you ever been sympathetic to and or a supporter of He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named?"

"No."

"Did you kill Peter Pettigrew?"

"No."

Murmurs of shock rang out through the small audience, Amelia herself even looked shocked. She had not asked Sirius what had happened before for she too believed him to have gotten his revenge and the Wizengamot had been fully prepared to let it go.

"What happened on that night?" Amelia asked and the whole court room seemed to lean forward in anticipation of what had truly happened that night.

"I had gone to check on Peter, we hadn't heard from him in a few days and when I got there he was gone. I figured that he had gone to visit Lily and James but when I got there I saw what had happened. I didn't even bother to check, the dark mark was floating over the house and all that I could think about was to find Peter and to kill him. When I finally managed to track him down he was in muggle London. I called out for him and instantly he started screaming about how I had been the one to betray James and Lily. I drew my wand but before I could act he used a severing charm to slice off one of his fingers and then threw a blasting curse at the ground. Right before it hit I saw him transform and go into the sewer drain. After the smoke cleared I couldn't help but laugh. I was in shock, not only did I lose my best friends and godson but Peter had managed to pull one over on me. That's how the aurors found me."

"You said transformed, what do you mean?" Amelia asked, shock still clear in her voice.

"He was an animegus. A rat."

"The ministry has no record of that," Amelia said after shifting through her files and the audience began to murmur.

"No one knew," Sirius answered though it wasn't a question. "He, myself and James Potter all became animegi in school to help Remus Lupin through his transformations."

More murmurs rang out through the courtroom before finally the questioning was finished and the antidote administered.

"Sirius Black, you are hereby cleared of all charges held against you. Reparations shall be payed in the form of 5,000 galleons for each year of your unjust incarceration. Otherwise, you are free to go about your life as a free man as soon as you are deemed fit to by a healer. You are also hereby ordered to register your animegus form within a week of your release. So mote it be!"

"Sirius," Amelia called as she made her way over to where Sirius was catching up with his relatives followed closely by the three cloaked figures he had noticed before. Two of the three were relatively equal in height to him though the third, who was firmly sandwiched between the others, was extremely short reaching only around four foot tall.

"Sirius, we'll see you later," Andromeda said with a smile as she gave him another hug, "I'll come visit you tomorrow now that I know where you are. Oh! I'll also owl Remus for you. Hopefully he'll get it quickly."
"Thanks Andie, I'll see you tomorrow," Sirius said before shaking Ted's hand and watching them leave. With that he turned back to Amelia and her companions. "Hello again Amelia, and who might they be?" Sirius had to admit he was interested, extremely so.

"Sirius, may I present to you Bill and Charlie Weasley as well as Charlie's soul mate, whom you've already met, Harry Potter."

Sirius' heart stopped. Pure and simple. His body seemed to shut down before it kicked into overdrive as small pale hands reached up to pull back the hood of his cloak.

The hood fell back to reveal a shock of messy raven black hair and large innocent green eyes that looked at him with open curiosity. This was Harry, his little godson, the only light he had had to keep him company while he was in Azkaban and he was here, standing right in front of him...

"Harry," Sirius breathed as a smile spread across his face and he knelt down so that he was equal to Harry's level. "Harry, I'm... I'm your godfather, and it's... A dream come true to finally meet you."

A small blush spread across Harry's pale cheeks as a small smile of his own spread over his face.

"It's nice to meet you too mister Black," Harry said, his voice like beautiful music to Sirius' ears and caused his smile to widen that much more. "I'm glad that you're not in Azkaban anymore. Charlie told me about it and it doesn't sound pleasant."

"No, it's not. But I'm getting much better now that I'm out. I hope you wouldn't mind getting to know me more? I knew you as a baby and I must say I still do love you Harry, if you don't want to you-" Sirius began to babble before he was cut off by a small body colliding with his own in a hug.

"I would love to get to know you better," Harry said as he finally pulled away and looked Sirius dead in the eyes, his own were so bright and full of such happiness at the prospect that Sirius couldn't help but pull him back into another hug.

"I'm glad," He breathed out as he held Harry close and tried to memorize the happy fuzzy feeling that was overtaking him.

That is, until something clicked into place...

"Wait, soul mate!?"

A few days later and Sirius was happier than he had been in years.

His godson had by now become a permanent feature in his life and he found himself dreading the day he would have to leave for Hogwarts and not just because of how much he would miss him.

Albus Dumbledore really was a piece of work, he had had the gall to come and visit Sirius as though nothing had happened. Well, he had quickly been dispatched of and Sirius had even got a visit from another of his old professors which was much better appreciated.

Minerva McGonagall had been all too happy to learn that Sirius had been innocent and was positively incensed with Albus, Sirius was happy to note her promise to keep an eye on him and to watch out for Harry.

Harry. That was Sirius' new favorite subject. Over the last few days he had gotten to know the boy and his... Shadows, better.
For every time that Harry would visit there were always four constants. One, Harry would always
smile at him like this was the happiest time of his day. Two, he would be even more adorable than
the day before. Three, Bill and Charlie were always with him. And four, whenever he would hug
Harry, Charlie would for some reason far beyond him, blush like a madman while Bill chuckled at
some inside joke.

That was a story that Sirius would have to hear at some point...

Sirius was drawn from his musings by a knock at the door and looked up to see Harry standing
there with such a bright and excited smile that Sirius could practically feel his heart warm.

"Hello beautiful," Sirius called out and was rewarded with Harry's shy blush. Oh, his darling
godson was just too adorable to resist teasing! "Come on over here and give me a great big hug."

As Harry quickly made his way across the room to him Sirius was amused as always to see the
crimson blush stain Charlies cheeks and couldn't help but smirk into Harry's silky black locks.

"Now," Sirius said as he pulled back and held Harry at arms length, "Let me get a good look at my
beautiful godson! You know, I really should go with you to Hogwarts, someone will have to beat
the boys off of you now won't they?"

And that was true. If Sirius didn't know better he would have said that Harry had a good amount
more veela in him than he currently did what with how truly breathtaking he was.

Today Harry was dressed in a pair of simple black slacks which he had paired with a dark blue long
sleeved shirt which neckline was cut so that it scooped down to show a bit of his collar bone and
Sirius had to admit, back in his Hogwarts days he would have been one of the fools to chase after
him.

Which was exactly why he was so positive that his little Bambi needed protection.

"Siri I'll be fine!" Harry said with a laugh as he sat down beside him on the bed, "You guys all
need to calm down, it's not like some giant dog is going to come and gobble me up or I'm going to
get attacked by a big smelly troll. It's just school, I can handle it and if not you guys will be the
first to hear different, okay?"

"Harry," Charlie said as he pulled his own chair closer to the bed so that he could better look Harry
in the eye, "We're just worried about you. You don't seem to realise that you will be under
Dumbledores constant supervision while you are on Hogwarts grounds. There is no way to avoid
detection, nor is there a way to know where to avoid. The people who are there that are on our side
can only do so much Harry, then theres also the students to worry about. We're just worried about
you."

"I know you are," Harry said with a mysteriously serene smile as he leaned back to snuggle into
Sirius' side. "Don't worry, I've got some tricks up my sleeve too. The twins and the goblins have
remarkably similar thoughts on certain aspects, it's pretty funny really."

With that they descended into silence as Harry remained curled up against Sirius' side and Sirius
began, as they were all prone to do for some reason unknown to them, to card his fingers through
Harry's hair as they were left to ponder exactly what Harry meant.

Later that day found Sirius sleeping peacefully in his hospital bed.

He was having a wonderful dream. He and Harry were playing in the grass with him as Padfoot.
He would hop around and yip while Harry would try to catch him. Whenever he would get too close to his goal Sirius would playfully lick his face before it all began again.

It was a marvelous loop really. The whole scene utterly perfect and never ending. Sirius loved it and quite honestly could not wait until it could become a reality.

But then the dream changed...

Harry ran away calling for Sirius to catch him instead. The bright musical tinkling of his laughter now sounding somewhat ominous instead of light hearted.

A house materialized up ahead, and Harry ran straight into it, the door slamming behind him and Harry's laughter turning into screams of panic.

In a flash Sirius was at the door and pounding.

Pounding... Pounding...

*Knock knock knock*...

With a gasp Sirius sat bolt upright and looked toward the door only for his breathe to catch.

"Remus."

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**Authors Note:** So, I didn't plan for this whole chapter to be Sirius centric but that's just how it came out. Anyways, Sirius is here! Yay!

Next chapter is the rest of summer and the train ride to Hogwarts so you only have one more chapter to cast your votes!

Before any of you ask: Yes, I did take some of my info for Azkaban from Rikers Island. Hey, they're good ideas, might as well use some of them! Plus, the best stories have a grain of truth in them!
"Remus," Sirius breathed out in shock before a grin spread across his face and his eyes lit up, "Remus! You're here!"

"Sirius," Remus said his voice shaky as he took a single hesitant step into the room, "H-how can you not be mad at me? After all I-

"Remus," Sirius cut him off with a soft smile on his face and his eyes shining, "Come in here and sit down old friend. Unless your name is Peter Pettigrew or Albus Dumbledore you have done nothing wrong."

That was all it took and with a deep shuddering breath Remus allowed his legs to finally give in and collapsed into the vacant chair that was positioned by the head of Sirius' bed.

"How is it that you've managed to forgive me so easily?" Remus asked weakly as he looked at Sirius. His amber eyes were pleading to understand this situation he somehow found himself in. How? How could Sirius have forgiven him? After everything? Remus should have been the one person to believe in him and yet he didn't! He had let his aching heart get in the way, of everything! How in the world could Sirius possibly forgive him?

"Because you're my friend," Sirius said in such a simple matter that it shocked Remus into silence. "Remus, if either of us should be apologizing it should be me. I was the first one to not trust you, I started it and I am ashamed of myself for ever believing the word of some old manipulating coot over my best friend. I knew better but I still did it and for that I am so, so sorry Remus. I was afraid that you actually wouldn't come because-"

"That I wouldn't come?" Remus asked incredulously, "Are you bloody insane Sirius!? That I wouldn't come? Madness I tell you, complete and utter madness!"

"There's my Remus," Sirius said with a soft chuckle and his eyes dancing. "You know Remus, self loathing just doesn't quite suit you. I think you need to find a new look."

And just like that, in a way that only friends who know each other to a 'T' could do, they moved on with the mutual understanding that it was neither of their faults and that they would, as always, help each other through their struggles.

"So what exactly have you been up to for these last eleven years?" Sirius asked as he and Remus sat and drank from the hot chocolate he had gotten from one of the healers who were only too happy to provide it.

"Well, I only found out what had happened when I had come back to report to Dumbledore again. Everything had already been done, you were in Azkaban and Harry was placed with his relatives
and suddenly everything was gone. James and Lily dead, you in prison, Peter killed by you, Harry placed somewhere safe where no one could find him and I had no more reason to spy on the wolves. I tried to get Dumbledore to let me see Harry, I really did. But, he kept telling me it wasn't safe and that anyone, especially me, seeing him would hurt him and I was stupid enough to believe him."

Remus sighed and seemed to curl into himself as he stared at his reflection in the coco's surface. After a few minutes he finally continued.

"I kept trying, even if he'd only let me send a letter but he kept saying it was dangerous, I was dangerous, and eventually I began to believe him. After a while I gave in. I tried to move on but I just couldn't. I had lost everything and everyone that I had fought for... I moved away. Went to visit an old friend of mine who offered help and he helped to get me a job in a library. Since then... I just stayed. Never left the town unless it was a full moon and never gave a second thought to anything. I had planned to owl Harry, once Hogwarts started and I knew that he could get it. I actually started drafting the letter when Andie's letter came and that's pretty much it."

"So you've been a librarian for the last eleven years?" Sirius asked curiously.

"Pretty much yeah, pathetic isn't it?" Remus replied with a laugh as he looked back over at his friend.

"A little bit," Sirius answered back as he too laughed and the remaining tension faded from the room.

"So what have you been doing since you got out? Flirted with the healers? Broke some hearts? Cause mayhem?"

"Actually none of that," Sirius said seriously before bursting into boisterous laughter at the look of pure horror on Remus' face.

"Who are you and what have you done to Sirius Black?"

"No Remmy, I'm Serious," Sirius said simply before his poker face was cracked with a smirk upon seeing Remus roll his eyes. "I've actually been getting to know my godson."

"Harry?" Remus asked as he sat up straight, his eyes wide and pleading for information.

"Yes Remus, Harry. Our little Bambie, Remmy," Sirius said with a starstruck expression.

"Tell me about him?" Remus all but pleaded as he sat at the edge of his seat.

"Remus he's... Adorable. Absolutely adorable. He's just like Lily and James, he's got her eyes and his hair but besides that he's like the perfect little fusion of them both, you can see them but he's his own person through and through. He's so sweet, and smart and he starts out shy but after a while he becomes this little ball of energy and you just can't be mad at him even if you wanted to. You know, I think that he could even get old Snivellus to smile," Sirius rambles on before giving a breathless laugh and continues, his voice now slightly bittersweet.

"He's already found his soul mate Remus. He lives with him and his family after everything that happened with the Dursleys and Dumbledore. His name is Charlie and I swear that man is never more than a few feet away from Bambie but I don't blame him. They're both anxious about being separated and quite honestly, the rest of us are too."

"Wait, what about the Dursleys and Dumbledore!?" Remus growled as his eyes flashed in anger.
With a sigh Sirius told Remus everything. The rest of the night was spend with a mixture of anger, proclamations of torture to come and tears as the two friends mourned the life that their darling Bambie had been forced to live.

That night Remus stayed, both occupants crying themselves to sleep while comforting each other.

"Good morning Sirius!" Came Harry's sing song voice as he ran into the room and pounced onto the bed completely ignorant of Remus' presence in the chair just a small ways away.

Bill and Charlie were not so ignorant however as they held Remus at wand point with glares firmly fixed upon their faces. This man was a potential threat and until Sirius declared otherwise he would be treated as such.

"Morning Bambi," Sirius laughed before holding him close to his side and turning to his companions before they hexed Remus. "Bill, Charlie, this is Remus Lupin. Remus is the old friend of mine who I told you about."

Slowly the wands lowered and sheepish grins took the place of glares as introductions began.

"Remus, this is Bill and Charlie Weasley. Bill, Charlie, this is Remus Lupin. He's practically Harry's other uncle. Speaking of Harry," Sirius said with a grin as he pulled a giggling Harry into his lap and placed his chin on top of the mess of Raven colored silk that he called hair. "Remus, this little beauty in my lap is Harry. Harry this is Remus Lupin, he was best friends with your father and me, he's practically your uncle."

"Hi," Harry said with a shy grin and a blush, figures that Sirius would want to cuddle while introducing him to someone new, not that he's complaining. Harry loved to cuddle, loved when someone would pet his hair, it reminded him that he was here. It... Grounded him, made him feel safe. "It's nice to meet you mister Lupin, Siri's been telling me about you."

Remus took the offered hand with an awestruck expression. Harry was so small, his hand alone like a delicate piece of china that could be shattered with a strong gust of wind. His eyes, while they were so much like Lily's own in both shape and color, they sparkled with a light all their own. Sirius was right, if he didn't know any better he would say that Harry had a good dose of veela in his blood.

Charlie was a lucky man, and if he wanted to stay lucky he better keep their Bambi safe.

"It's nice to meet you too Harry, but please call me either Remus or Mooney. No 'mister' business. Makes me feel too old."

With a giggle and another shy smile Harry nodded before turning towards Sirius again.

"I made you something Siri," Harry said before he giggled again as Sirius began to pat him down looking for the 'prezzie'. "It's not on me! You have to ask nicely." Harry said while looking at Sirius with a smirk.

"Ah, my dear darling Bambi. You do realize that I could just... Force you to give me the present and there would be nothing that anyone in this room would do to stop me."

"Sirius if you tickle me, the cookies go to Charlie," Harry deadpanned and refused to relent as Sirius began to pout and finally beg.

"Please Bambi? I'll be a good doggy, I swear! I'll eat all my vegetables and stop wolf whistling at
the healers and everything! See? I'm giving you the eyes. You can't say no to the eyes!" Sirius sounded almost desperate and it was all Remus could do not to laugh as Harry turned it around on Sirius, his eyes growing wide and his brow furrowing as an adorable pout adorned his features.

"But Siri," Harry said softly, sadness coating his words and completing the sad puppy look he seemed to be going for, and succeeding at but that was another monster completely. "You haven't asked for them and that's not nice. I just wanted you to ask."

With that Harry began to turn away and, if the look of panic on Sirius' face was anything to go by, he was about to cave. With his next words that was confirmed.

"I'm sorry Bambie! Can I please have my present? Pretty please?" Sirius begged as he cuddled Harry closer to himself.

"Okay," Harry said with another giggle as he held his hand out to Charlie. With a roll of his eyes Charlie drew a box from his robes which Harry quickly handed off to Sirius, who was about to dig into them with reckless abandon until he noticed that Harry's hand had then returned only to be held out to Bill who cursed under his breathe and put three gold galleons into Harry's waiting hand.

"What was all of that about?" Remus asked curiously seeing as Sirius had shrugged it off in favor of savoring his cookies.

"Harry bet us that he could get Sirius to ask for his present nicely," Charlie said matter of factly as he pulled another chair towards the bed. "Bill took him on his bet and as you can see he lost."

"Harry, you bet that you could get me to beg?" Sirius asked looking at Harry with a raised eyebrow. Harry merely blushed as he averted his eyes and nodded. "That's my boy! Minnie won't stand a chance!" Sirius exclaimed proudly.

The last week of summer was spent in a controlled chaos at the Burrow.

Each day was spent with laughter and smiles as the family got in as much quality time as they could.

In just a week Fred, George, Percy, Ron and Harry would board the Hogwarts Express. The next day Bill and Charlie would go back to work. Charlie in Romania where he would stay until at least winter and Bill wherever Gringotts decided to send him. No one but Harry and Charlie had a clue as to what he would now be doing.

For the week that they were together the family spent playing together, laughing, telling stories and, on occasion, packing their trunks.

Charlie and Harry were never further than a few feet from each other as though they could feel the looming separation and were attempting to make the most of the time that they had left. Each day was spent with small affections. Hugs, holding hands, kissing foreheads or cheeks. Even when they were unaware of what exactly they were doing the others knew.

It was only a matter of time before they would be separated and their bond was still relatively new. The only upside to the whole thing was that the bond had had a month to settle.

Yes, the separation would be hard still, but without that month... It could have been fatal.

There were laws against the separation of soul mates for that exact reason. If the bond was too new and any great distance of separation was acquired, even if only down a block, for an extended
period of time then the bond would strain and the two who were bonded would grow weak. In rare cases the bond would snap and the backlash was horrible. Not only would those bonded have perished but their magic could go haywire as it attempts to reach out to the other and it would leave not but destruction in its wake.

This is what those who understood the bond feared. That their bond would weaken or that Dumbledore would attempt to cut it off.

If that were to happen then they would likely not know until it had already begun. If that were to be the case then they would need to know what Harry had somehow managed to cook up.

Even now as they all but begged Harry refused to tell. The only people who seemed to know what he had planned were the twins and the goblins which just made them that much more worried. Genius though they were there was also a certain edge of... Insanity and malicious glee to them as well.

Sirius was released just in time to see them off to school. The day itself was bitter sweet.

They started earlier than usual. The early morning air and peaceful silence of daybreak being shattered by the frantic movements of the occupants of the house as they searched for missing articles of clothing or stationary that had managed to somehow get scattered.

Harry was sitting at the table peacefully as he nibbled at his toast and watched the chaos. Rons trainers had managed to somehow make their way under the couch in the living room, Freds boxers were being modeled atop of a hens head and Percy was attempting to coax one of his books away from Ginny.

At ten Sirius and Remus showed up to bask in the chaos as well as he joined those who weren't attending Hogwarts and Harry at the breakfast table to watch the chaos. Molly had summoned all of the missing items and left them in a pile in the living room for the others to sort, though they did catch that hen going for Freds boxers again for some unknown reason.

Sirius had transformed into Padfoot and happily corralled the wayward hen back to its pen accompanied by much teasing from Remus and the others on the career option of sheep dog available to him.

At ten thirty Molly declared that enough was enough and that it was time for them to leave. After promising to send Scabbers once he was found they were able to leave.

Five minutes later and the family flooed to the Leaky Cauldron, trunks shrunken and stowed within the pockets of their owners so that Percy could enlarge them on the train. Once they were all gathered they then set out down the various streets until they finally reached Kings Cross station with only six minutes to spare.

"You all write, at least once a month or I will send you all a howler you understand?" Molly asked as she dished out hugs and kisses to each member of the group.

"Yes mum," They all chorused with grins on their faces as she then began to hand out various wrapped sandwiches and gave them all more hugs. While she was busy fussing over a smudge of dirt which had adhered itself to Rons nose Harry made his escape.

"I'm going to miss you," Harry said with his head buried into Sirius' chest as he gave out his own good bye hugs. "You're going to write to me aren't you?" He asked as he looked at the man who was quickly becoming another father to him. Some people were lucky to have one and yet in a
single months time Harry had managed to find three.

Arthur, Sirius and Remus were quick to take up the mantle that had been abandoned for so many years and Harry couldn't help but to love them that much more for it.

"Every day if you want kiddo," Sirius said seriously as Remus took over the hug. "All you have to do is say the word."

"Maybe not every day," Harry said with a grin, "I don't think that would do much good. How about... Once a week?"

"You got it Bambi," Remus replied instead as the hug was then transferred over to Bill who made a show of twirling Harry and planting a kiss on his forehead before passing him once again over to Charlie.

"Now, you're not going to forget me are you Harry?" Charlie asked with a smile as he held Harry close.

"Never," Harry said seriously as he buried his head into Charlie's broad chest. "It's going to be lonely isn't it?"

"Of course, but we'll get through it. Write me and let me know what happened at the sorting okay Harry?"

"Of course Charlie," Harry said before the engines whistle blew and he had to run to climb onto the scarlet train. "I'll miss you!" Harry called out as they started to move and Percy guided him further inside of the engine to where the others were waiting.

Harry could feel an odd weight settle deep within his chest as he glanced back to see the platform fade away. Harry had never had a home that he could miss before and while the sensation was new it left an ill taste in his mouth. He was leaving behind a good portion of his family and, while it did ache, he couldn't exactly say that he was against the thought of having something to come home to.

As the train continued to move further and further away from London Percy was quick to begin his 'duty' of enlarging the twins' trunks for them before they disappeared down the hall in search of their friend Lee Jordan.

After that Percy had helped the new first years to locate an empty compartment and quickly set their luggage on the racks, enlarged it and then he himself disappeared to perform his prefect duties.

Harry and Ron were content to merely sit and chat for the entire journey.

Ron continued his attempts to make a Chudley Cannons fan out of Harry that he had been practicing for most of the summer though Harry was still determined to not take sides if only for the fact that the others' attempts were so hilariously inane.

At half past twelve the clattering sound of a cart being pushed sounded from the outside corridor before a dimpled woman with a kind smile knocked and opened up the door for their compartment.

"Anything off the trolley dears?"

Harry and Ron stood and made their way over to the sweet laden cart with smiles on their faces. Harry had decided that he would use the money he had won from Bill during their bet on sweets
from the trolley after Fred and George had told him about it. After all, winning was sweet but sweets were sweeter.

On the cart was a peculiar mixture of various sweets Harry had no experience with and, since he had three galleons that he could use he decided to just get a few of each item.

As Ron transported their bounty into the compartment Harry paid and was shocked to find that the total was still less than a galleon.

Eleven sickles and seven knuts to be exact.

Why in the world had Bill taken him up on his bet? Something Harry would need to remember to include in his first letter...

Entering the compartment again Harry looked over to Ron who was sitting on one side of a massive pile containing Bertie Bott's Every Flavor Beans, Drooble's Best Blowing Gum, Chocolate Frogs, Pumpkin Pasties, Cauldron Cakes, Licorice Wands, and a number of other strange things Harry had never seen in his life. With a smile Harry took his own seat and after glancing at their sandwiches they had a hard decision to make.

"Check to see what kind of sandwiches they are and then choose?" Harry offered and with a smile they both dug into their pockets for the aforementioned sandwiches.

Pulling out their lumpy packages they discovered four sandwich halves each and upon discovering that they were corned beef quickly set them aside in favour of the candy. Though Harry was partially sure that they would have done that anyways.

As they steadily made their way through the treats Harry was happy to find that his new chocolate frog collection was steadily growing. Soon he had not only Dumbledore, who he wanted to throw away as he had done the others but found that he couldn't if only to make his collection complete, Morgana, and Hengist of Woodcroft, but also Alberic Grunnion, Circe, Paracelsus, and Merlin himself. He finally tore his eyes away from the druidess Cliodna which Ron had given him as he did with all copies that he gained, they began in on the Every Flavor Beans which they had a marvelous time trying to identify.

Harry had gotten toast, coconut, baked beans, strawberry, curry, grass, coffee, sardine, and had even been brave enough to nibble the end off of a funny gray looking one that Ron had refused to touch, which turned out to be black pepper.

By the time they had finally decided to nibble at their sandwiches the countryside was flying passed the windows in a dizzying array of green and gold. The neat fields were replaced with trees and twisting rivers which surrounded dark green hills. Harry found that this scenery was soothing actually and just as he was about to point this out a hesitant knock sounded from the door of their compartment.

As the door opened it revealed the round faced boy that Harry had met inside of the robe shop a mere month ago.

"Hello Neville," Harry greeted with a smile before he notices the other looked tearful.

"Oh, hi Harry," Neville said with a watery smile, "Sorry to interrupt you, but have you seen a toad anywhere? He keeps getting away from me and I can't seem to find him!"

"I'm sorry Neville I haven't," Harry said with a frown, "I can help you look if you'd like?"
"No that's okay Harry, someone else is helping me look. Thanks anyway."

"Wait!" Ron called out just before Neville left the compartment. "We could ask my brother Percy to summon him. He's a prefect so he should be able to."

"That's a great idea Ron!" Harry said happily as he jumped up and grabbed both boys sleeves and led them quickly from the compartment towards where he could hear Percy's voice down the aisle.

Within minutes Neville was reunited with his toad Trevor who was now unhappily settled into Scabbers' empty cage. They were just about to extend an invitation for Neville to join them for the remainder of the journey when the door slid open again and a girl stepped in who was already dressed in her Hogwarts robes.

"Hello have you seen-," She began automatically before her gaze landed on Neville and she smiled, "Oh Neville, you've found Trevor!" She cried out happily. Her voice was pleasant enough though it seemed to contain a certain undertone that sounded vaguely bossy. She was also rather pretty and her bushy hair and slightly larger front teeth only added a level of endearing charm.

"Hello," Harry greeted the girl with a cheery smile as he moved their scattered candy into a neater pile. "It's nice to meet you. Ron, say hi," Harry reminded as he nudged his best friend gently.

"Ron Weasley," Ron said after rolling his eyes at Harry with a grin.

"Harry Potter," Harry chimed in once he was content with their pile.

"Are you really?" The girl asked excitedly. "I know all about you, of course, you see I got a few extra books for background reading. You're in Modern Magical History and The Rise and Fall of the Dark Arts and Great Wizarding Events of the Twentieth Century. I've only read them recently mind you, nobody in my family's magic at all, it was ever such a surprise when I got my letter, but I was ever so pleased, of course, I mean, it's the very best school of magic that there is, I've heard. I've learned all our course books by heart, of course, I just hope it will be enough, I'm Hermione Granger, by the way," She said all of this very fast in a single breath and Harry couldn't help but to feel impressed at the level of dedication she had shown.

"Am I?" Harry asked with a kind smile as the four settled down into seats, an unspoken agreement happening with them just vaguely aware.

"Goodness, didn't you know, I'd have found out everything I could if it was me," said Hermione. "Do either of you know what house you'll be in? I've been asking around, and I hope I'm in Gryffindor, it sounds by far the best; I hear Dumbledore himself was in it, but I suppose Ravenclaw wouldn't be too bad... Anyway, we'd better go ahead back to our compartment. You two had better change, you know, I expect we'll be there soon," She said before she nervously stood to leave.

"Hermione," Harry called as she reached the door. "We never said you had to leave. We were actually going to invite you two to stay, though getting our robes on would be a good idea. How about you and Neville go and get your stuff and then meet back here? I'd like to be friends if you want."

Suddenly Harry was shy again, as he looked over to the girl who looked speechless at his announcement.

"Really?" She all but breathed in shock before she began to babble again. "Are you sure? Because most people don't really like me that much and I-"

"Hermione," Harry cut in as he reached out and grabbed her hand, "I'm sure!"
A few minutes later and the four were once again gathered inside the compartment as they began to get to know each other better.

With a sense of familiarity that only truly made sense between Harry and Ron they talked for hours on end, their joys fears, what they wanted to learn, everything.

From Ron they learned of his fear of spiders and how he was afraid to not be able to make his family proud, from Harry his fear that this was all just a dream and at anytime he would wake up back in his cupboard, Neville was afraid that his magic was a fluke and that he couldn't make his family proud and Hermione was afraid to be alone with no friends.

They shared many similar fears but joys as well. Through the next few hours they learned more about each other than they had known before, even Ron and Harry.

Eventually the conversation turned towards the sorting and yet another fear was discovered.

They were all afraid to be separated from their new friends.

Surprisingly it was Ron who stated what they all seemed to need to hear...

"Well, I don't really care what house I'm put into, not really. I used to think it was Gryffindor or nothing but now... Well, as long as I have my family and friends I'm happy. I'm not going to give that up just because we're not in the same house."

"Geez Ron, when did you grow up?" Harry teased as he poked Ron in his stomach with a laugh, his heart, which he hadn't realised had been aching, suddenly feeling lighter.

"Since I met you obviously," Ron said as he pulled Harry into his side. "Seriously Harry, whatever house, we're still brothers. Even if you join the snakes," He teased.

"Thanks Ron," Harry said with a brilliant grin as he then looked over at Neville and Hermione who had been watching the exchange with fond smiles on their faces, "That goes for you guys as well! No matter what houses we're sorted into, we'll still be friends! After all, house unity really needs a good kick in the rear to get it started again!"

With that their compartment rang with the sounds of laughter and joy for the rest of the journey as new friendships were formed and solidified. Who would have known that a single chance encounter and a houdini of a toad would be able to forge such a strong foundation for an even stronger friendship...

Authors Note: I planned to go up to just before the sorting but it felt too compressed to me so that will just have to wait until next chapter!

This is it you guys! It's almost time for the sorting!

Cast your final votes, let me know what you thought, you guys know the deal!

^-.^ !Happy Reading! ^-.^~
Chapter 10: Sorting and Unity

"Welcome to Hogwarts," said Professor McGonagall, a relatively tall witch with black hair that was pulled back into a severe bun and who was wearing a set of emerald colored robes. She looked stern, not someone to cross lightly, but she also looked nice if you didn't get on her nerves. "The start-of-term banquet will begin shortly, but before you take your seats in the Great Hall, you will be sorted into your houses. The Sorting is a very important ceremony because, while you are here, your house will be something like your family within Hogwarts. You will have classes with the rest of your house, sleep in your house dormitory, and spend free time in your house common room.

"The four houses are called Gryffindor, Hufflepuff, Ravenclaw, and Slytherin. Each house has its own noble history and each has produced outstanding witches and wizards. While you are at Hogwarts, your triumphs will earn your house points, while any rule breaking will lose house points. At the end of the year, the house with the most points is awarded the house cup, a great honor. I hope each of you will be a credit to whichever house becomes yours.

"The Sorting Ceremony will take place in a few minutes in front of the rest of the school. I suggest you all smarten yourselves up as much as you can while you are waiting."

Her eyes lingered for a moment on Neville's cloak, which had been hastily fastened under his left ear in the excitement of arriving at the station, and on the smudge on Ron's nose which refused to go away despite all of his friends' attempts. Harry and Hermione both began to nervously attempt to flatten their hair until they noticed Neville and Ron's chuckles and stopped with crimson blushes staining their cheeks.

"I shall return when we are ready for you," Professor McGonagall said with a hint of amusement. "Please wait quietly."

She then left the chamber and with the closing of the door the once silent room filled with nervous whispers.

"Hey guys," Neville asked as he moved closer nervously, "How exactly is it that we're sorted?"

"Some sort of test, I think. Fred said it hurts a lot, but I think he was joking," Ron said absentmindedly as he batted Hermione's hands away from his smudged nose. "Hermione, it's not coming off so leave it."
"Of course he was Ron," Harry said with a smile as he fixed the clasp of Neville's robes for him. "Bill said that it's done by an ancient magical artifact that determines which traits are greater and which house we fit in best."

And just like that the nervousness seemed to leach itself from the group as they turned to wait for the professors return. Just as they had begun to truly relax a sudden scream caused them to jump and turn towards the back of the room from where it had originated.

"What the-?" Someone began to say before an echoing gasp ran through the room at the sight of multiple ghosts floating into the room through the brick wall as they floated above their heads seemingly unaware of the group of children as they argued.

"Forgive and forget, I say, we ought to give him a second chance -" A rather portly looking monk began as the ghostly contingent floated their way across the room.

"My dear Friar, haven't we given Peeves all the chances he deserves? He gives us all a bad name and you know, he's not really even a ghost." Another ghost who was dressed in what one would more than likely see on a nobleman in the 15th century, "I say, what are you all doing here?" He asked in a slightly shocked voice as he finally noticed the children in the room.

"New students!" The first ghost, Friar, cried out happily as he beamed down at them all, "About to be sorted I suppose? Well then, I hope to see you in Hufflepuff! It was my old house you know, still is as a matter of fact," He finished with a happy giggle as he did a little turn in the air.

"Move along now," Professor McGonagall's sharp voice cut through before anyone could reply. Instantly the ghosts began to float through the wall, most with small waves or nods of the head to the children within the chamber.

"Now then," Professor McGonagall continued once the last ghost had disappeared beyond and the children turned back to face her once again. "Every one form a line and follow me."

As they were lead into the great hall Harry was in utter awe at the clear use of magic that was on display. Above the four long tables, which held hundreds of students all wearing black robes like them but with a single houses crest as opposed to the Hogwarts crest itself, were countless candles that floated in the air below what, at first glance, was the open sky outside.

As he continued to look at his surroundings Harry vaguely noted Hermione murmuring something about the ceiling being bewitched but found that he couldn't quite focus on his friend.

The room that had just moments ago was now ice cold to him as he looked at his surroundings, his heart was pounding in his ears and his breathing became more shallow. They stopped right in front of the teachers' table with their backs facing them as they looked out towards the veritable sea of students. Harry knew that he was being foolish but he had never been in a room with so many people before!

Suddenly Harry could feel a hand in his own and couldn't help but to jump in shock. Looking to his left Harry was met with Ron giving him a supportive grin as he gently squeezed Harry's hand.

Taking a deep breath Harry squeezed back with a soft smile and, as he felt Neville begin to softly shake beside him he too reached over and held the shy boy's hand who did just as he had before he grabbed Hermione's as well. Harry could feel his smile grow wider.

"No matter which house, we're still friends," Neville murmured with as he looked at them with a slightly more confident smile.
No matter what, Harry echoed back as he felt his heart begin to settle again and the, by now familiar, warm fuzzy feeling fill him again.

With a sudden shock Harry noticed that the hall had suddenly gone quiet as they all stared at an extremely patched and frayed wizards hat that had obviously seen better days and was sitting on top of a simple four legged stool.

Was this the ancient artifact that Bill had mentioned? Well, it certainly did look ancient at least.

Suddenly the hat twitched so that it sat up right and a rip near the brim opened wide as though it were a mouth and the hat began to sing.

"Oh, you may not think I'm pretty,  
But don't judge on what you see,  
I'll eat myself if you can find  
A smarter hat then me.  
You can keep your bowlers black,  
Your top hats sleek and tall,  
For I'm the Hogwarts Sorting Hat  
And I can cap them all.  
There's nothing hidden in your head  
The Sorting Hat can't see,  
So try me on and I will tell you  
Where you ought to be.  
You might belong in Gryffindor,  
Where dwell the brave at heart,  
Their daring, nerve and chivalry,  
Set Gryffindors apart;  
You might belong in Hufflepuff  
Where they are just and loyal,  
Those patient Hufflepuffs are true,  
And unafraid of toil;  
Or yet in wise old Ravenclaw,  
If you've a ready mind,  
Where those of wit and learning,  
Will always find their kind;  
Or perhaps in Slytherin,  
Where you'll meet your real friends,  
Those cunning folk use any means,  
To achieve their ends.  
So put me on! Don't be afraid!  
And don't get in a flap!  
You're in safe hands (though I have none)  
For a Thinking Cap."

As the hats song came to an end the occupants of the hall burst into applause and the hat proceeded to bow to each of the four tables and Harry couldn't help but smile. This place was amazing!

"So all we have to do is try on the hat?" Ron whispered in shock. "I should kill Fred, he kept going on about wrestling a troll!"

When the hall was silent again Professor McGonagall moved to stand beside the stool with a long roll of parchment.
"When I call your name, move forward and sit on this stool. The sorting hat will then be placed on your head and you will be sorted," She said in her crisp voice which easily traveled through the room before she called the first name. "Abbot, Hannah!"

A short girl with blonde pigtails and a pink face quickly stumbled from the line and sat on the stool nervously, the hat falling down and covering her eyes. For a moment she merely sat there before the hat spoke again.

"HUFFLEPUFF!"

"The table on the near right burst into cheers and clapped as Hannah quickly made her was over where she was greeted by the Friar ghost who looked rather happy in getting the first new student.

Next came 'Bones, Susan!' Who Harry could immediately see the resemblance of to Amelia Bones and couldn't help but to wonder at the relationship there as she was quickly sorted into Hufflepuff as well.

Do ghosts boast? Well, surely I suppose they do but what about ghost friars? Because the Friar at the Hufflepuff table certainly looked as though he was quite happy to have gotten such a quick turnout for his house.

As Harry was pondering this issue 'Boot, Terry' and 'Brocklehurst, Mandy' were both sorted into Ravenclaw which was positioned to the left of the Hufflepuff table.

Did the sorting go in pairs? No, that was broken with the next to who were sorted going into different houses with 'Brown, Lavender' going to Gryffindor at the table on the far right and 'Bulstrode, Millicent' going into the last house and table Slytherin.

All in all Slytherin didn't look completely horrible, some of the students looked all right if a little somber though others definitely reminded Harry of Dudley so he quickly made a note to be cautious.

As Harry watched 'Finch-Fletchley, Justin' get sorted into Hufflepuff as well he noticed that as each person were being sorted the timing was different. Some, like Justin, were sorted quickly while others, like 'Finnigan, Seamus' took a little while more. Eventually Seamus was sorted into Gryffindor and it was Hermione's turn.

As she walked past the three boys grinned at her and wished her luck as she sat upon the stool, after around thirty seconds she was sorted into Ravenclaw and her friends cheered almost as loud as the table itself and, though they got a few odd looks they didn't back down as they grinned at the now blushing Hermione.

Next it was Neville who was called forward and with an encouraging squeeze of his hand he began to move forward bolstered on by their well wishes as well as Hermione, who surprised everyone by actually screaming her well wishes from her place at the Ravenclaw table.

As he sat on top of the stool Harry and Ron waited with baited breath until finally...

"HUFFLEPUFF!" The Sorting Hat Called and again, the newly pronounced house as well as the other three of the newly discovered quartet of friends.

Eight people later and Harry's name was called. As he moved forward with a squeeze to his hand and a murmur of encouragement from Ron along with the two echoing shouts of encouragement that came from Hermione and Neville, it was decided he would 'meet' the rest of the Weasleys through Ron so they remained silent, his heart was pounding in his chest again.
The pounding of his heart in this case actually worked to his favor as it prevented him from hearing the whispers that broke out all through the great hall.

The moment he seated himself on the stool he closed his eyes and was vaguely aware of the feel of slightly rough fabric settle along the tops of his cheeks and the soft glow from behind his eye lids was blacked out and a sudden sense of calm settled upon him.

"Hmm," a small voice seemed to say directly in his mind though Harry didn't feel an ounce of fear.
"Difficult. Very difficult. You have plenty of courage, I see. Not a bad mind either now that you're no longer held back by the Dursleys. There's talent, a very large amount of untapped potential... A decent thirst to prove yourself though it's not a desperate one which is good. Yes, your very balanced. I must say I am impressed.

"You've earned the respect of the goblins as well, now I am very curious I must admit. That is a very impressive task, almost as effective as befriending them. I must admit this contingency plan is pure genius. Do not worry, I keep all secrets and support your dealings with the headmaster. Perhaps we could speak later?"

"I would like that sir," Harry thought back as he smiled softly, the Sorting Hat seemed pleasant enough and he looked forward to their conversation as the hat gave an amused chuckle as it seemed to readjust itself on his head.

"Now then, back to business eh?" The Sorting Hat said again once it settled, "I will be the first to admit that you could rightfully fit into any of the four houses though I do not believe Slytherin is a good choice for you as it sits, too many who would wish to harm you and at the moment what you need the most in companionship and loyalty. The same goes to Ravenclaw even with that friend of yours. A change would need to happen first and I have no doubt that you could help that change to happen.

"Now, that leaves us with Gryffindor and Hufflepuff, both very good houses. The Hufflepuff's will no doubt make you a part of the family and yet you already have family within the Gryffindor's... Yes, I believe I have decided."

"HUFFLEPUFF!"

Silence reigned throughout the great hall as though someone had cast a blanketied silence charm.

At least, that is until Hermione, Neville and Ron began to cheer their friend on followed by the almost deafening cheers of the Badgers.

Throwing one last grin to Ron who still had yet to be sorted Harry moved quickly to sit across from Neville where he was promptly greeted with smiles and friendly faces. Looking behind him towards the Gryffindor table Harry could tell just why the Sorting Hat had put him here instead.

A few of the people at the Gryffindor table were giving him betrayed looks, as though it were his duty to have been sorted into their house.

Ignoring this for now Harry looked back up to the head table and instantly saw Hagrid who was sitting at the end of the table nearest him. As their eyes met Hagrid grinned and gave Harry a thumbs up causing Harry to grin back before turning to watch the last four be sorted.

'Thomas, Dean' was next to be sorted and went into Gryffindor while 'Turpin, Lisa' went to Ravenclaw. Finally it was Ron's turn and Harry took joy in yelling encouragement up to him accompanied by his friends and brothers.
Ron, who had been pale and slightly green as he trudged towards the stool, was obviously bolstered by the calls of support and shot them all a grin before the hat slipped over his eyes. A few seconds later and the house was called out...

"GRYFFINDOR!"

Cheers and applause sounded through three of the tables now with the Gryffindor table roaring as well as two happy Hufflepuff's and a Ravenclaw as Ron came over and sat on the seat behind Harry as 'Zabini, Blaise' made his way to the stool.

"Congrats Ron," Harry said happily to his brother before they both turned towards the front yet again as Slytherin was called out.

As Blaise made his way towards the Slytherin table Professor McGonagall rolled the scroll and carried the stool and the Sorting Hat away.

Albus Dumbledore stood then, with a benevolent smile and his arms wide open as though nothing was wrong in the world and he couldn't have been more pleased to see them all which was probably true seeing as he was in charge here...

"Welcome!" He called out merrily, "Welcome to a new year at Hogwarts! Before we begin our banquet, I would like to say a few words and here they are. Nitwit! Blubber! Oddment! Tweak!"

With that he sat again and the tables were filled with wonderful dishes of food that were probably fit for a king.

Roast beef, roast chicken, pork chops and lamb chops, sausages, bacon and steak, boiled potatoes, roast potatoes, fries, Yorkshire pudding, peas, carrots, gravy, ketchup, and, for some strange reason, peppermint humbugs.

With a smile Harry dished a little bit of everything onto his plate, bar the peppermints, and began to eat as he listened to those around him begin to talk.

"Hello you lot," Came a greeting from beside him and Harry looked up to see a rather tall and lanky boy with sandy blonde hair and warm honey brown eyes, "I'm Gabriel Truman, the Hufflepuff prefect. I just wanted to congratulate you all on being sorted.

"Hello Gabriel," Harry said with a smile as Neville echoed him nervously.

"Well, I'll be giving you all a little speech once we get to the common rooms but if you have any questions now I'm all ears. Hufflepuff's are more than what the other houses seem to think so don't let them get to you yeah? Anyways, I'll let you get back to your food."

With that he turned back around to talk to his friends and Harry started in on his food again as he and his year mates made idle conversation between bites.

Once everyone had had their fill of the feast the food that remained on the table seemed to fade back into the tables leaving everything sparkling and pristine once again. A moment after the feast had disappeared desert materialized in much the same way. Blocks of ice cream in every flavor you could think of, apple pies, treacle tarts, chocolate eclairs and jam doughnuts, trifle, strawberries, Jell-O, rice pudding and many other rich and flavorful delicacies.

As Harry helped himself to a treacle tart, the others began to speak about their families.

Susan Bones was in fact Madam Bones' niece. Her parents had died during the first war so she had
been raised by her aunt at Bones Manor.

Hannah Abbot, the girl with the blond pigtails who had been sorted first was a half blood. Her father, a wizard, had married a muggle and they lived in a small flat on the outskirts of London.

Megan Jones, who was related to none of the more well none Jones', was a muggle born witch from Yorkshire where she lived with her mother and uncle but already showed a keen fascination towards potions.

Ernest, Ernie, Macmillian was a pure blood who had a penchant for paranoia and trying to find a conspiracy theory behind anything at all though he was nice.

Lastly came Justin Finch-Fletchley, a rather nervous boy who constantly fretted on whether or not choosing Hogwarts over Eton was a decent choice. He, Ernie, and Hannah had shared a compartment on the train and seemed to be rather well acquainted already.

"Well, my gran brought me up and she's a witch," Neville said nervously, "but the family thought I was all... Muggle, for ages. My Great Uncle Algie kept trying to catch me off my guard and force some magic out of me. He pushed me off the end of Blackpool pier once, I nearly drowned... But nothing happened until I was eight. Great Uncle Algie came round for dinner, and he was hanging me out of an upstairs window by the ankles when my Great Auntie Enid offered him a meringue and he accidentally let go. But I bounced!" He continued quickly once he saw his house mates' horrified expressions, "All the way down the garden and into the road. They were all really pleased, Gran was crying, she was so happy. And you should have seen their faces when I got in here! They thought I might not be magic enough to come, you see. Great Uncle Algie was so pleased he bought me my toad. Though I doubt Gran will be quite as pleased since I didn't get sorted into Gryffindor."

"Why wouldn't she Neville?" Harry asked in complete and utter confusion.

"Well," Neville began as he looked down at his plate with a furious blush, "My parents were in Gryffindor and my Gram just wants me to be like my dad. I even have his wand."

"You know that that isn't right don't you Neville?" Harry asked in concern as he leaned closer to his friend until he could see into his eyes. "Even if you had been sorted into Gryffindor that wouldn't make you more like your dad and using his wand certainly doesn't. You are your own person Neville, no matter what anyone else tries to change that. Especially by forcing you to use another's wand, that will just hinder you."

"What do you mean hinder me?" Neville asked in mild panic.

"Each wand is specially crafted for one wizard. Say, if I were to trade wands with Ron, his wand wouldn't work as well for me as my own if it even worked at all. If this is your father's wand then it wouldn't work nearly as well for you as your own would because you aren't your father. Do you understand Neville?"

"I think so... But the school years already started. I'll have to use my dad's, at least until winter."

"No, we'll talk to one of the teachers tomorrow okay? They should know how to help."

With that the desserts disappeared from the table as Dumbledore stood up again and the hall fell silent.

"A few announcements are called for now that you have all been fed and watered," He said before laughing at his own joke, "The forest on the grounds is forbidden to all pupils, our first years
should take note of this while a few of our older students should remember it," With this he glanced over to where the twins were sitting.

"I have also been asked by Mr. Filch, the caretaker, to remind you all that no magic should be used between classes in the corridors. Quidditch trials will be held in the second week of the term. Anyone interested in playing for their house teams should contact Madam Hooch immediately. Finally, I must tell you that this year, the third-floor corridor on the right-hand side is out of bounds to everyone who does not wish to die a very painful death."

At this last announcement there were a few scattered snorts of laughter though Harry's eyes narrowed. This man was willing to risk the only thing he had left so soon after loosing the rest!? That's it, this man was mad.

"That's odd," Gabriel murmured to himself just loud enough for those near him to hear, "He usually gives us a reason why we're not allowed to go somewhere. Like the forest's full of dangerous beasts, everyone knows that. I don't understand why he's giving no one a reason. This'll just make people more curious to find out what's behind the door."

"And now, before we go to bed," Dumbledore's voice demanded their attention yet again, "Let us sing the school song!"

With Dumbledore's cry the teachers' smiles seemed to have grown fixed as they instantly stood a little stiffer, it looked like they didn't quite like the school song...

Dumbledore pulled out his wand and flicked it as though he were trying to shoo a fly from the tip and a long gleaming ribbon made of gold floated out of it before twisting itself into cursive words.

"Pick your favorite tune and off we go!" Albus cried before the din of thousands of voices and tones began in much the same way one would picture a kindergarten music class.

"Hogwarts, Hogwarts, Hoggy Warty Hogwarts,
Teach us something please,
Whether we be old and bald
Or young with scabby knees,
Our heads could do with filling
With some interesting stuff,
For now they're bare and full of air,
Dead flies and bits of fluff,
So teach us things worth knowing,
Bring back what we've forgot,
just do your best, we'll do the rest,
And learn until our brains all rot."

The song was finished at different times for everyone with the last to finish being Fred and George who sung to an excessively slow funeral dirge which Dumbledore conducted the finally of.

"Ah, music," Dumbledore said as he wiped a fake tear from his eyes. "A magic beyond all that we do here! Now, it is bedtime. Off you trot!"

With that the students rose from their seats and Harry had the unnerving feeling that he was being watched. As he filed out behind his year mates and their new prefect he quickly waved to his friends in the other houses before he lost sight of them completely.
Authors Note: Yes, if any of you noticed this I did in fact flip the Gryffindor and Slytherin house tables for the sake of giving Harry a nice safe table sandwich to protect him for now. No killing the author! You’d have to finish the story yourself then!

Now, I know that was mostly information but I’m proud of this chapter. Or at least of all of the information I had to find to make it work. I hope you enjoyed!

^-^ Happy Reading! ^-^-
The Beginning of Change

Little Dragon

Author's Note: Hello folks! So as I've told a few of my reviewers I am, in fact, a Hufflepuff! On almost everything I do that official Harry Potter I find that I am almost always sorted into this amazing house. Now, I may be slightly biased for this reason, but I love all houses the same. Any who, here be the next chapter! ~Wanders away mumbling sea shanties under my breath~

Hey guys, I've started a facebook page if any of you are interested! I plan on posting interesting tid bits and so on that you can check out when your bored. It's called simply FCTSyndrome. :) Hope to see you there! ^-^

Disclaimer: I do not own this wonderful world! Though I shall claim the depictions of the Hufflepuff house. Huffle-Badger Don't Care!

Chapter 11: The Beginning of Change

The seven new Hufflepuff's were quickly shepherded out of the great hall to stand at the brick wall in the schools main entry way as the other students continued to stream forward and up, or down, the three flights of stairs on their left.

"Alright you lot," Gabriel the prefect from earlier began with a smile. "You may be wondering just why it is that I have stopped you here and I will tell you this... Information. The other houses don't even bother to give their first years a quick run through on general locations and that, in my eyes, is a mistake. Believe me, I wish that one of the prefects in my first year would have done this but, since they didn't, I will. This will be a lot of help for you all tomorrow for classes.

"Across this chamber stands a doorway which will lead you to several empty classrooms as well as Filch's office and the staff lounge. The far staircase will lead you to the dungeons, the potions classroom and the Slytherin dormitories. Professor Snape's office is also down there but you can more than likely reach him through his classroom, one of the seventh year Ravenclaw's has come to the unanimously agreed upon conclusion that he has it warded. I recommend that you go down there only for emergencies at the moment.

"Now, the larger of the staircase is the main one which will lead you to not only all remaining classrooms, bar herbology, but also the library and the other two common rooms which are in two of the three towers, the other two being occupied by astronomy and divination.

"Last but by no means least is the stairway to not only our common room but also the kitchens. Now, follow me you lot," Gabriel finished with a grin as he made his way towards the nearest staircase leaving them to follow.

"Now, while we walk I would like to take this chance to dispel some myths on our wonderful house," Gabriel continued as he began to bravely walk backwards down the steps. "Most say that Hufflepuff's are the least clever, least brave and least impressive house to be in but I have found that that is, in fact, a myth. We may be the least boastful and most underestimated of all of the houses but I believe that that is what makes us the best.

"Just look at some of the amazing people who have come from our house! Grogan Stump, one of the most popular Ministers for Magic of all time was a Hufflepuff, as were the successful Ministers
Artemesia Lufkin and Dugald McPhail. Then there's the world authority on magical creatures, Newt Scamander; Bridget Wenlock, the famous thirteenth-century Arithmancer who first discovered the magical properties of the number seven, and Hengist of Woodcroft, who founded the all-wizarding village of Hogsmeade, which lies very near Hogwarts School. Even the great Alastor 'Mad Eye' Moody, the most feared dark wizard catcher to have walked these halls! Ah, here we are!" He said as they drew to the end of the corridor.

On one side was a, rather large, still life painting of a bowl of fruit and on the other stood a nook with a pile of barrels.

"Now, these are the entrances to the kitchen and to our common rooms. Since I'm positive that Professor Sprout, our head of house, is waiting to give you all the welcome speech and make sure that you're settled in for bed I will leave the kitchens till tomorrow. Now, for entry to the common room all you have to do is this... Find this barrel, two from the bottom in the middle of the second row and tap it in the rhythm or 'Hel-ga Huff-le-puff', be careful though! If you tap the wrong pattern or lid you'll be drenched in vinegar. We're the only house with a repelling device as well. The other houses may boast about how 'secure' their common rooms are but they really aren't. Ravenclaw just makes you solve a riddle and the others need a password. Foolish if you ask me! In over a thousand years though, not one single person from another house has gained entry to the Hufflepuff common room! Anyways, I won't keep you any longer! Welcome, to the Den."

And with that Gabriel tapped the barrel and allowed the first years to climb through the short passageway that led to the common room where they were greeted by a squat grey haired woman with kind brown eyes and a motherly grin on her face.

"Hello dears," She practically cooed as they gathered before her and the older students who had decided to lounge about the common room itself tossed friendly greetings to their new members. "It is a true pleasure to have all of you in Hufflepuff! My name is Pomona Sprout, I am the head of this house as well as the herbology professor! I just wanted to welcome you all and let you know that several of our older members have volunteered to give you all an early tour of the classrooms once the schedules have been handed out so I recommend that you eat breakfast early so you can head out right after you get your schedules. Though, if you are running late any of our other members and the Friar are also willing to help you on your way. Now, I'm sure that you are all exhausted from your long day so I will leave it at that and will see you all later! Sweet dreams m'dears." She finished with another coo before she made her way back out of the room and Gabriel took her place with an amused grin.

"Sorry about that, she's in a bit of a hurry. There's a staff meeting starting in a few minutes but she always insists on welcoming our new members first. She's actually the one who brought most of these plants in for us, some sing, some dance, there's a few that I'm positive try to help with forgotten homework but they never get the answers right so I think they're her way of making sure we do ours. Anyways, this is the common room or, as we like to call it, the Den," He finished with an elegant sweep of his arm.

The room was utterly magnificent. It was rounded with a low ceiling and the peculiar feeling of basking in the sunshine on a lazy day. There were circular windows which gave a view of rippling green grass and colorful patches of wildflowers that they knew wasn't an actual view and that only added a sense of wonder to it all.

The room was decorated with burnished copper and an assortment of plants which hung from the ceiling and sat on the various window sills and table tops. Clusters of overstuffed chairs and sofas were scattered about the room with black and yellow upholstery which seemed to only add another layer of soothing coziness to the room and Harry could definitely see why the other students had
dubbed it the Den.

"Now, like she said I don't doubt that you're all tired so I'll let you all head off to bed. Ladies through the left, gentlemen the right. Your rooms are the first door after that. Have pleasant dreams and I shall see you in the morning."

Two rounded doors stood across the room which they now knew lead to the dormitories and upon seeing this door exhaustion seemed to crash down upon the young students who, with mumbled wishes for a pleasant night stumbled their way into their dorm.

Through the door on the right the four boys were relieved to see that their door was very close indeed as opposed to what Harry guessed was the seventh years' dormitory at the end of another hallway.

Entering their dorm Harry vaguely took note of how the copper lamps were casting a soothingly warm glow over the four-poster beds which were covered in plush patchwork quilts which looked like a cloud. Nor did he truly take note of the furnace in the center of the room which let off a mild heat or the copper bed warmers which were hanging on the walls.

The boys moved automatically as they pulled on their pajamas which had already been laid out at the bottom of the beds before climbing into them with one last tired 'good night'.

They were out before their heads had even touched the pillows...

With a soft hum of comfort Harry contentedly snuggled further into Charlies soft embrace. The bed was softer than usual and so were Charlies arms...

Opening his eyes groggily Harry blinked in confusion as his gaze fell upon nothing but a plush patchwork quilt before reality dawned on him. Oh yes, he was at Hogwarts.

Suppressing a sigh Harry sat up and looked around the room at the other occupants around him. Neville was asleep in the bed closest to his own, Scabbers' cage on his bedside table but Trevor somehow missing. They would need to place a tracking charm on that toad!

Ernie and Justin were also sleeping still though they themselves looked dead to the world as opposed to Neville who looked as though he were almost ready to wake up.

With a smile Harry stood and made his way down to the trunk at the end of his bed to retrieve his toiletries and uniform before he carefully padded across the room to where the bathroom lay.

Half an hour and one long soothing shower later and Harry walked back into the room and greeted a just waking Neville with a smile as he moved towards one of the desks and began a letter to Charlie. Harry wasn't planning on sending it out until friday of course but he just couldn't resist writing about everything so far.

He had new friends who seemed to really like him and the Den was just so cosy and Harry knew that Charlie had never seen it since he wasn't a Hufflepuff... Could Harry get a camera that would work? That would be nice, he could get pictures of his friends too!

Deciding that he would ask Charlie Harry quickly jotted it down and turned to greet Neville as he came out of the bathroom freshly showered and dressed.

"Morning Neville!" Harry chirped happily as he smiled at his friend.
"Morning Harry," Neville said with a smile of his own, "Do you think we should wake the others or just head on up to breakfast?"

Looking over at the two sleeping boys Harry couldn't help but laugh. Somehow during the time that Neville was taking a shower and Harry was writing Justin had done a complete 180 in his bed so that his head was where his feet had been and Ernie was now laying spread eagle sideways.

"I think," Harry said as he attempted to suppress his giggles, "That we try it once. I doubt they'll wake up though and they still have plenty of time before they really need to wake up. It's only seven and most people don't show up to breakfast until nine, or at least that's what Gabriel said to Susan at dinner yesterday."

With serious nods in each others' directions Harry and Neville walked to the space between the two beds before leaning over and trying to wake the other two boys up.

"Hey Justin," Harry said gently poking the other boy in the side, "Justin it's time to wake up." But still the other boy continued to slumber. With a smile Harry turned back toward Neville who had had less success.

"Well Harry we tried," Neville said with a chuckle.

As they went to move away from the two beds Harry suddenly felt a pair of thin arms wrap around his waist, with a gasp and eyes wide in terror Harry met Neville's shocked gaze just before he was pulled off of his feet and the world went into a spin...

"I'm serious Ced," Anthony said with a laugh, "Puddlemere United is going to win this year! Their line up is-" He cut off suddenly as a scream penetrated the previously calm atmosphere of the dormitory hallway.

Sharing a panicked look with his friend the two boys quickly raced the short distance to the first year boys' room and threw open the door before stopping in their tracks at the sight before them.

In the room were four boys, two already dressed in their uniforms and the other two still in their pajamas but that was not what stopped them. No what stopped them was the fact that one of the pajama clad students had effectively trapped a small raven haired boy who was dressed in his uniform under himself and was cuddling said boy like a teddy bear.

"Harry!" The other first years cried in shock, one rather groggily as though he had just woken up.

"Neville!" The small boy cried out in a muffle as his arms flailed, "Help!"

Still in shock the two third years rushed across the room to assist in the small boys rescue.

Once they had managed to pry the somehow still sleeping first year off of the small boy who was quick to scramble away from the bed.

Turning to address the young boy Cedric felt his breath catch.

This boy was gorgeous, his hair was mussed and his cheeks from being stuck under the other boy for so long and his clothing was thrown about in every which direction, his emerald eyes looking at them with a silent greeting as his plump rosy lips were stretched into a shy smile. This was Harry Potter and he was beautiful.

This was a first year Hufflepuff and Cedric vowed that he would be his! After all, it would be all
too easy for the third year to make him like him, what wasn't there to like?

After a few moments of awkward silence in which the two older boys stared at him oddly Harry finally coughed, grabbed Neville's arm and made an excuse that wasn't all that fake about meeting their friends for breakfast before they quickly fled the room.

"Harry," Neville panted as they finally slowed once they had reached the top of the stairs leading to the main lobby, "What was that about?"

"I'm sorry Neville," Harry said with a blush as he leaned against the wall with a heavy blush, "I just didn't like the way they were looking at me is all."

"It was a little weird wasn't it?" Neville asked with a sly smirk as he grabbed Harry's hand and began to lead the smaller boy into the relatively empty great hall. "It looked like the tall one wanted to eat you!"

Harry looked at him with a look of pure horror before looking down at his stomach and back. When their eyes met again they both burst out laughing as they stumbled their way down the aisle to take their seats.

"Good morning you two," Gabriel said as he looked up from a book he had been reading, "Settling in well?"

"Yeah," Harry said as Neville just nodded at his side, "Had a little incident this morning but we're okay otherwise."

"What kind of incident?" Gabriel asked concerned causing Harry to blush and him to turn to Neville with a raised eyebrow.

"Oh nothing really," Neville said as he reached over and grabbed a slice of toast, "Justin just tried to use Harry as a teddy is all."

"Anyway!" Harry cut in quickly when Gabriel had begun to laugh uncontrollably. "I did have a question I wanted to ask you."

"What is it Harry?" Gabriel asked with an amused smile and a chuckle still in his voice.

"Well, are there any rules against sitting with your friends who are in other houses?"

"Well," He began as his brows scrunched together in thought, "There are no rules that say you can't sit at another table, people do it all the time in fact though usually not for the whole meal. I can't see a problem with it unless of course its a feast or the sorting so why not?"

"Thanks Gabriel," Harry and Neville chimed together happily before calling to Hermione who had just wandered in.

Severus Snape stared over the brim of his mug at the spectacle that was the Hufflepuff table.

He had to admit, if only privately and to himself, that the Potter boy was not what he had been expecting at all.

He had been expecting another James Potter, a spoiled and incompetent brat who was lazy and interested in nothing but himself and yet... This boy was different.
Not only was there that article that claimed his relatives had stolen from him and abused him, which Severus had thought was merely the child's attempt to spite his oh so generous caregivers whom he had believed had spoilt the precious Boy-Who-Lived, but now just looking at the boy Severus could not drum up the full brunt of his previous hatred.

Not only did the boy bear little resemblance to his father but Lily's features shone through in such obvious ways...

His kind smile and gentle mannerisms, while slightly different, practically screamed 'Lily'. His lean build and, more than anything, his bright shining emerald green eyes.

This was Lily's boy.

This was Lily's boy and Severus could finally feel the secret animosity, the bone deep hatred he had harbored all these years, begin to slowly leach from him.

As Harry's tinkling laughter rang out loud and clear through the mostly empty great hall Severus could feel his heart melt just that small bit as he quickly took a sip of his chilling coffee in an effort to hide his small smile. Judging by Minerva's choked gasp he hadn't been quite quick enough.

With a withering glare at his colleague and, however hesitant, friend before leaving in a signature swirl of black robes as he stalked from the room.

Breakfast had passed quickly filled with laughter and stares from all over the great hall as the four friends dined at the Hufflepuff table. At first they had merely thought that it was merely because of just who Harry was until that is, the whispers reached them.

"What are a Raven and a Lion doing with the 'Puffs?"

"Why aren't they at their own table?"

"What's going on?"

"Those are the four first years who cheered each other on during the sorting right?"

"I wonder how long they've been friends?"

That's how breakfast had passed with whispers and talking about their common rooms and heads of houses.

Professor Flitwick seemed to operate on a rewards based system and each member of Ravenclaw house up till third year were roomed with only one other person and third to seventh had single rooms. Each room filled with only the essentials and what the student had brought until they reached one of several academic standards and gained things such as the option to change the walls color, throw rugs and even a secondary enchanted window. Their head of house, Professor Flitwick was a short and rather quirky man who taught charms and held the title of dueling champion.

Gryffindor however was relatively laid back however. Their house seeming to be the epitome of laughter and fun, especially now that the twins were placed there. Professor McConagall, their head of house was exceptionally busy what with her other roles of transfiguration teacher and deputy Headmistress. As such the duty of providing a welcome speech and seeing the new first years settled in fell to the prefects. Gryffindor's also roomed together much as Hufflepuff.

Once breakfast was finished having been filled with endless teasing from Harry on Ron being
awake so early in a single minded effort to eat all of the food before the other students and Neville who teased Harry on the incident from earlier both Ron and Hermione were invited to join the Hufflepuff’s for their tour of the school.

As their group made their way through the mostly empty halls the two seventh years, Kristen Lowell and Austin Kirsty, two lovebirds who many expected to marry soon after graduation, they made quick work on informing the first years of the many tricks which others did not learn until they were forced to experience them.

They learned that the location of portraits and suits of armor were not to be trusted seeing as they liked to wander around, to avoid the third step from the second landing of the main staircase, that you had to ask certain rooms for entrance politely as with the fourth floors rest rooms and that the castle had far too many unused classrooms.

However, their most important lesson came in the form of Mrs. Norris and a large assortment of small herb filled pouches provided to them by their very own Professor Sprout. The woman was a genius really.

After all, who else would have thought to provide catnip?

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**Authors Note:** Before you all yell or anything, I do not plan on making Cedric the bad guy! Yes, he is... Infatuated, but that doesn't mean he'll stay that way! I won't tell you what I have in mind because that will ruin the surprises so you'll just have to wait! ;)

Aren't I evil?

A little short, sorry guys! I had more typed out but my connection went bad and deleted a good portion of what I had. I got most of it typed back up and I honestly don't remember the rest but this will do!

Aww Sevy~! You do care! :3 Under all that vampy behavior is a big old sweetheart! ~looks to side where the sound of a knife being sharpened comes from only to see Sevy boy glaring~ Uh oh! Got to go guys, enjoy!
Little Dragon

Authors Note: Okay, I soooo did not mean to bring some of these aspects to play! I swear to you but there is a reason for my username! So... You've been warned?

A tentative class schedule will be posted on the Facebook page or, if you don't want to go onto the Facebook page or can't, just ask and I'll pm it to you! :)

Disclaimer: Yeah, I don't own Harry Potter and I wish I made money off of this...

Chapter 12: You Dirty Rat!

Early the next morning the air above the great hall was filled with hundreds of feathered bodies carrying letters and packages of items forgotten at home by this years students.

Two owls landed on the table before the quartet of friends who were once again eating together, the unfamiliar barn owl landing in a graceful swoop and the Weasley owl Errol crashing headfirst into a large platter of scrambled eggs, both owls had been transporting a rather large box with Molly's handwriting labeling it to simply 'My Boys'.

With eager hands Ron dug into the wrapping while Harry tended to the owls with crispy strips of bacon and a small dish of water as he soothed Errol's ruffled feathers.

Once the twine and paper were unceremoniously discarded Ron pulled the cardboard flaps of the box apart only for Hermione to let out a startled shriek as a fat grey rat with a tattered left ear popped its head from within the confines before scampering over to Ron who quickly took him into his hands with glee.

"Looks like mum found Scabbers!" Ron said happily as he cradled his pet to himself with such a happy grin that Harry couldn't help but laugh.

"Looks like she left a note too," Harry said as he reached into the boxes confines and pulling out a small scrap of parchment which Harry quickly read out loud, "This is all that I could find left at the house. Ron, Scabbers showed up just before I sealed the package oddly enough so he must have been around here somewhere. Try not to lose him again! Love you all, Mum."

"That was awfully nice of her," Hermione said with a smile as she hesitantly ran a finger down Scabbers head before turning back to her toast.

Neville, who had gotten a package himself, finally looked up from his letter with a happy grin of his own.

"Harry it worked! Gran got permission to come get me after classes and take me to go get a wand of my own as long as I'm back by dinner! She even said that she was sorry and was proud that I had already made such a good friend!"

"That's great Neville!" Harry said with a grin of his own, he was happy that Neville's Gran understood that he would need his own wand. It was just a good thing that they had noticed soon enough.
It actually seemed that a lot of people were forced to go without their own wands more often than one would think, he had actually fought with Molly to let her buy the others’ wands when he had found out that they were mostly subjected to using hand me down wands. It was the only time he lost his temper that he could even remember and still the only reason that Molly had given in was because he had pulled the 'we're family now and you would do it for me' card.

Shaking himself from his thoughts Harry turned back to the conversation again.

"You know Ron, we could keep Scabbers with us until tomorrow, that was Neville could get a proper tank for Trevor while he's out with his Gran and Scabbers could just use Hedwig's cage," Harry offered.

"If you're sure that would be great!"

With that the four split yet again, Harry and Neville to store Scabbers and gather their class materials as Ron distributed the rest of the boxes contents to his brothers and Hermione to yet again review her homework assignment.

As Harry and Neville entered the common rooms Harry was acutely aware of Cedric Diggory's gaze as it traced his progress through the room.

Upon reaching the room Harry quickly put Scabbers into Hedwig's cage with a smile and double checked that the food inside would be able to be consumed by the rat. It seemed as though Scabbers was staring at Harry funny but he quickly shook it off and went about gathering his own materials before they both retreated from the room yet again.

Entering the common room again Harry was shocked to feel a surge of relief wash over him when he saw that the older boy was no longer there. Did the boy really bother him that much?

"Harry," The all too familiar voice chimed up from beside him and with a startled gasp Harry whirled to see the fourth year leaning casually against the wall.

Yes. He did make Harry that uncomfortable.

"Why don't you sit down and we can talk?" Cedric asked with a kind smile that, while it would usually look pleasant, just didn't look right paired with his eyes, "You know, new school and all. It must be... Overwhelming."

And with that purr Harry was ready to leave... Like, right now!

"Sorry Cedric," Harry said as Neville grabbed onto his sleeve and pulled him towards the exit.

"Yeah, we promised to go over last nights homework with our friends. See you," Neville said before he and Harry practically fled down the tunnel and the hallway beyond.

Once they had reached the top of the stairway the two finally stopped and bent over with their hands on their knees as they panted.

"We need..." Harry said between pants, "To get... Him... A bell."

Five minutes before dinner was set to begin found Harry, Hermione and Ron standing outside of the great hall waiting for their friends return.

Just as Ron was going to complain again the doors across the entry way opened revealing a smiling
Professor Sprout and a beaming Neville.

"Hey guys!" Neville called as he burst into a run across the hall so that he stood before his friends and leaving the chuckling professor behind. "Look at my new wand! It's thirteen inch cherry wood and it had unicorn hair as a core. Mister Ollivander said that it was no surprise I wasn't getting good results with my dads wand, his materials were exactly the opposite!"

"Don't forget your new terrarium Neville," Professor sprout chimed in as she drew up the other children with a smile of her own. "It's already in your room for you so you can just transfer Trevor to it once dinner is finished. Now, I don't know about you lot but I for one am famished."

Just as dinner was finishing a dark speckled owl came flying through the air before landing in front of Harry accompanied by the stairs of the occupants of the great hall which caused Harry to blush as he quickly took the letter and gave the owl some water before it flew off yet again being stared at by the occupants of the hall.

"Who's the letter from Harry?" Ron asked with his eyebrows drawn together in confusion. Neither of them had seen this owl before so it was only natural to be curious.

Looking at the writing on the front of the letter Harry could practically feel his face split into a grin.

"It's from Charlie," He managed to say quickly before he tore the envelope open carefully to pull out the treasure inside which consisted of a carefully folded piece of parchment along with a flat glittering dark brown stone.

'Dear Harry,

I know that we decided on letters once a week but what can I say? I miss you terribly already and it's only been a day. I honestly have no idea how it is that I am going to make it until winter.

I have been back at the reserve for a few hours now and I must admit that it is nice to be back. This place has been a second home to me and I have missed it. I hope that you will get to see it soon, I think you would love it as much as I do.

We have just got a new nesting mother today too! A Norwegian Ridgeback of all things! She is set to lay her eggs around February then they should hatch around April, the whole reserve is ecstatic and my boss says that I must be lucky which I am inclined to believe seeing as I somehow managed to get you as a soul mate.

I am being a little sappy though aren't I? I should probably stop that.

Anyway tell me, how did the sorting go? Have you made any new friends? What house were you sorted into?

I'm afraid that I have to leave this letter at that otherwise it won't reach you until midnight and I'd rather not have you forced awake for a silly little letter.

I love you my little dragon,

Charlie

p.s. I have included a scale that fell off of the new mother. I thought that you would like it.'
Harry couldn't help the soft grin that spread over his face as he held the small scale in his hand. He would have to see if he could make it into a necklace or something.

The remainder of the meal was spent in discussion of the new dragon on the reserve and admiration of the scale which already meant so much to Harry.

That night Harry slept with a smile on his face and the scale resting gently in one of Harry's small fists clasped loosely on the bed beside him...

Later that night Harry woke up uneasily with the odd sensation of being watched. It was well after midnight and Harry had been in the middle of a very pleasant dream so that couldn't be it. Deciding that it was a good idea to look around just incase Harry rolled over and glanced to both sides of his bed only for nothing to be wrong and yet he still didn't feel right...

Taking a deep breath Harry looked towards the foot of his bed and froze.

There standing at the base of his bed a large figure loomed. Its features were cast into shadow and Harry could make nothing out apart from the fact that this was a male and he was a threat!

As Harry quickly sucked in a breath to scream out to his room mates the figure struck. His movements were too fast as a large calloused hand clasped down onto Harry's mouth with such force that all that escaped was a small startled squeak as the man's weight pushed Harry back down and into the once comfortable bed.

Harry could feel terror claw at him desperately as his heart began to hammer somewhere in the vicinity of his throat.

Harry moved, trying desperately to claw at this stranger's hands only for his hands to be grabbed in the man's other hand and forced down so that they were trapped between them as the man straddled his chest.

This man was heavy, far too heavy for Harry's frail form. He was extremely aware of the crushing weight pushing down onto him and making it even more difficult for him to breathe.

Harry's stomach rolled as hot breath wafted over his face and assaulted his nostrils as this man's face finally came into view.

From what he could see the robes were ratty, threadbare and covered in a layer of grime that Harry did not even wish to consider. His hair was a muted mousey brown color that hung down around his pudgy face both lank and snarled like twisted bits of string. His eyes were far too large and seemed to bulge out with a murky blue color.

This man looked like some rodent-man hybrid!

As the man leaned forward to speak Harry was able to see his yellowed teeth and vaguely noted that his front two teeth were longer than the rest just adding to the impression that he was some kind of rodent.

"You are going to be quiet," The strange man all but hissed into his ear and Harry felt white hot anger course through him as he bucked with all of his might and bit into this stranger's hand as harshly as he could. He would not be the weak little boy whose uncle could beat and touch, Harry would not just lay there and take it!

As his teeth sunk into this strange man's skin a scream of pain sounded out but instead of letting
him go his other hand came forward and wrapped tightly around Harry's neck as anger flared in his eyes.

"It's no use Potter," The rat man spat as his hand tightened causing a whimper to escape Harry's still covered lips before he removed his hand and instead yanked Harry's arms painfully from under his weight and pushed them so that they were pinned above his head at a painful angle. "Even if you could scream it's no use, ever heard of a silencing spell? Yes, that's right. Your precious friends won't be able to save you. No one can."

Terror, pure and simple coursed through Harry at this. This was just like with Vernon, he was weak and useless and no one would save him. Not even Charlie could save him, he was all the way in Romania!

As the man leaned forward Harry clenched his eyes shut in terror. This was it. This stranger was going to achieve what his uncle never had be that killing him, raping him or both.

Just as he could feel the soft scrape of chapped lips on his cheek a loud echoing screech sounded throughout the small space and echoed.

Harry's eyes flew open at the sound and his heart stopped before racing even faster.

In through the special port that only owls could enter came Hedwig. His beautiful familiar whose claws had quickly found purchase in this strange mans buttery face.

With a roar of pain the man toppled backwards and Harry quickly scrambled out of his bed and took in the sight before him.

Hedwig did a quick swoop back around in a graceful arc to face the intruder and with another screech her claws sank into the strangers arm before she flapped her wings to lift off, claws still sunk in his arm, in an effort to tear off the offending limb.

Once the shock of seeing his familiar attacking his attacker Harry quickly began to look around for something that would let him help. His wand would do little good to him at the moment, this man was neither a needle nor was he a matchstick and they had only begun to touch upon theory in the other subjects and this was not the time to see if he could do any of the spells he had read!

His chest was too heavy for him to lift alone so that wouldn't work, Hedwig's cage had Scabbers, wait... Where was Scabbers?

Looking back at the cage Harry's stomach flipped. Scabbers was gone.

No...

Looking back to the, now bloody, man realization coursed through Harry like a bolt of lightning.

This was Scabbers!

Harry quickly grabbed onto Hedwig's cage and, summoning up all of his strength, swung it down on the strange mans head.

With an all mighty CRASH the cage made contact and the man went still. Hedwig fluttered up to land lightly on Harrys shoulder as she nuzzled into his cheek and made small almost encouraging sounds.

After a few moments of shock Harry finally got his wits about him and ran over to harshly shake
Neville awake.

"Harry?" Neville asked in tired confusion as he attempted to blink the sleep from his eyes to gaze at his panicked friend. "What is it? Why is Hedwig here? What happened to you!?"

"There's a man! Go get a teacher or one of the older years! Please, before he wakes up!" Harry pleaded with his friend in desperation.

"Harry-"

"Go Neville! Hurry!" Harry all but shrieked as he shook.

With a nod Neville shot out of his bed and raced down the hallway to the seventh years' room where he quickly threw the offending door open and shook the closest seventh year awake which just so happened to be Austin Kirsty.

"You need to come now!" Neville panted out as he practically drug the seventh year from bed, happily noting that he had snatched his wand, "There's a strange man in our room and he attacked Harry!"

When the two had finally reached the first years room, followed quickly by the other seventh years who had awoken at the sound of Neville's panicked voice, they were greeted with the sight of an unconscious rat looking man and Harry being comforted by Justin, Ernie and his snowy owl Hedwig though they didn't seem to be making much difference.

"John, stun that guy and check him for any weapons and a wand then immobilize him. Ethan, go wake everyone else up and have them gather in the common room, we'll stay there for now. Matt, you go and get the professors!" Austin quickly ordered before he made his way over to the huddled first years.

Matthew Taylor ran as fast as he could through the Halls of Hogwarts hating, for the first time, the fact that they were generally free of professorial supervision. Racing up the stone steps and making as much noise as he could in an effort to catch a professors attention he could honestly say that he was glad to see Professor Snape's heated glare.

"Oh Merlin! Professor Snape am I glad to see you! You have to come quick, there's a strange man in the dorms and he attacked Harry!" Matt managed to pant out before the professor could let loose an insult of some sort.

The professors eyes widened ever so slightly in shock before he quickly cast a spell to alert the other teachers and turned to the seventh year with a withering glare.

"Well? Let's go," he growled before they both hurried towards the Hufflepuff common rooms.

The whole of Hufflepuff house were now gathered in the Den as the teachers took care of the strange man that had somehow managed to attack one of their younger members.

For a while the house had been abuzz with energy and anxiety at what exactly had happened and why but they had quickly settled down again and had slowly gravitated towards the center of the room where they settled into an odd form of a group cuddle session and yet no one seemed to mind. They were all just like a family after all.

Everyone was touching in one way or another be it resting against or on top of another member as
they seemed to make a pile of entwined bodies all seeking and providing comfort.

The older years were positioned around the outside edges of the group as the youngest were grouped together in the center. Harry and Neville were laying side by side, both leaning into the other as they rested their heads, with some gentle prompting, on the side of an older student. Hannah was laying with her head resting on Neville's stomach as Susan's rested on Harry's Mary was curled in between Ernie and Justin who were also resting their heads on another student until each student was turned into and were using a human pillow.

A soft hum of contentment seemed to ring out through the air as everyone could feel their eyelids droop in contentment.

Harry had just began to fall asleep yet again, with a feeling of complete relaxation thrumming through him when he was startled by a gentle voice whispering softly into his ear.

"Good night Harry."

Yep. Definitely getting that boy a bell.

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Authors Note: Okay, so we got a little heavy there but how cute is that!? I've had the image of a mass cuddle session in my head for forever!

Can any of you imaging Cedric having a bell tied around his neck just because Harry got tired of him sneaking up on him!? Jingle jingle!

Now, I am exhausted so I'll go ahead on post this before I go ahead and pass out! ^-^

!~Happy reading~!
The Descent

Little Dragon

Authors Note: A little short but here is the next installment of Little Dragon! I should probably just take down my schedule I don't follow it lol. I love Minnie! ^_^ But I love the resident Matrons just a tad more! :3

There's a few cuss words in this chapter. Just a heads up.

The Facebook page is up to 8 likes! Just wanted to let you guys know that once it reaches 10-15 then I will do a Q&A just for boredom's sake.

Disclaimer: I never have and never will own Harry Potter! I wish so very much that I did but the closest I have come is the Death Eater posing as my tooth that keeps crucio-ing my jaw! Ouch!

Chapter 13: The Descent

Severus swept through the halls after the seventh year Hufflepuff. He did not run, though he seventeen year old surely was, he swept. Robes billowing out behind him and that offending organ called a heart most definitely not racing nor was his mind. Of course that didn't stop him from being curious of course.

Who had gotten in? How had they found the Hufflepuff common rooms? Was the Potter boy safe? Not that he cared of course, surely not. What exactly had happened?

Finally they reached those blasted barrels that had somehow kept the Hufflepuff common rooms hidden from all who were not Badgers themselves or teachers and sprinted, or in his case glided, down the short tunnel and into the far too cheery room beyond.

The common room, which should have been empty at this time, was slowly filling with students who were being shepered to a relative group safety. Hmm, he would have to remember to award a few house points, discreetly of course, but they deserved it.

He was quickly lead through the common room through yet another door and then yet another till they entered what he would guess was the first years dorm.

The first that he noticed was the bloody fool on the floor. Hair lank and matted, skin pale and bland looking and robes which had no doubt already been frayed were not shredded and bloody at the sleeves. He was unconscious and possibly petrified with Jonathan Cursty standing guard over him with wand at the ready. More points for Hufflepuff.

In the corner opposite stood Austin Kirsty and the four Hufflepuff first years along with a snowy owl. The owl's feathers were splattered in bits of blood so it was only logical to assume it had been the one who did most of the defending, chalk up another point, and Potter was currently cooing to her with splatters of blood on himself, hopefully from that fool of a man, with the other first years simply standing there and offering comfort. Yet more points... It was a good thing that the points counters didn't show who or how they were awarded.

"What all has been done?" He asked curtly as he moved towards the man who was currently immobile on the ground.
"John stunned, disarmed and immobilized that guy, I have Ethan waking up the rest of the house and moving them all into the common room just in case you were wanting to search the rest of the rooms, Matt went to get you and I have been calming Harry down. I also have Mary holding the portal now that your in here."

Good, very good. Yet more points.

"Very well," Impressive, "You all may go, mister Potter will need to be looked over and this... Man," No he did not sneer, "Will need to be questioned."

"Yes sir," Harry piped up when the others seemed to hesitate. Interesting...

After the others had left Severus made quick work of checking the bonds on the face down man, very well done indeed, and then surprised himself by kneeling down beside Potter.

"Are you alright?" Where did that come from!? Something was surely wrong with him...

"I-I'm okay. I think Hedwig might be hurt though." Hedwig? Ah, yes the owl.

"I'm sure that Madam Pomfrey will be able to take care of her for you. How are you feeling?" Why was he being nice? There was something about this boy... More than just Lily's son...

"I'm just tired sir," Ah so he was polite even after something like this, that was good, "My ribs hurt a little, that man sat on them."

"What else did he do mister Potter?"

"Harry."

"What?"

"It's Harry sir," The boy, Harry, began shyly as he looked up at him with those large green eyes that were so much like Lily's but shone with a light all their own.

"Very well, what else happened Harry?"

"I woke up and he was standing at the end of my bed, I went to scream and call for the others to wake up but he jumped and covered my mouth so I bit him but he choked me. He said he had a silencing spell set up so the others couldn't hear me and then he kissed my cheek," Harry paused to shiver before looking down at Hedwig with a smile as he stroked her feathers almost reverently. "Hedwig flew in and clawed at his face and it knocked him off of me and onto the ground then she swooped back and got his arm! I tried to find something to help but I don't know any spells and didn't think it was a good time to practice what I had read but Ron's rat Scabbers was supposed to be in her cage but he wasn't and-" Horror quickly dawned on his face as Harry looked over at the man who was still on the floor across the room.

"That man! He's an animegus! He's Scabbers!"

What!?

Just then the rest of the teachers who were on patrol, Minerva and Pomona, as well as Poppy quickly made their way into the room.

"Harry!" Pomona said instantly as she made her way over to the first year along with Poppy while Minerva took over in guarding the man. "What happened? Are you alright?"
Severus was quickly buffered off to the side, which was perfectly fine by him the fact that he found himself incapable of being rude to the boy truly confusing him, as the two motherly women began to smother the poor boy.

Moving over to where Minerva stood Severus left Harry in the two matrons hands before telling Minerva what he had been told.

"Whoever this is," He sneered and gestured to the pathetic lump on the floor, "Is an animegus that has been posing as the Weasley families pet rat. He tried to attack Potter and was only stopped by the boys owl."

Minerva looked horrified and rightfully so as her gaze narrowed as she looked at the man again, is Severus didn't know better he would have thought that he heard the woman *growl*.

"Then let's see just who this is," Yes, that was indeed a growl. It appears that that particular trait had embedded itself from her animegus form... Fascinating.

"Indeed," Severus said dryly as he flicked his wand lazily causing the man to flip over and onto his back. "It appears that Potters owl is very capable of defense."

The man on the floors face was hardly visible with blood steadily seeping from various ragged claw marks spanning both his arms and face in crisscrossed patterns. Very capable indeed.

Bending over so that he could more readily examine his right arm in which a snarl promptly tore itself from his throat and startled his companion.

"Severus? What is it?" Minerva asked is shock as she looked at him incredulously.

"This," Severus spat as he continued to glare at that, that *fiend* who occupied more space than he *deserved* on the floor, "Is Peter Pettigrew!"

A gasp tore from her throat before she could help it before she turned her glare on the unconscious figure once again. Quickly taking her wand out she shot a spell at Pettigrew's form before Severus could react.

With little more than a raised eyebrow in his colleagues direction Severus turned to take in just what she had done before promptly biting his tongue. Little could make him laugh but this... This was definitely something!

There in the space that had once held Pettigrew's disgusting form sat a small wind-up cat toy. A mouse.

"Oh look, a cat toy," Minerva said with a smirk firmly planted on her face as she turned to look at Severus, "I believe that I shall indulge Mrs. Norris with a toy for a while before I turn it over to Madame Bones. I think it's a good idea, don't you?"

______________

Finally, once everything had been settled and they were able to leave the dormitories, they had split into two groups after sending Potter to join his class mates with he and Minerva scouting the male dormitories and Poppy and Pomona the female, preparing to exit through the common rooms they came across a scene they had not been prepared for nor had they truly expected to see. The whole of Hufflepuff cuddling before the fire!

Beside them Poppy and Pomona came from the female dorms and smirked as they took in their colleagues stunned and incredulous expressions.
"Welcome to Hufflepuff," Pomona said smugly as she and Poppy both grinned.

"What... How? Is this even possible!?” Minerva spluttered and Severus couldn't blame her, if he had dared to speak he would be the same way. This, this level unity, wasn't possible!

"How are our students so unified and comfortable?" Poppy began with a sly smirk and a giggle at their expressions.

"Simple..." Pomona continued as she moved to lean against the wall with her hip and folded her arms across her chest with a smirk of her own in place.

"This is Hufflepuff!" They finished in an eerie impression of the Weasley twins.

Amelia Bones, head of the DMLE was the person given the privilege of interrogating Peter Pettigrew. As such, she was also the one who was giving a valiant effort to not vomit or burst into tears. Or both. Both sounded good.

Peter Pettigrew's story was... Disturbing.

Most Death Eaters joined the ranks for some sort of belief or the hunger for power but not him. No, Peter had joined for the simple reason that he could! No one had believed him foolish enough to join, they had trusted him not to. Content in the knowledge that he was little more than another freshly graduated student and the most doted upon of his little group. Too weak to perform a spell properly, too shy to get his own dates and too loyal to ever betray their trusts...

How foolish they were...

Peter was Voldemort's prized pet! He would fetch whatever information was asked of him and bring it back for a simple pat on the head. He would be praised and awarded with a treat at the next raid that was little more than some poor woman for him to do as he pleased!

There he was powerful and could do no wrong, he was too useful! No one could harm him and he could reap all of the benefits and he felt absolutely no remorse for it.

The only thing that prevented that from continuing was Harry.

When Peter had found out about him he had begun to fear for his place in their group and did the only thing that he could to insure his place wasn't taken...

He killed them.

If they weren't around to give his place away then he could be content in the knowledge that it remained. Only, there was a flaw.

Remus Lupin had been suspected as the spy which worked to effectively drive him away and everyone believed that Sirius was the secret keeper. It wouldn't be much of a stretch for him to convince others of the two of them having a close relationship and being in it together.

Sirius was supposed to be there with the Potters that night. It was a tradition after all, but instead he had come to see Peter. He had lived! That wasn't supposed to happen and it ruined everything!

The only thing Peter had been able to do was disappear.
If he could vanish and get away then that would work and the only way to vanish was to fake his own murder and make sure that they wouldn't believe Sirius...

So he laid a trap. Sirius fell for it. It was perfect.

And then it all unraveled because of the Potter brat again!

Sirius was released and they knew what he did! But not who he was.

He disappeared until just before the package was sealed and made *damn sure* to keep his right hand, paw, whatever hidden just in case as he was sealed up inside the box.

But then the opportunity! Harry was right there, so vulnerable!

He was going to kill him but not before he got a little fun! After all, no one should die a virgin and it had been *so very long* and the boy was so very *pretty*! Just like Lily...

Yes, Amelia was well and truly disgusted and thanked the heavens for Harry's having found his familiar.

She would need to send that beautiful bird a nice big box of owl treats...

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Why?

Why wasn't it working!?

The enchantments should have assured that the Diggory boy would have done what he could not! Why were they not working?

The boy didn't have someone dear to his heart, there was nothing preventing the spell to take over! Especially after all of the trouble he had gone through to even get those spells!

Dealing with that miserable fool Mundungus was problem enough but then he was forced to actually venture down Knockturn himself, imagine if people had seen!

No matter, it had all worked out in the end and his luck seemed to have turned for the best when he had noticed the Diggory child's... Crush.

A simple compulsion charm here, a bit of potion there and one superiorly aimed spell later and Albus had a nice little pawn who was willing to finish what Vernon Dursley had started.

But it wasn't working! Somehow the little bastard had managed to fight the majority of the potion! Yes, he was obsessed but not to the point that Albus needed him!

This wasn't even enough for the Potter brat to get a restraining order!

Diggory was supposed to be aggressive, to stake his claim, make the Potter brat his and his alone! To tear him apart and make him scream, beg for mercy until he broke so that Albus could rebuild him to the perfect weapon!

Instead he was a creepy stalker boy! Something had happened to make it fail but *what*!?

Just what was keeping him from what he was supposed to do!?

He couldn't possibly love the brat! He had no one else he loved in that way. So what!?! Why wasn't
it working!?

At this rate he was going to have to do it himself and as lovely as that would be it was too risky before the boy broke!

Albus continued to mull over the current blight of his existence well into the night. Unknown to him, however, Fawks sat in the corner of the once great wizards office and glared at who was thought to be his master...

"Harry," Professor Sprout called out after she dismissed the class.

Looking up Harry frowned in confusion before waving his friends off and towards the entrance of the green houses to wait for him.

"Yes Professor?"

"Harry I believe that I have something, or rather someone in my office who would like to see you," Professor Sprout said with a grin as she pulled off her gloves and moved around the workbench with ease.

"Someone Professor?" This just got stranger.

"Oh, lets just say a tall fellow with lots of burns and a nice head of red hair-"

"He's here!?" Harry all but squealed as he looked up at his teacher with such obvious glee shining in her eyes that it almost hurt. "Where? I get to see him right? Can we go now?"

"Of course," she said with a chuckle as she moved close to her excited charge and began to guide him out of the greenhouses. "But first, I do believe your friends require an explanation."

"I have a visitor. I'm going to go see him. Tell you more at dinner. Professor let's go!" Harry said almost as quickly as Hermione as he all but drug her the short distance to the castles entrance.

The moment the offices door shut behind him Charlie wasted no more time and pulled him into his chest, both giving a sigh of contentment as a weight neither had noticed before seemingly fell from their shoulders, both content to merely hold onto each other.

After what seemed like forever Charlie finally pulled back and looked him in the eye with nervous anxiety shining deeply inside those ocean blue eyes.

"Are you okay? What happened? Mum floo called me last night with the news and I got here as soon as I possibly could without the old fool knowing. Why aren't you talking? Oh no, you're hurt aren't you!? I knew they didn't tell me everything I-"

"Charlie," Harry broke in with a grin as he finally managed to speak above the panicked dragon tamer. "I am perfectly fine. Hedwig managed to get him off of me before anything really happened and it's really good to see you!"

With that said Harry nuzzled his head into Charlies chest and breathed in the familiar scent that was Charlie.

"I missed you too kiddo," Charlie said with a soft smile as he went back to just holding his little bonded close. Not even a week and already he missed Harry dearly, more than even his precious
dragons. He could just stay here for the rest of time and he would die happy...

But he couldn't. Too much longer and Dumbledore would become aware of his presence and he did not need that old bastard to find out about the soul bond.

"I can't stay for much longer," Charlie sighed as he buried his nose into Harry's silky hair and breathed in the heady scent that was Harry.

"I know," Harry murmured back as he nuzzled into Charlie's chest again causing him to chuckle.

"So you're a Hufflepuff?" Charlie asked with a grin as he finally took in the color of his tie.

"Yeah," Harry said with a laugh as he pulled back to beam at Charlie, "The Den is amazing Charlie! You should see it someday!"

"The Den? That sounds interesting."

"It is! We're right across from the kitchens and we have a secret entrance that no one who's not a Hufflepuff or a teacher have gotten into for over a thousand years!"

Time went on like this for the short time that the two were able to meet. Their stolen minutes of companionship and love shown not in sweeping gestures of romance or bodily acts of intimacy but by the simple act of being close to the other and listening though perhaps it was far more telling in the companionable silences that accompanied a gentle smile or a warm caress of a large hand through silky tresses.

Though the greatest and most expressive act of all was perhaps the stolen kiss that gently swept across soft pink lips and caused a crimson blush to stain the youths cheek far after the laughter had died out along with the emerald flames in the fireplace.

Authors Note: So I figured that I needed to give you all a little more Harry Charlie fluffiness after such darkness! :3 I thought that you deserved a little treat. But don't expect it too often!

I just noticed that I have a habit of beginning POV's with the persons name, interesting...

Oh Charlie you naughty boy stealing a kiss! Look at poor Harry, he's still scarlet! :3
Chapter 14: Retribution

Charlie had kissed him. Charlie had kissed him! Not just a simple kiss on the forehead like all of the times before either but a real kiss! A real and true kiss on the lips!

Absentmindedly Harry lifted one small hand to gently rest against his bottom lip as he continued up the various staircases and finally into the library.

Still in a daze Harry took his seat and took no notice of his friends' curious inquiries and questions of just what had happened or if he was all right.

Minutes passed by and it seemed as though no one were going to make any progress. That is, until Hermione decided to use her quill.

The pointed end which was already loaded up with plenty of ink...

One quick poke to Harry's forehead and his attention was effectively snapped back to the situation at hand.

"Wha-what was that for 'Mione?" Harry asked shocked as he looked in confusion between his friends' snickering faces.

"Oh, nothing Harry," Hermione practically sang as she pointed her quill at him warningly, "Just that you've been zoned out and ignoring us for the last fifteen minutes is all. What happened? You're usually not like this."

"Oh!" Harry said shocked before a blush crossed over his cheeks and his fingers yet again rested on his lips as though he could still feel the soft weight against them. "N-nothing... Happened? Just, uh, just a visit from Charlie is all."

"Charlie was here?" Ron asked before Hermione could call him out on his obvious embarrassment. "Why was Charlie here? I though he would be in Romania by now?"

"Oh, he was. When he heard about Scab-Peter he decided to come make sure that I was okay."

"Did you tell him about that Cedric bloke?" Neville piped up from across their small table and he leaned forward to better examine Harry's eyes going wide in shock and slight panic. "You forgot didn't you?"

"Maybe?" Harry asked sheepishly as he put his head down on his arm. "This might be better
though, I'll just write it down in his note and then he'll know but won't be able to... Do any
damage."

"That sounds like a good idea to me Harry," Hermione said with a smile and for a moment Harry
almost thought that she was willing to let his behavior go. Almost. "That still doesn't tell us what
exactly happened to make you zone out like that though, let alone cause that blush."

"Um..." How exactly was he supposed to answer that? Well, I just got kissed by my soul mate and
it was amazing? That wouldn't work. "Well... You see..."

"Harry?" Neville asked in concern as he watched his friends' face turn steadily more and more red.
"Are you okay?"

"I-I'm fine, it's just..." Cue a deep breath here, "I kissed Charlie or well he kissed me!"

"What?"

"Charlie kissed me. Right before he left."

"Really? What was it like?" Hermione asked as she moved so that Harry had no choice but to look
her in the eyes.

"It was... Really nice." Harry said as he thought back on it...

Their time was up and it was time for Charlie to go. As they slowly made their way towards the
now empty grate Harry couldn't help but feel as though something big were about to happen.

When Charlie gave him the usual hug goodbye it felt... Different somehow. Not bad, but certainly
not the same as all the others before it.

"Harry," Charlie said with a gentle smile as he locked gazes with him and one of his large
calloused hands gently caressed his cheek. This was nice, Harry decided as he leaned into the
gentle touch and allowed his eyes to drift closed in contentment. "Keep your eyes closed," Charlie
whispered into his ear. When had he gotten so close?

Then...

Oh! That was different. Harry thought as he felt a warm weight press down onto his lips gently
causing a warm flutter to run through his body.

Cracking his eyes opened Harry was shocked to find ocean blue orbs locked with his own, so very
close. He could hardly see anything else apart from those brilliant blue orbs that shown with so
much love and compassion.

With a smile Charlie finally broke the kiss and moved up to lay a soft kiss on the tip of his nose and
then his forehead before both hands came up to cradle his now burning cheeks and kept him from
looking away.

"I'll see you soon love, be sure to write," Charlie said with a grin before he swooped in and stole
another kiss. Just as soon as this one was over Charlie moved swiftly into the now glowing flames
with a laugh and a shout of his destination leaving Harry to stand there in shock and confusion the
feel of lips still pressed against his own...

"Details Harry! Details!" Hermione all but squealed, ever mindful of their presence in the library.
"No details!" Ron said quickly, eyes wide and panicked as Neville merely watched on in amusement.

"Harry!" Cedric called out from directly behind the group as they made their way from the great hall along with everyone else.

With a startled squeak Harry swirled around only for his look of surprise to change into one of mild irritation.

"Cedric," He practically growled as he looked up at the older boy who pretty much towered over him, "I swear, if you keep this up I'm going to get you a bell! You can't just go around scaring people like that!"

Cocking his head to the side Cedric actually looked like he was contemplating the matter! But he couldn't be! That was completely ridiculous. Wasn't it?

"Sounds like fun," Cedric all but purred with a grin before he turned and sauntered away leaving the four friends to stare after him in stunned silence.

"Hey Ron?" Harry asked once the shock finally managed to fade enough for him to turn to look at his brother.

"Yeah Harry?"

"Will you tell the twins that I need to talk to them before breakfast tomorrow?"

"Sure," The confusion was evident in his voice as he looked at Harry through furrowed brows. "I'll tell them tonight, okay?"

"Perfect," Harry said with a grin that could only have been learned from the twins and caused shivers to course down the others' spines in an odd combination of anticipation and dread.

Later that night found Harry and Neville holed up in a corner of their dorm room and plotting. What they were plotting no one knew nor did they wish to know.

Harry was writing with the ferocity of a Ravenclaw when challenged with a ten foot essay and Neville was easily reading through the quickly growing stacks of parchment that surrounded the two.

All in all it made for a rather frightening sight even when one did not factor in the malevolent grins that the two first years sported let alone the glints that lay within their eyes.

Who ever their target was the other 'Puffs couldn't help but feel a wave of sympathy towards. Though, if they had managed to get onto the bad side of the two usually quiet first years they probably deserved it...

"Harry?" Fred asked as he and George ran up to the three with Ron at their side, "Ron said that you wanted to see us? What's up?"

"Well," Harry said with a small smile as he examined his two elder brothers with a grin. "How would you feel about helping me with a prank?"

Just like that everything changed. Fred and George, while before wary and nervously, now stood at
prompt attention twin smiles of mischief alight on their faces as they clapped their hands in glee.

"We would be honored brother mine," Fred began sounding positively gleeful as he threw his arm over Harry's shoulders with George copying him from the other side.

"What's the plan brother dear?" George asked as they began to move through the doors and to the first years spots at the Hufflepuff table where they were promptly accepted and then ignored in favor of focusing on their own meals.

Cedric wandered aimlessly through the halls.

Why wouldn't Harry even so much as sit with him? Perhaps he was coming on too strong? But he had seriously toned himself down!

Half the time it was all he could do to even announce his presence let alone to refrain from touching Harry, pulling him into a corner and showing him just what a proper snog felt like!

But no, Cedric wanted for Harry to come to him as much as it killed him to wait.

With a sigh Cedric went to turn back around and head towards his years study hall in the library when he caught sight of two almost identical figures standing further down the hallways.

As he squinted to get a better look at the figures they started to move closer.

"Hey Ced!" One of the Weasley twins' voice rung out from the figure on his left.

"We need to have a word with you mate," The other twin said as they finally drew up to the other third year and casually swung their arms around his shoulders.

"About?" Cedric asked. He wasn't worried. Not in the slightest...

"Well mate-"

"It seems that-"

"You've been bothering-"

"Our younger brother-"

"Sneaking up on him and all that-"

"And that just won't do." It was like some kind of verbal tennis match was being played with him as the met. The conversation was effectively distracting him from the fact that he was essentially being shepherded into one of many unused common rooms.

"What are you two talking about?" Cedric asked vaguely annoyed by their typical banter. He should have expected it, really.

"Well mate-"

"Let's just say that-"

"Well, Harry did say that-"

"He was going to get you a bell."
With that Cedric was shoved into the classroom where a flash of light and a burst of purple colored smoke quickly overtook his senses. What was this all about!? Harry? A bell? What!?

Once the smoke finally cleared Cedric moved to look at himself only to find that he was covered from head to toe in hundreds of tiny bells. Each one of the deceptively small balls gave off a cloyingly loud 'jingle jangle'.

Each of the small orbs were disguised to match the color of whatever it was that they rested on. All but one that is.

Around his neck hung a rather large bell, about the size of his clenched fist, and attached to it was a note. A simple note which contained only one sentence but was certainly enough to bring a smile to Cedric's face as he read it.

'I told you I would have to get you a bell. Enjoy!'

Today was the day that the first years had their first potions class. Gryffindor and Slytherin had already attended (That resulted in Seamus Finnegan being rushed to the hospital wing and Gryffindor losing five points. Not that Ron had complained at lunch or anything.)

Down in the dungeons the pleasant warmth that accompanied them from a delicious and filling lunch seemed to be slowly seeping from them in the unusual chill of the potions lab. That accompanied with the fact that there were no windows and almost every wall was covered in glass jars of floating animals and such just added to the creepiness of the room as a whole.

"Why is it so cold?" Neville asked from Harry's right, he, Hermione and Neville were all sharing a table located in the approximate center of the room according to Hermione.

"It's for the ingredients," Harry replied almost immediately as he and Hermione busied themselves with gathering their materials. "When the cauldrons get lit the temperature raises, the natural chill of the room helps to keep it a good temperature for the ingredients to remain fresh for a longer amount of time."

Just then the door to the classroom burst open and Professor Snape strode in with his robes billowing behind him. He certainly wasted no time as he quickly went through roll call with a barely noticeable pause on Harry's name before he continued on in a speech that certainly caught Harry's attention.

"You are here to learn the subtle science and exact art of potion making," He spoke in little more than a whisper yet somehow his voice traveled through the room and caught each of the students attentions with will be little foolish wand waving in this class, many of you will hardly believe that this is magic. I do not expect that any of you will truly understand the beauty of the softly simmering cauldron with its shimmering fumes, or the delicate power of liquids that creep through human veins, bewitching the mind, ensnaring the senses... I can teach you how to bottle fame, brew glory, even put a stopper in death. That is, if you are not as big a bunch of dunderheads as I usually have the misfortune to teach."

Well, if it weren't for that last bit then that would have been a truly wonderful speech...

The reactions to the end of the speech however were most interesting as the Ravens flinched and a look of determination flitted over their expressions as the 'Puffs merely raised an eyebrow and looked between each other while silence rung through the classroom.

"Potter!" Professor Snape called suddenly as he looked straight in Harry's direction with a
calculating expression masking his features. "What would I get if I added powdered root of asphodel to an infusion of wormwood?"

"Drought of Living Death, sir. It is a sleeping potion that is extremely powerful and is only allowed to be administered by registered healers."

"Very well. Where would you look if I told you to find me a Bezoar Potter?"

"The stomach of a goat, sir. A Bezoar will neutralize most poisons and toxins in either one's system or, if used correctly, within a potion itself," Harry was now extremely happy that he had managed to read all of his potions materials at this point.

"What is the difference, Potter, between Monkshood and Wolfsbane?" Professor Snape seemed oddly pleased now. His harsh expression had been replaced with instead a soft, almost not there, upwards turn of his lips and his once condescending raised eyebrow now seemed more of a challenging one and Harry felt himself slowly relax bit by bit.

"They are the same plant Professor. They also go by the name of Aconite."

That night after an... Interesting meeting with Hagrid in which the quartet learned to both avoid the rock cakes and that Fang was extremely friendly and loved to rest his head in your lap, especially Harry's.

Once they arrived back at the castle they were also privileged to see that Hufflepuff had once again mysteriously gained another good handful of points that confused the Hogwarts population to no end.

That night when Harry and Neville returned to their common room it was with grins and laughter.

That is, until they saw Cedric.

Who was coming closer to them.

And still had the large bell jangling happily about his neck...

"Thank you for the gift Harry," Cedric said with a wink as he moved one hand up to flick the bell causing it to let out a cheerful 'dingling, jing, jing.'

With that he simply walked away, each footstep causing a small 'ding dingle.'

"Well..." Neville said as they watched him walk away. "At least we know it worked."

"True, but is it a good thing?" Harry whispered with a hint of growing horror in his voice as Cedric turned around and yet again flicked the bell as he smirked at Harry.

Harry promptly turned away and entered the relative safety of their dorm room where he stayed for the remainder of the night.

On Sunday that same dark speckled owl came in with the rest of the owl post, this time in the morning, and landed yet again in front of Harry who could feel his grin split across his face yet again.

"What does Charlie have to say this time Harry?" Hermione teased from his side with a sly smirk.
"I don't know yet," Harry laughed as he gently took the letter and Hermione fed the owl a piece of her bacon.

‘Harry,

Yet again I haven't been able to survive a week without you! I feel that it has become even harder in fact.

I can still feel your lips on mine, I swear that was probably the most magical moment of my life beaten only by when I met you and our bond formed.

I can't believe how incredibly mushy I sound in these letters and yet it is all the truth.

I can't say however that I am quite as happy about this Diggory boy...

I want you to be careful around him Harry. For me?

Keep me updated will you? I need to know if anything else happens with him.

Cudos on that prank you pulled with the twins by the way. Truly inspired.

Is he really still wearing that bell though? Just a little creepy.

Oh! You should probably look up now. I'm afraid I couldn't help myself and this Diggory is going to be getting a rather... Rude morning wake up call? Well, it would be better if you just looked.

I love you my little dragon.

Yours forever,

Charlie’

With a small laugh and a smile Harry looked up and over at where a tawny owl was just now landing in front of Cedric.

"Um guys," Harry said quickly as he got their attention, "You may want to watch Cedric."

"Why?" Hermione asked with her brows knit in confusion.

"Well..." Harry said as he watched Cedric ever so slowly begin to open the letter, "I think Charlie may have pulled a prank."

"What?" Ron asked as he leaned forward to look at Cedric as he finally tore apart the last vestige of parchment open.

Within seconds a cloud of multicolored smoke and what looked to be sparkles came floating out of the envelope and enveloped Cedric completely.

When the smoke had finally settled it revealed Cedric who was now colored in splotches of pastel colors each accented with a thick dusting of glitter along with a great quantity of even more glitter which floated in the air before the shocked third year spelling two simple words...

'HE'S TAKEN!'

Authors Note: A little short but I'm happy with it! I figured that I would give you all a nice fluffy
chapter! ^-^ I'm in a VERY good mood lol.

Anyways, I am now doing a Q&A session, you can ask what ever and how ever many questions you want. I'll do my best to answer on both Facebook as well as PM.

Next chapter is a time skip to Halloween to help save some time and keep this story rolling since I have only just now, with the use of this chapters overview, gotten to the end of the first week.
First Flight

Little Dragon

Authors Note: Unoriginal title aside I am pretty happy with this chapter! I had planned for it to include not only the first flying lesson and such but also Halloween but... Well, what can I say? My muse got away from me. ~shrugs~ Oh well, that's only good news for you all my dears! Not to mention that my muse if feeling oddly fluffy lately...

In other news I have extended the Q&A until further notice! All questions are open and allowed. Ect. Ect. :)

Disclaimer: Muahahaha ~rubs hands evilly in a shadowy corner~ Soon... Soon.

Chapter 15: First Flight

After Charlie's 'warning' Cedric's behavior had changed immensely.

Now, instead of sneaking up behind Harry at random times, which had become much harder since he now refused to take off that bell- oh how Harry was regretting that prank, and trying to get him to study or any number of other activities he had instead taken to following Harry around like some kind of a lost puppy.

Yes, a good portion of the creepiness seemed to have leached out of him but that didn't mean anything when it was instead replaced with some kind of... Pathetic desperation?

Harry couldn't help but feel like this was all wrong. Cedric wasn't supposed to be like this! From what he had heard around the school and in the Den Cedric was always so self assured and strong! The perfect gentleman who all of the girls fawned over and yet...

Here he was following Harry around like a servant or something, insisting on carrying his books and bag, opening doors and refusing to leave him alone. Constantly asking him about who he was taken by, why Harry chose him, when they had gotten together, why it wasn't Cedric himself, if Cedric still stood a chance. It all seemed so wrong!

And Harry was going to figure out exactly what was going on...

The next week on Thursday, one week before Hermione's birthday, was set to be the first flying lesson of the year.

Neville and Hermione were panicked and jittery at the very thought while Harry and Ron watched on in amusement. Harry had already been told not to panic by Charlie. A broom was sort of like a horse, have a healthy respect for it and you'll be fine but let your fear control you and nothing good will come from the encounter.

So here they were, standing on the plush grounds between the castle and the forbidden forest as the gentle breeze ruffled their hair as it swept passed.

Their flying instructor, Madame Hooch, was a rather tall and thin woman with short grey hair and golden eyes that gave the distinct impression of a hawk.
"Well?" She asked impatiently as no one made a move towards the two lines of brooms laid out before her. "What are you lot waiting for? Everyone stand by a broomstick, wand hand over the broom itself. Hurry up."

Quickly the students moved forward and stood, most of them with their brooms to the right, though some like Mary stood to the left.

Harry looked around at the brooms and saw just what the twins had been complaining about before. These brooms were in horrible condition, not a single one of them had escaped unscathed. The best looking of the lot had only a few random twigs sticking out at odd angles though Justin seemed to be the most unlucky of the lot seeing as his looked as though one strong gust of wind would tear it apart.

"Hold your wand hand over the broom and say firmly 'UP!' then wait for further instructions," She stated simply as her eyes ran over their rows, it didn't fail Harry's notice that her eyes lingered on Justin's broom as the slight sneer that crossed her stern features.

Apparently she wasn't fond of the schools brooms. Perhaps Harry could recommend that someone look into the schools finances? This was surely gross negligence on Dumbledore's count.

Calls of 'UP!' rang throughout the two lines as the students hurried to follow her instructions. Harry's broom was one of the few that flew up and into his hand firmly though his was also one of the few that had moved at all. Some like Hermione's broom gave a feeble wobble and rolled over while others' like Neville's or Justin's stayed still as though nothing had been done at all.

"Just take a deep breath," Harry said with a smile as he looked at his friends, "It's alright. We're all learning so there's no reason to be afraid. Nothing is going to happen. Now, try again and just relax."

Harry's words of encouragement seemed to have traveled more than he had thought as, with plenty of deep breathes and more confident calls of 'UP!' the rest of the brooms soon found their places into their temporary riders hands. If the gently upturn of Madame Hooch's lips were anything to go by then she seemed pleased.

After being shown how to properly mount their brooms and avoid sliding off of the end accidentally Madame Hooch then walked down the line and corrected the few grips that were off before finally they got to the best part...

"When I blow my whistle, you will kick off of the ground hard. Keep your brooms steady and rise a few feet. On my next whistle you will lean forward slightly and come straight back down. Ready on my whistle."

"Keep calm," Harry whispered as he saw Neville begin to shake and Hermione's grip on her broom tighten, "Everything will be okay."

"Three," Madame Hooch began to count down, that same slight upturn to her lips as once again the others who had heard him calmed as well, "Two... One!"

Harry's feet left the ground as a young chicks would on its first flight, slightly wobbly and tremulous but none the less care free. As he rose those few feet into the air Harry could feel his heart soar in a close proximally of what Charlie himself was able to make him feel.

It was marvelous!

After a few small exercises to practice their directions and how to properly navigate they were all
set to fly in small, short, laps around her beginning slow and slowly gaining in both speed and altitude as they grew more comfortable with flying.

Harry felt free! One short lap beside his two friends and a soft word of encouragement from Hermione to 'not worry and just have fun' was all it took. Within minutes Harry was little but a speeding bullet as he weaved his way through his classmates and coaxed the ancient broom to greater heights than it had surely been to in years!

"Potter!" Madame Hooch called out with that small upturn of her lips as she called for Harry to come toward her.

"Yes ma'am?" Harry asked in concern. Was he in trouble? He didn't think that he had broken any of the rules she had set at least...

"Mister Potter, have you ever flown on a broom before this?" She sounded... Intrigued to say the least. Rabbit and slightly possessive to say the most but that was another matter.

"No ma'am."

"Have you even touched a broom before this?" Yes, that was definitely a manic glint in the Professor's eyes, he wondered why.

"Just once Professor, but I didn't get to summon it. Just touched it," He was being completely honest after all. Charlie had presented one of the families brooms to him before if only to prove to his dubious senses.

"After this lesson I want you to stay behind Potter," Now she sounded like Ron did whenever he talked of chess strategies that could possibly hold up against Arthur... Fascinating. "You are not in trouble of course. Far from it! Now, go enjoy some more flying, try to get those friends of yours to loosen up and we'll speak more later!"

She was... Extremely happy. Odd... Should he be hesitant about what was to come? Probably. Was he? For some reason, not in the slightest...

"Just think of the potential Pomona!" Madame Hooch said with a fanatical glint in her eyes as she spoke animatedly to his head of house. Harry himself was content to merely watch the encounter while he nibbled on a coconut ice that Professor Sprout had offered him.

"Yes of course I do Rolanda, but let's be reasonable here. Harry is only a first year! He's also only had one lesson in flying and-"

"And took to the air far better than any I've ever seen before!" Madame Hooch cut in excitedly. "You and I both know that that seeker of yours is only a seeker because there's no one else! He's been pestering each of us on potential replacements since he joined your team! You and I both know-"

"It doesn't matter what we know. This is, in the end, Harry's decision as well as the rest of the teams! I may be the head of house and he may be talented but I will have no part in any sort of forced action!"

"Of course I know that Pomona! Just think about it though!" Madame Hooch was far too worked up about this, Harry thought idly as he carefully sucked on one of his fingers to remove the delicious stickiness that coated them.
"Well Harry," Professor Sprout finally said with a grin as she looked at the small first year before her, "What are your thoughts in all of this?"

"I would have to think about it at any rate Professor," Harry said as he carefully thought over his options. "From what I've heard the current seeker would rather be a chaser but can't because no one else can be a seeker. On that case, if I were to take over the seeking duties they would be moved to chaser and the roster will be full. But, there are also rules in place that would prevent me from playing ma'am. For one the 'no broomstick' rule. The schools brooms seem like their about ready to give up and as fun as flying is I don't think I would quite like to fall from the sky because of a gust of wind going a little too strong."

"Of course, though that would be easily remedied with the use of a certain rule. Between Pomona and myself we would only need one other person and viola! You have access to a broomstick of your very own!" It's official. Madame Hooch liked Quidditch just a little too much for a non fanatic!

"Is... Would it be possible for me to think about it? I would like to talk to some people about this first and I know that tryouts aren't until Tuesday?"

"That is perfectly fine Harry," Professor Sprout said with a grin as she reached into her desk drawer and produced a small box of Coconut Ice which she quickly handed over with a wink, "Let one of us know when you have made your decision and make sure to share those with your friends!"

"Yes ma'am!" Harry said with a grin as he pocketed the box and ran from the room with a hasty good bye to the two professors.

---

'Harry,

I must admit, I am impressed!

It took until my second year to become Gryffindor's super seeker and that was, at first, because they were desperate! It all worked out of course, I was Gryffindor's best seeker in a long time but it looks as though that was nothing on you! When the holidays are here, mind you mum might just kill me for this, we will have to have a one on one match!

Now, as far as the advise that you asked for... Do what you think is right.

Why not meet with the team, maybe try out a practice round and see how you feel? If it makes you happy then by all means go for it!

Just have fun and enjoy!

Now, I have to go. It's time to feed miss Flacara.

Love you my little dragon,

Charlie'

---

One practice! That was all that Harry had agreed to if only for the chance to fly again. One practice to meet the team and try his hand at actually doing what they wanting him to do.

One practice was all it took...
Harry loved this. The thrill that coursed through him at the almost non existent him of the material beneath his fingertips, the air as it whipped around him in a near frenzy and yet somehow comforted him as though instead of trying to knock him back to the greedy clutches of gravity it were instead embracing him in a welcoming caress. It was amazing.

The thrill of the game, of dodging between countless bodies as they scrabbled after the quaffle all while he avoided the bludger's and chased the snitch... It all seemed so natural. The adrenaline as it hummed through his veins, the gasps and noises of awe that sounded so faint in his ears as he barrel rolled away from a particularly clingy bludger, it all felt so right!

All that was left was a solemn promise from the person who still insisted on following him around like a lost puppy that he truly wanted for Harry to take over the position of seeker and that he really did want to be a chaser instead and it had all been settled.

Hufflepuff had a new seeker. The youngest in a century and certainly the most surprising find of the year as far as Quidditch rosters were concerned.

Hermione's birthday was a small affair within their small group of friends. How they had become so close in a mere nineteen days was beyond them but far be it for them to question the bond that had no doubt flourished.

A mere nineteen days and already they were so very close to each other as compared to any relationships previous. Hermione who was always shunted to the side, Harry who was forced there, Neville who was near constantly alone and Ron who had a tendency to gravitate around on his own in a world full of chaos.

What a group they made!

In a mere nineteen days they were already each others best friends, pseudo brothers and sister, everything. They couldn't have wished for more.

The day itself was relatively the same as all those before though today it was accompanied by well wishes and small trinkets from some of the others in the school.

Somehow however, it seemed that all of Hufflepuff had discovered what day it was which, while it would be shocking enough by itself, was then celebrated with the mere reasoning that they couldn't leave one of their 'Honorary Badgers' to celebrate their birthday alone.

This was quickly accompanied by the Twins' whole hearted agreement and quick thinking as they begun a rousing chorus of the birthday song.

By the time the day had ended Hermione had a near permanent blush and a large haul of candy and books.

All in all her twelfth birthday was by far her best.

While all of Harry's little family learned about his new position on the Quidditch team they made sure to let Harry know just how proud they were but none of them had quite pulled it off as Sirius and Remus had...

The day after Hermione's birthday would probably stand as Harry's most embarrassing.

Accompanying the usual flurry of owls that delivered notes and packages to the students six
specific owls stood out. It wasn't as though they were so very different than the others that flew through the great hall or even the fact that they were all required to assist in the delivery of a single package.

No, what stood out was the fact that the package was connected to each of the owls by an assortment of rainbow colored curls and bows that fluttered in the breeze caused by their wings as they flew down and effectively cleared the table in front of Harry of all of its dishes. Perhaps the school should look into a perch of some sort to avoid this from happening so much?

With what seemed like the whole entirety of Hogwarts watching Harry and those around him made quick work of the ribbons and bows trapping the owls to the oblong package with some sort of red envelope hanging off of one end.

"Oh, I'm sorry Harry," Gabriel said with a wince as he looked at the now smoking envelope. "I don't know what you did to earn a Howler but you might want to just get it over with."

"Howler? What's a Howler?" Harry asked in such utter confusion that he could practically feel some of the more... Vocal girls coo at his expression.

"Well it's-" He was cut off by the letter exploding in an echoing cadence of laughter.

"HARRY!" Sirius' voice boomed from the floating bit of parchment in obvious amusement and Harry could feel his face burn. Why? Why would Sirius do this?

"REMMY AND I JUST FOUND OUT ABOUT YOU BEING MADE SEEKER! CONGRATULATIONS BAMBI! WE ARE SO VERY PROUD OF YOU AND WE SWEAR WE'LL BE THERE FOR YOUR FIRST GAME!" His voice was so loud it was literally causing the silverware on the tables to shake though that did little to stop the snickers that went throughout the hall.

So embarrassing! Yet, also... Sweet.

"WE GOT SPECIAL PERMISSION TO GET YOU THIS PREZZIE, DIDN'T TAKE MUCH ONCE WE POINTED OUT THAT FORCING YOU TO USE A SCHOOL BROOM WOULD BE A DEATH SENTENCE. WE HAD TO PROMISE THAT YOU WOULDN'T USE IT TO CAUSE TROUBLE THOUGH, NO IDEA WHAT THE WORLD IS COMING TO," By this point Harry had his head firmly buried in the protective casing of his arms. This worked well to his benefit as the screaming letter just kept going.

If Harry had any doubts before, which he hadn't, on their feelings of him they were quickly and violently torn to shreds with each shrieked refrain of the love that Sirius had for his darling little Bambi of when Remus would tune in with his own cries of love as well. Yet, despite everything, Harry loved it. He was loved so very much and if they were willing to shout it out through a letter Harry probably didn't want to know what would happen when they were actually here!

And still the letter continued to include praise over his own letter to them and how very detailed it was. The prank he helped to pull on Cedric, which caused Cedric to flush and grin as the hall snickered at his embarrassment instead.

Finally, finally the letter ended! The last echoes of 'WE LOVE YOU PRONGSLETTE, KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK! LOVE, YOUR UNCES MOONEY AND PADFOOT' not even ended before the twins had all but thrown themselves at his feet as though he were some sort of deity.

"We are not worthy!" They cried out together as they then moved at begin kissing at the back of
his hands as though he were their king! "We are but worms! Use us, we will do your bidding!"

What... Just happened?

Once the whole debacle had calmed down, which was accompanied by yelling from the once great Dumbledore, pleading from the twins for Harry to make them his man servants which Cedric had quickly joined in on, more yelling and Harry making a quick escape to avoid any further horrors, he was finally able to focus on just what had happened.

Sirius and Remus had gotten him a broom! A Nimbus 2000! They were definitely getting super hugs the next time he saw them but there was also the fact that Sirius at least had planned the whole ordeal for some form of embarrassment as sweet as it was in any case.

So, he would have to figure out a way to get them back. Easy enough if he merely denied them chocolate, the two were addicted.

But what was that with the Twins' reactions!? The reactions weren't even to the broom but instead to what Sirius had called him.

It wasn't Bambi, Fred and George had heard that nickname get used a fair bit... Prongslette? Well, that one was newer in any case.

Or perhaps it had to do with the fact that they had signed the letter Mooney and Padfoot? But, those were their nicknames from school, how would Fred and George know about that?

Perhaps... Perhaps they were the ones with the Marauders map?

Hmm, Harry would have to ask them about it at some point.

In fact, perhaps he should get into contact with Sirius and Remus and see if there was any possibility of getting copies of the map made? Maybe even add on a search feature so that it was easier to locate who you wanted if what Siri and Remmy had told him about the map were still true.

Yes, that was indeed something to remember for later...

Authors Note: This may seem completely random but has anyone here actually had Coconut Ice? It's DELICIOUS! So are macaroons. And any kind of sweet really... No judgments!

Okay so... I wanted to Halloween in this too but my muse is in a really good mood! The next chapter will once again hold darker themes, I plan a nice bit of Dumble-mindedness. (Please pay no attention to my odd words by the way. That's just how I am sometimes.)

Anywhozles, I hope you enjoyed! ^-^
Nightmares Abound

Little Dragon

Authors Note: A little dark compared to the last few chapters. Sorry about that but hey, blame the muse!

I can't believe that I'm already on the 16th chapter! If my original posting schedule had been followed we would only be on the 3rd chapter! I can't believe how much progress I have made with this and it's all thanks to you and your wonderful reviews! :3

Warning, this is a little bloody. I have a fight scene in it. Come on! It's Halloween! What's Halloween without some sort of mental trauma? Yeah, I know but hey, it's in the name!

Disclaimer: ~Looks up at the moon through a child's bedroom window~ Oh don't look at me like that old friend. You knew this day was coming. My fan girls are ready... Are your copywriters? (No I don't own ROTG either!)

Chapter 16: Nightmares Abound

As time continued forward Harry seemed to become more and more restless. Something seemed wrong. Very wrong, but he couldn't quite figure out what it was.

Professor Quirrell was... Unsettling to be around. His stuttering was far too frequent to be a natural ailment but then again the excessive stutter could be a side effect of the acute paranoia that he seemed to suffer from. Whatever had happened with those vampires must have really done a number on him to cause that.

Though that didn't explain the other reasons that caused him to feel awkward around the professor.

The professor had taken to looking at him... Oddly. As though he were an obstacle in his way or even in some obscure form of jealousy. That is, when he actually looked at Harry. The professor had a habit of making sure that Harry was constantly behind him even when addressing a question that he had asked, he would simply turn and face the board even though he did no writing. Whenever this happened Harry would be overcome with the feeling of being watched by someone unpleasant yet there was no one in the room who could have caused it...

When his unease was not directed at the professor then it lay firmly with whatever was being contained behind the doors in the third floor corridor.

Whatever it was that was being kept locked away in there seemed to be growing restless itself if the faint rumbling of growls or the sound of claws scratching against marble flooring was anything to go by.

What exactly Dumbledore had deigned to hold within the castle that could cause death to any unlucky student that so much as chose the wrong door worried him greatly.

The man was a fool, greater than any he had had the misfortune to have encountered before. The only bright side to the whole foolish episode was that the reign of Albus Dumbledore would soon come to an end. That is, if he even made it through the remainder of the year.

Until then Harry would wait and be prepared. He and his friends had already agreed that they
would travel in groups if only for the company that it offered.

It was even growing more and more common place for those of the various houses to mingle with each other out side of classes. In fact, the four house tables in the great hall were quickly becoming mere tables and to think, it all had begun because of an escaped toad!

Everything was falling apart. Sure his social standing still held some small smidgen of power but that meant little to him now...

He might have been able to come back from the Gringotts incident, they were only goblins and perfectly able to forge those documents. All he would have to do would be to pad a few pockets with what was left, steal what he still needed and he could finally be rid of those bloody nuances but no. He couldn't, not yet. They might be of use later...

He could even come back from what happened with the Potters! A grief stricken parental figure doing what he thought best to keep those he viewed as his children safe.

It could have been so simple given enough time!

But no, no someone just had to go digging! Just had to find out about Ariana, about his father, about Grindelwald!

Rita Skeeter was out for blood and she was getting it. She wasn't even working for the Prophet anymore, it appeared that she was privately hired by some new company that paid extremely well. It was... Disconcerting.

Added to the political aspects of his problems was the fact that the Diggory boy was still fighting. It even appeared that he was winning now as opposed to merely holding it at bay. That letter he had received in the great hall seemed to have been the turning point. The potion was still there, still effecting him, but not nearly as much.

That also lead to his greatest problem however...

**WHO THE HELL WAS WITH HARRY BLOODY POTTER!?**

How was he supposed to gain back control of the boy when someone else was holding him up!? It was bad enough that Sirius Black and Remus Lupin were back in the picture but they were just pawns and easily overlooked. Neither stable enough to provide a decent foundation to keep Potter from falling so it had to be someone else but who!?

How could he get the Potter boy back under his control? He had little that he could offer the boy anymore...

Unless...

Yes, perhaps it was time to bring out the mirror again. If he could get Potter to look into it then he could find out his weakness, find out what he could use against the boy.

Then he could exploit it and he would finally have the upper hand again and the boy would be his!

Unbidden the memory of Harry Potters appearance from yesterday came to the front of his mind...

His luscious pale skin had positively glowed against the emerald green of his shirt. The neck having scooped down to show the barest hints of chest, the fabric fluttering about his lithe form to
settle along the top of his black clad thighs...

Yes, he would get the Mirror of Erised as soon as possible. The sooner the better...

The school year had been going for two months now and still things were new and magical. Everyday Harry would see or hear or learn something new that seemed to make the world that much brighter.

Once a week, on occasion twice, Harry would get a letter from Charlie describing the reserve, his friends and the dragons themselves. He would also make sure to end each and every letter by telling Harry how very much he loved him. When Harry received those letters his smile wouldn't fade for the rest of the day.

Yes it wasn't quite the same as actually seeing Charlie but it was a close second. Each time he saw Charlies handwriting his heart would speed up just that little bit faster and it seemed as though he had finally released a breath he had been holding for far too long...

A true breath of fresh air he hadn't been aware that he needed...

Halloween that year fell on a Thursday and with it came the delicious scent of baking pumpkins and other sweet things that helped rouse the normally deep sleeper to the great hall so that they could get their fill on the various wonders that had been prepared.

Harry took delight in listening to Hermione's grumbles on how her parents would surely kill her for eating sweets so early in the day. Of course she went on to accentuate her point by biting into a rather large cinnamon roll.

To make the day that much better Professor Flitwick had finally deemed them ready to begin practical charms work!

By the time lunch had came only the Gryffindor's and the Hufflepuff's had attended charms producing very different results.

Ron, who had been paired up with Seamus Finnegan, had at last discovered the hidden reason behind their uniforms cap as he was forced to use it to put out a fire that was caused by his partner to which he was teased that said hat appeared to be flame proof on account of his hair.

Harry and Neville however had no such story from their own class other than the fact that Justin had managed to cause Ernie's bag to float and could not get it back down until the professor had stepped in.

To put it simply, by the time lunch was finished Hermione was practically vibrating in her seat with excitement.

Harry, Ron and Neville were worried. Very worried.

Usually Hermione would have met them after classes were over in the library so that the four could go over their school work before Ron could get too relaxed but she hadn't shown up.

Yes, on occasion she was late because she had decided to talk with one of the teachers but never like this!

Once half an hour had passed they decided to go and look for their friend starting with the
Transfiguration classroom, which was empty, and then they headed outside to the Black Lake, which had plenty of people milling around it but no Hermione.

At five they went in search of the Twins. If anyone would be able to find her it would be them, and the map but Harry hadn't told the others about that yet.

On their way to the Gryffindor tower they were stopped by two other first years, both Ravenclaw, Terry Boot and Mandy Brocklehurst.

"Oh thank Merlin we found you guys!" Terry panted as he came to stop in front of the small group. "We've been looking for you for ages!" Mandy said as she laid a hand on Terry's back as he bent down to hold onto his knees. "You're looking for Hermione aren't you?"

"Yes, have you seen her?" Harry asked before Ron had a chance to be rude. He loved him he really did but sometimes his mouth overrode his brain.

"She's in the third floor lavatory," Mandy said with a frown as she looked between the three. "She's been in there ever since Charms ended. Lisa Turpin said some rather nasty things to her and now she won't come out of the stall!"

"Thanks you guys," Harry called over his shoulder as the trio began to head for the third floor. "We owe you!"

The third floor girls lavatory was located just down the hall from the forbidden door. When you exited the staircase you would have two options, the right hand door that would cause death or to go left. A little ways down the hallway, nestled between a statue and a tapestry stood the entrance to a room that the three boys would usually avoid at all case.

Now however, was no time to feel awkward...

"Hermione?" Harry asked with a blush as she slowly edged open the door and peeked in. "Hermione are you in here?"

"Harry?" Came the sniffled response that forcibly shoved all further awkwardness away and allowed for Harry to quickly bolt into the room, concern for his friend over powering all else.

"Oh 'Mione," Harry breather as he quickly made his way over to where his friend sat curled against a wall beside the sink. Without a seconds hesitation Harry quickly wrapped his arms around her and held her close as she began to cry.

Whatever Lisa Turpin had said to her Harry wouldn't allow it! She had made one of his best friends cry and that wasn't right!

Behind him Ron and Neville were also thinking similarly if their talk of recruiting the Twins was anything to go by.

"'Mione, what happened?" Harry asked when she had finally calmed down enough for a conversation.

"Lisa was having problems with the charm," Hermione all but whispered as she clutched onto Harry's robes tighter, "We were paired together so I tried to help but when I was able to do it and she wasn't she got angry. She called me a lot of nasty things and said that you three didn't really like me and that you were just using me. I don't believe her but it still hurts Harry! All of the other
kids at my old school were like that and it just got under my skin you know?"

"Oh 'Mione, you know we love you," Ron said as he and Neville took up spots on either side of the two. "We'd never use you like that. Lisa's just jealous that she doesn't have such great friends as you do!"

"You really think so?" Hermione sniffed as she looked up at their smiling faces with watery eyes.

"We know so 'Mione," Neville piped in as his grin grew wider. "Think about it, we're probably one of the closest groups in this whole school! We sit together because we want to and not because of our house, we cheer each other on despite our houses and we can actually talk about more than Quidditch!"

"That's true," Hermione said with a small smile as she held onto Harry tighter, "You guys are like the brothers I never had!"

"Well, I've had plenty of brothers and a sister, I do believe that you all fall into those ranks," Ron said with a smirk as he reached over to ruffle Harry's hair, "Especially since one of you has already been adopted. You know what, I say that we all get our families together sometime! Make it official!"

"That's a great idea Ron! I don't think that my Gran would mind, she's really happy that I've made friends already." "Then that's settled," Harry said with a smile as he nudged Hermione to get her attention again. "How about we head down to the feast and let Lisa Turpin know just how wrong she is?"

With a giggle and a nod Hermione stood and wiped carefully at her face as the three boys stood themselves.

"Well, let's hurry up then," Ron said seriously as he started towards the door, "The feast has already started and I don't know if you lot remember but this is a girls lavatory and Mum'll kill us if she hears about this!"

As the quartet exited the lavatory time came to a crashing halt.

In front of them stood a creature from their nightmares.

The creature stood at a towering twelve feet, it's small bulbous head just shy of brushing against the arches in the ceiling hunched over as it was. It's skin was a mottled putrid grey in color and clusters of gnarled skin speckled its hide. It was a giant of a creature appearing to be almost as wide as it was tall with disproportionate limbs. It's legs were practically stumps compared to it's arms which dragged across the ground behind the creature.

A putrid mixture of foul scents assaulted their nostrils and caused their stomachs to roil as bile climbed up their throats and threatened to come out.

Their stunned stillness was broken by Hermione's shriek of terror.

Moving quickly Neville clamped his hand over her mouth to muffle the shriek but the damage had already been done.

With a muffled grunt the creature turned and looked at them with it's beady eyes for a moment before, quicker than should be possible for a creature so large, it rose its great club and brought it down on them.
Moving quickly they dove out of the way only for the club, which turned out to be a large tree trunk, to swipe towards them against the ground.

Dodging around the attack they headed towards the closest available safety, the lavatory. Just as they went to enter it again the club swung down and this time it connected.

With the sound of wood cracking and the shattering of stone their exit was blocked and they were yet again forced to dodge away from the doorway and subsequent rain of rock and splinters of wood.

Moving with instincts formerly unknown to him Harry quickly grabbed onto the nearest person's arm and quickly pulled them after him and between the creature's stubby legs.

Once through Harry turned, he didn't care which way they went, either way they would reach a stairwell.

Moving quickly he ran, still pulling whoever it was behind him and absently taking comfort in the three other sets of pants and clapping footsteps.

He didn't even need to look to be able to tell that the creature had just noticed them fleeing. With a mighty roar that shook them to their bones the creature moved, its long arms swiping out in front of it and its heavy footsteps shuffling and pounding behind them.

Either the creature was so large the hallway was trembling or Harry was just that far gone in panic.

Don't worry about that! Keep moving, keep moving! There's the stairwell!

"No!" Harry cried out in despair at the staircase as it finished its swing to the other side. Of all of the times for it to change why now?!

Looking around desperately Harry felt his heart lurch to a stop. There were only two options left.

The forbidden door which held a creature with claws that growled, or the creature behind them that was quickly catching up.

Or...

Or they could open the door and hope that whatever was behind it could handle this thing! That and this thing could at least keep it busy long enough for either the staircase to come back or a Professor!

With his mind made up and the creature coming closer Harry got to work.

"Get to the sides of this door and get down now! Alohomora!" Vaguely he noted the idiocy of a first year spell being able to open a door that spelled death but now was no time for that.

The moment the lock came up Harry grabbed the doors handle and pulled while diving out of the way though not quickly enough as a massive black form dove from the room and forced the door, and Harry himself, into the wall.

Taking huffing breathes and waving off Neville's concern Harry watched the ensuing confrontation with wide eyes.

Before them stood a large black dog with three heads as big as the creature it faced as it took up most of the space in the corridor itself. Crouched down as they were on the floor the four were
easily able to see the other creature from between this ones legs.

A deadly growl tore itself from the Cerberus' throat as it lunged forward and sunk it's long yellow fangs into its opponents shoulder causing blood to spurt out from the wound.

With what seemed to be a snorted snarl the creature rose one of its long arms to claw at the Cerberus' eyes with short and stubby fingers only for its efforts to be rewarded with the Cerberus shaking its head viciously before skipping backwards with a chunk of mottled flesh hanging from its muzzle.

"What on earth is a Cerberus doing in a school!??" Hermione asked weakly.

Cerberus... Hagrid had a Cerberus didn't he? What was it's name?


What was Fluffy doing in the forbidden corridor?

With an ear shattering roar the creature lunged towards Fluffy, both long arms moving awkwardly together as it came forward in some sort of a fast paced attack.

But Fluffy was quicker.

With a snarl Fluffy moved forward and sunk his fangs into the creatures jugular and tore.

Blood spurted from the wound and covered the hallway, Fluffy and themselves in the hot crimson liquid as the creature fell with a thundering crash.

Well, no help was here yet and neither were the stairs. But this was fluffly. What had Hagrid said about Fluffy? Think Harry, think!

'Just play a bit of music and he falls straight asleep.'

He didn't have an instrument but... Singing. Or at least humming, just enough to calm him down.

Humming a random tune Harry stood on shaky legs, ignoring for the moment Neville's hands scrabbling at him to keep him down and Hermione's hissed 'what are you doing!?' as he slowly edged his way forward, still humming.

The fierce wildness seemed to be draining from the six massive eyes of the Cerberus as they took him in. Several agonizing moments later Fluffy blinked.

With a whine that sounded far too submissive for such a great beast who was fresh from battle Fluffy sank to the floor.

Like this, with his muzzle pressed to the ground, the top of Fluffy's head still stood taller than Harry's own.

Slowly his humming got softer until, with one final echoing note, the hallway fell silent.

"Hey there Fluffy," Harry crooned softly, making sure to never break the eye contact he held, "Thank you for helping us. My name is Harry, I'm friends with Hagrid. Do you understand?"

With another soft whimper Fluffy moved so that his three heads were facing Harry and he licked with the tips of each of his three tongues.
"I knew you would, you did very well. I'll be sure to have Hagrid give you a nice big treat!" Harry giggled.

Reaching the top of the staircase Severus Snape and the other teachers halted in horror.

Before them was a scene from a nightmare, the hallway was covered in blood and the ravaged corpse of a mountain troll lay of to one side.

Directly before them however stood four of their youngest students, all of them covered in blood and only one of them standing with a giant Cerberus facing them with a snarl.

"Shh," Potter crooned at the beast with a soft hum as one of the massive heads turned back to look at him, "It's okay Fluffy. These are the Professors, they're here to help us. It's okay."

What exactly was going on here?

"It's okay Professors," Potter said with a small smile as he pat the beasts muzzle, "Fluffy helped us with that thing. He won't hurt us."

"Potter, perhaps it would be best if you backed away from the Cerberus?" Minerva asked with a small quiver in her voice.

"Hey Fluffy?" Harry said with a nervous glance at the professors, "Do you mind going back in your room? The Professors are going to take care of things now and I know you want to get some sleep before your treat right?"

"Potter that creature cannot-"

With a soft whine and a gentle lick at Potters side the beast moved over and through the door which Potter then closed behind it.

"What?"

"Fluffy helped us, he wouldn't hurt us, you just need to know how to handle him. It's lucky though, if it weren't for Fluffy that thing would have gotten us and if it wasn't Fluffy then Fluffy would have gotten us," Harry began to babble.

"I believe he's going into shock," Filius murmured from behind him before he moved forward and started gathering the four, obviously in shock, first years together.

"Potter, Longbottom, Granger and Weasley," Severus called out suddenly and found every eye in the hall focused on him. Oh, if they weren't in shock before they certainly would be. "Twenty points. Each."

"Well then, now I know that these poor children are in shock," Filius said with a smirk as he began to guide them towards the stairwell. "Come on you lot, let's get you to Poppy. I believe that you two will track down Pomona and let her know what happened?" With that Filius shepherded the four children away.

As they watched the small procession Minerva came up beside him with a smirk planted firmly on her lips and a single sentence that caused Severus to groan.

"You like him."
That night they were forced to spend the night in the infirmary. Not that they minded of course. Madame Pomfrey was of the firm belief that the only treatment they needed were a few large mugs of rich hot chocolate and enough sweets to send someone into a coma.

Not that she condoned it of course. She had no idea what so ever that the typical mush provided to her patients had been switched with an assortment of sweets. Of course not.

No, the only thing she was aware of that night was how truly grateful she was to Hagrid's pets and the fact that there were four young children who were still able to laugh.

Yes, things would work out for these four, she was sure of it.

Authors Note: Okay so, I had another scene planned but I decided to end the chapter with some fluff! ^-^ I may be evil and sadistic to my characters but I just love a happy ending don't you?

How did I get this done so soon!? O.O
Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Little Dragon

Authors Note: So I had planned for this chapter to be Harry's first Quidditch match but, well... Charlie is a very protective mate and refused to spend another moment away from Harry! He tied me to a chair at threat of being eaten by a dragon and demanded that I write this chapter, that of course caused Harry to act up and well... Enjoy~! ^-^

A few short scenes but hey, if they got extended the chapter would never end. That and I didn't want to give too much away! ;) Keep the mystique as it were.

Disclaimer: I own nothing, if I did I would be the luckiest girl in the world!

Chapter 17: Enter the Dragon

The story about the troll attack spread like wildfire that night. It had begun with a simple inquiry as to the missing first years' locations and had quickly escalated from there. Somehow by the time morning came even those in Slytherin house, who should have had no incite, knew of what happened as much as any other student, though of course certain details had been left out.

For one, everyone seemed to be under the impression that four first year students had been able to defeat a fully grown mountain troll on their own!

Fluffy wasn't mentioned what-so-ever nor was the fact that the troll had been torn to shreds and had taken a decent portion of the charms corridor with it.

By the time morning came there was little evidence left to prove that a troll had gotten into the school at all, the corridor had been cleaned of all traces of blood and debris and the walls and floor were repaired.

Add together these factors and the fact that the four first years were forced to spend the night in the hospital wing for 'a minor case of shock' and they quickly became legends to the rest of the student body.

"Really now Severus, you could at least chuckle instead of just smirking into your coffee cup!" Minerva huffed in exasperation from her place beside him.

"Really Minerva," Filius began from her other side with a smile of his own, "You- Oh look! Poppy let them out after all! Oh dear, Potter looks awfully mad don't you think?"

It was true. Potter looked to be extremely upset as he quickly made his way through the surge of students who had risen up to greet the fours arrival. He even seemed to be ignoring the Granger girls attempts to stop him as he continued towards what appeared to be a pale and nervous looking Ravenclaw first year.

"I wonder what that's all about." Minerva murmured as they, along with the rest of the hall, watched the scene unfold before them.
Potter had finally come to a stop in front of an extremely pale and shaking Lisa Turpin who seemed to be cowering away from the angry Hufflepuff. Behind him the youngest Weasley and the Longbottom boy were also glaring at the girl while Granger simply stood behind the three and blushed.

"You're Lisa Turpin right?" Potter began his voice hard and his posture, despite him being far too small for his age, screaming danger.

"Y-Yes," She whimpered as she sunk back further into her seat.

"What do you think is going on?" Filius murmured absentmindedly, confusion coloring his voice.

"Do you have any idea what could have happened yesterday?" Potter continued, his voice hard and even yet oddly it was worse than if he had shouted. Impressive.

"N-No," Turpin stuttered before curling into herself further as Potters eyes narrowed dangerously.

"Then let me educate you," Potter continued with a smirk as he leaned back, his arms crossed and his hip jutted out to the side to make him look perfectly comfortable as though this were just another conversation with a good friend. As if to match his change in posture his voice changed as well as it went from the previous deadly calm to gentle and friendly. These changes made his next words all the more horrible.

"Hermione could have died. If what you said had been even remotely true, which it's not I assure you, and we didn't care for her like we do then she would have died. I know that you heard about what happened last night, everyone did. So let me ask you... How do you feel about that? You were the reason Hermione ran off, the reason she was alone, and you told no one. You did nothing. When Professor Quirrel came in with his warning about the troll you didn't tell anyone. You told no one that she wasn't there. Where you had last seen her. That she was in danger. You should count yourself lucky Lisa Turpin. Count yourself lucky that every single word you spoke yesterday were lies. Because if they weren't and we hadn't gone looking for Hermione then she could have been killed and the blame would lie solely with you."

With that Potter spun on his heal, slung one arm around Granger's waist and the four first years left the great hall behind in stunned silence.

Impressive indeed...

Saturday morning and the school had finally calmed down again.

Dumbledore had given a spiel on how the troll getting in had been nothing but a one in a million fluke that had been since been remedied and classes went on as before, though the teachers did seem to have approved of Harry's... 'Conversation' with Lisa Turpin.

As the mail came in the four friends couldn't help but huddle that little bit closer in fear. Today they were all but guaranteed anxious letters from there loved ones. The only reason they didn't get any yesterday was because of the distance that the owls would need to travel added onto the original letter sent from Professor McGonagall on Halloween.

With every owl that swept through the air above them the feeling of despair grew.

"Please not another Howler," Harry whispered in fear as an owl swooped down and landed gracefully on the table. With a shaking hand Harry reached forward and untied the parchment from the owls leg.
Gathering his courage Harry opened the letter...

'Harry,

I am so glad that you are okay! I won't go into detail now, there's plenty of time for that later. Anyways, I hope this gets to you in time but Mum, Dad, Bill, Sirius, Remus, Madame Longbottom, the Granger's and I are all coming to Hogwarts.

I will be in disguise, both appearance and voice, but you should be able to figure out who I am through process of elimination. For the time being just call me Balaur, no need for the old goat to know who I am yet.

Love you my little dragon and see you soon,

Charlie'

Quickly reading through the short letter a second time to make sure that he had indeed read it right Harry could practically feel the happiness and dread warring within him.

"Um, you guys," Harry said nervously as they redirected their dread filled gazes from the owls above towards him. "You don't need to worry about an owl. Our families are coming..."

"What?" Hermione hissed as Ron snagged the letter and read through it before blanching.

"Bloody hell," He moaned as Neville and Hermione read through it together, "We're dead."

As though summoned by their horror the doors of the great hall banged open and hit the walls with a loud 'CRASH'.

There standing in the doorway were several familiar faces as well as three others. Molly and Arthur stood to one side of the doors next to a black robed man who's hood was up and obscured his features completely, Harry figured that was Charlie, sorry Balaur. Beside him stood two brunettes that Harry didn't know, one was an older woman who looked just like Hermione but with blue eyes and the other was a slightly taller man with short hair who had Hermione's warm chocolate brown eyes. Beside them stood Lady Longbottom, Sirius and Remus.

Within an instant the hooded figure swept down aisle way towards where Harry was seated and with a happy smile Harry stood and ran the rest of the way to meet his mate.

"Balaur!" Harry cried happily as he was swept into the mans warm embrace. Having to use a different name made little difference to Harry. This was Charlie! He was here and oh, his hugs were the best!

"Harry," Balaur said, his voice so unlike what Harry was used to he couldn't help but giggle. Instead of Charlie's usual warm timbre it now held a deep gravelly quality that was oddly chilling and warming at the same time. "I'm glad that you're safe."

"I am sorry but none of you have clearance to be inside the castle, least of all you mister... Balaur?" Dumbledore practically seethed as he stood from his place in the middle of the head table.

"I'm sorry," Balaur growled, his gravelly voice taking on an icy quality that seemed to act as knives directed straight at Dumbledore, "But you'll find I have just as much right to be here as those behind me. I share guardianship of Harry with Sirius Black in joint custody thus granting us as much permission as the others. You have no right to withhold our children from us. Not only do we..."
have signed permission from the board of governors and the ministry, but also the Deputy Headmistress. Even if we had none of this paperwork we would still be within our rights to come here because this is Saturday and since there are no classes to interrupt you have no stance to see us thrown out as written within the Hogwarts Charter."

Silence reigned through the hall as Dumbledore spluttered in indignation, his mouth opening and closing as he obviously tried to figure out something that he could say without digging a deeper hole for himself.

"If you all would prefer," Professor McGonagall said as she too rose from her seat and began to make her way towards the group of parents fussing over their children in the middle of the aisle, "There is a chamber right over there where you can retire for the remainder of breakfast. Afterwards you are more than free to stay until dinner."

"Now see here Minerva-!" Dumbledore called in outrage as he was steadily ignored and the group was lead towards the chamber off to the side of the head table.

"I do see Albus," Professor McGonagall sniffed as she looked up at the headmaster through narrowed eyes, "I see that you have already overstepped your bounds. Now if you'll excuse me," With that the professor lead them through the doorway and quickly excused herself to give the families some privacy.

The moment the door was closed and privacy wards were erected the four first years and the other Weasley children found themselves being strangled in the embrace of various emotional adults.

Several long and assurance filled minutes later and the adults had finally calmed down enough for the group to sit down and for proper introductions to be made.

"You guys," Hermione said with a smile from her position between the two brunettes on one of the couches, "These are my parents Dan and Emma Granger. Mum, Dad, these are my best friends, Harry Potter, Ronald Weasley and Neville Longbottom. That's Fred, George and Percy Weasley, Ron's brothers who still attend Hogwarts and if I'm correct the man who was wearing the cloak is Charlie another brother of Ron's. These two are Molly and Arthur Weasley, Ron's parents, and finally Sirius Black and Remus Lupin and Lady Longbottom, Neville's grandmother."

"It's nice to meet you all," Dan said into the stunned silence as he, Emma and the three other first years chuckled, already used to Hermione.

"It's nice to meet you as well mister Granger," Neville said with a smile from his place beside his grandmother who seemed stunned at his easy and confident answer. It appeared his friendship with the others had indeed done wonders to his confidence levels.

"If I may ask," Emma began curiously as she looked at Charlie, "Why is it that you went by, what was it... Balaur? Yes, why is it that you went by Balaur when your name is Charlie?"

"Ah, right..." Charlie said with an embarrassed chuckle as he rubbed at the back of his neck with one hand and held Harry close with the other. "You see, witches and wizards have this thing called a 'Soul Mate'. Harry is mine. It basically means that we're meant to be together, though of course it is at his pace. The Headmaster is currently in some trouble with the government and looking to get sacked, as you were informed. The Headmaster especially tends to make it a habit to meddle in Harry's life. So, if he doesn't know who I really am then he can't try to mess with it."

"That makes sense," Emma said with a smile before her gaze landed on Harry who was currently
curled into Charlies side. "If I may, you two do make a very lovely couple."

"So what exactly is happening with the family accounts?" Harry said as he and Charlie, once again cloaked and hidden from view, walked around the lake holding hands in the slightly chilly air.

"The goblins are working on it as we speak," Came the gravelly voice that belonged to Balaur, "They think that it should be settled come Christmas. In fact, since they played such a key role before goblin relations have really taken a turn for the better."

"That's great!" Harry said happily as he moved so that he was facing Charlie while walking backwards. "Oh, I have a request."

"What is it?"

"Okay well, something is wrong with Cedric. It's not just him being creepy it's... Well, whenever I'm in the equation he's completely different. A little too different, you know? One moment he could be joking and happy and then he sees me and it's suddenly like he's a puppy and I'm it's master. It's weird and his friends have noticed it too. We think something might have been done to him but we don't know what. Do you think you could, I don't know, run a scan or something?"

Harry babbled as they made their way back towards the front doors of the school.

"Of course, I believe that you wanted to see if I could take a tour of your common room anyways?"

"Yep!" Harry chirped happily as he moved back to Charlies side and cuddled his arm as they continued to move. "Professor Sprout should be in her office right now, it's around the time that she takes a break from the greenhouses."

"I'll see you soon then Harry," Charlie rumbled as he bent down and kissed Harry of the forehead. "I will make sure those results get to the right person as well. I'm sorry that I couldn't figure out what was wrong with him but we will figure it out. Oh and remember, Sirius, Remus, and I will be coming on the twenty third to see your first match! The others wanted to come as well but... Well you know."

"I'll remember and it's okay," Harry said with a smile as he hugged Charlie and pulled away. "I've got to go, dinner will be starting soon. You'll still write to me?"

"But of course," Charlie rumbled as he kissed Harry quickly, a mere brush of the lips that left Harry blushing deeply and causing Charlie to chuckle.

With that he left and Harry remained to watch him for a moment, neither aware of the gaze burning into them...

As November continued on the temperature continued to grow colder. It became a completely normal sight to see Hagrid defrosting the school broomsticks in the early morning air, yet another point of proof for how truly old and in need of replacement the schools broomsticks were.

Along with the change in temperature there was also a major change in atmosphere. Finally, the Quidditch season had begun!

Hufflepuff wouldn't be playing until the second game of the season but that just meant they, along with Ravenclaw, had more time to prepare. As Harry was forced to listen to the Twins' complaints on their captain, Oliver Wood's, obsession he couldn't help but feel even happier.
Of course talk of Quidditch was rare between Harry and the Twins any more, not because of the fact that they were on rival teams, but because they were instead focusing on other aspects. Like the fact that Harry was a legacy Marauder.

That had been a fun discovery for the Twins.

Ever since, whenever they had seen Harry they would bow at the waist, sometimes full out drop to the floor, and welcome their 'Lord, King of the Pranksters'.

Harry had taken to ignoring them...

The morning of the Quidditch match the weather was perfect. The air had a slight nip to it but no greater than requiring a light jacket and scarf, the sky clear and the sun shining bright. Perfect for Seekers, the added light would make it that much easier for them to catch sight of the gling of gold that was the snitch.

By eleven what seemed to be the entire population of the school were gathered in the stands that surrounded the Quidditch pitch. Many of the students were even sporting pairs of binoculars in an effort to be greater able to watch the match.

Harry, who was sitting between his group of friend and the Hufflepuff Quidditch team could practically feel the excitement in the air.

The match was grueling in the fact that both teams were relatively even. Gryffindor's chasers worked amazingly well together and you could do no better than the twins for beaters, Oliver Wood was also an amazing keeper. The Gryffindor seeker however left much to be desired and the Slytherin's made up for the Gryffindor's strengths with dirty tricks and sneak plays.

Within five minutes the Gryffindor seeker had been hit by three bludgers, each only clipping him but obviously causing a great deal of pain if his reactions were anything to go by.

Within ten minutes Fred and George were forced to begin circling him in an effort to keep him alive.

By the time the Slytherin Seeker had finally caught the snitch the Gryffindor chasers had proved beyond a doubt that they were to be feared.

The game ended with a score of 230-210. Slytherin won the game by 20 measly points.

Authors Note: Next chapter is dear Harry's first Quidditch match! ^-^

Yes, this chapter is a little different but oh well. :) Still works.

Some of you may be wondering why Molly didn't get to yell at Dumbles, well the answer is simple! Molly is a proud Mommy! :3

Chapter End Notes

The companion piece for this chapter is now up.
http://archiveofourown.org/works/2339573
or the second part in the Little Dragon Series!
**Quidditch and Heart Attacks**

Little Dragon

**Authors Note:** My computer gave me a very hard time getting this chapter written out. I had to restart several times because it would blink out but I got it done! ^-^

The Quidditch match is completely new! Whoo hoo! The players will be listed at the bottom just in case any of you are confused. Enjoy!

**Disclaimer:** I own nothing but the plot and my darling character traits... That and this chocolate milk that I'm drinking. Delicious!

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**Chapter 18: Quidditch and Heart Attacks**

In the weeks leading up to Hufflepuff's first Quidditch match life in the castle had taken yet another surprising turn.

Since the troll incident and the subsequent familial visit Harry's school mates had taken to trying to figure out just who 'Balaur' was with surprising vigor though none more than Cedric Diggory and Albus Dumbledore.

The Headmaster had somehow managed on multiple times to 'run across' Harry and his friends in the hallway and engaged them in friendly chat. These conversations were thankfully always interrupted by one of the professors who would smile at them as they lead Dumbledore away. It appeared that none of the teachers had much patience with Albus Dumbledore these days.

Aside from that excitement however Harry was pleased to find that his small group of friends was steadily expanding.

Harry and the others had decided that it was high time their little group of friends branched out a little. Within the last two weeks they had managed to incorporate not only the other Hufflepuff, Ravenclaw (Lisa Turpin didn't count) and Gryffindor first years but also several of the upperclassmen that did weren't the twins and Lee Jordan who had already been sitting with them periodically throughout the year.

Harry had even begun to plan on how to incorporate some of the students in Slytherin.

They didn't seem that bad after all and some of them seemed very interesting despite Ron's original misgivings, but Hufflepuff and Slytherin had no classes besides astronomy together. That wouldn't have been such a bad thing of course, except for the fact that come time for astronomy the first years were usually too tired for much of anything...

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The morning November 23rd dawned bright and clear with just the slightest chill on the breeze, beautiful Quidditch conditions.

That morning Harry woke up nervously. Today Charlie would be there to watch. Charlie who was a seeker. He knew that Gabriel, who just so happened to be the captain of their Quidditch team much to his surprise, said that he was an amazing seeker but... What if he messed up?

What did he have to worry about though? Charlie would never make fun of him for anything he
messed up on! After all, he was the youngest seeker in a century and there was a reason for it!

He had three people who were making a special trip to the school to see him and he would do his best to make them even prouder than they were now!

With new resolve Harry climbed out of bed and made his way to shower and get ready for the day ahead.

He was always the first of his roommates to get up and they had somehow made a nice system to get ready that, thankfully, avoided any further incidents as the one that had happened on the first morning still refused to go near a sleeping Justin without his wand and someone to rescue him just in case, though the need for someone to personally wake Justin and Ernie had severely decreased once Harry had asked Professor Sprout for a spell that acted much like a muggle alarm clock which she had happily provided.

Bless that woman...

"Okay team," Jonathan Cursty the Hufflepuff Quidditch captain said as he stood before his team in the locker rooms. "This is it! The first match of the season and I must say that this is the best team we've had in a long time! We've all seen the match between Gryffindor and Slytherin a few weeks ago. We have some hard competition this year but that doesn't mean we can't win! We're going to go out there and do our house proud! We Badgers are the hardest working in the school so let's go out there and show them how it's done!"

With cheers and cries of agreement the team stood and made their way to the entrance to the Quidditch pitch. Harry looked nervous as he bit his bottom lip and shifted his weight from one foot to the other nervously.

"Are you okay Harry?" Jonathan asked as the Ravenclaw team was being introduced.

"Yeah, just a little nervous," Harry said with a shy smile as he wiped his palms against his robes nervously.

"No need to be nervous," He said with a grin as he ruffled the first years unruly locks, "You're an amazing seeker, do your best and there isn't a single thing that anyone can say about it."

"Even if we lose?"

"Even if we lose. It's just a game, do your best and you're a winner in your own way. Especially since you're the youngest person out there. You'll do fine. In fact... I bet you that you get that snitch, now come on, their calling us out."

"Now, I want a nice fair game, and good luck!" Madame Hooch's voice drifted through the now hushed stadium as she addressed the two captains and their teams. As Cursty and Andrews stepped forward and shook hands I noticed Harry's gaze drawn to the flashing 'Potter for President' sign that Harry's friends had set up. Oddly, it did not only contain the Hufflepuff badger but also the Hogwarts crest as well. Taking in Harry's brilliant smile I couldn't be happier that Harry had made such great friends.

"Mount your brooms, please," Madame Hooch spoke again and my attention was once again drawn away from the sign and back to the pitch where Madam Hooch was now blowing on her silver whistle and signaling for the players to take off.
As the fifteen brooms rose into the air my attention went back to Harry as he immediately turned and began to circle the pitch, smart.

"And the quaffle is immediately taken by Jeremy Stretton of Ravenclaw who immediately has to dodge a bludger sent his way by Hufflepuff's own Matthew Taylor. How he managed to get a bludger so fast nobody knows!" Lee Jordan immediately began to commentate.

"Stretton belting along towards Hufflepuff's goal posts, another bludger this time by Kirsty, neat pass to Burrow who passes back and it's intercepted by Diggory! Diggory flying fast now and dodges a bludger sent his way by Inglebee, passes to Truman who takes aim and... Score! First points of the game to Hufflepuff as Stretton takes back the quaffle and dives under Diggory to avoid a bludger, Diggory dodges as well, nice broom work there by Hufflepuff's newest chaser and Harry Potter is making a spectacular dive for the snitch, I'm glad he can see it 'cause I sure can't. Andrews hot on his tail, they better pull up soon or their going to hit the ground and, no I can't believe it, Potter pulls off a successful Wronski feint as he leads Andrews directly into the path of a bludger which she just barely dodges. Great find by Hufflepuff this year, Potter is the youngest seeker in a century."

Charlie let out a shaky breath as his fists slowly release their iron grasp of the bench below him. Who would have thought watching a Quidditch game would be so nerve wracking?

"-Truman with the quaffle, bludger from Samuels, ouch, looks like it clipped his shoulder and the quaffle is taken by Burrow. Andrews goes into a dive but Potter isn't following, looks like she was just trying to give him a taste of his own medicine but it didn't work. Pass to Stretton but it's intercepted by Diggory. Pass to Cursty, pass to Diggory, bludger from Inglebee and Diggory passes to Truman before dodging, Truman shoots and... Score! Hufflepuff leads 20 to 0!"

"Budge up there, move along," Hagrid's gruff voice sounds from behind him and Charlie only just stops himself from calling out a greeting to the half giant. He loved Hagrid, he really did but the man just couldn't keep a secret as big as this one.

"Hagrid!" Hermione called out in greeting and Charlie could feel his smile grow as Hagrid joined her, Ron and Neville on their bench.

"Bin watchin' from me hut," He heard Hagrid say as one of his large hands reached up to pat a large pair of binoculars that were hanging around his neck. "S'not the same as bein' in the crowd. No sign of the Snitch yet, eh?"

"Nope," Neville said excitedly as they all kept an eye on the game.

"Did you see my little Bambi's feint though Hagrid?" Sirius piped up from beside him with a grin, "Better than his dad whenever he had to sub for our seeker isn't he?"

"I don't think James would appreciate that Siri," Remus chuckled from beside him.

Harry was once again circling around the perimeter of the game, one eye on Emily Andrews, Ravenclaw's seeker and captain who was currently hovering above the center of the stadium, and the other looking for the snitch.

Every now and then Harry would make quick darting movements that would draw Andrews' attention to him. Harry hoped that if he were to do that enough then she would probably be too irritated with him to pay attention when he finally caught sight of the snitch.

So far he'd managed to mostly stay out of the fray, he'd only had to avoid those cannon balls they
had decided to call bludgers twice, once during his feint and the other when Jason Samuels had decided to send one his way.

Lee Jordan was still commenting, a steady drum of noise that managed to counteract the sudden lulls and roars of the crowd below but Harry was only paying the slightest amount of attention to it as his eyes narrowed in on a tell tale flash of gold by the middle goal post of the Ravenclaw's side.

With a quick glance to Andrews who was looking the other way Harry dove.

He leaned forward on his broom until his chest was a mere inch from the polished handle and tuck his legs up and under himself so that he resembled something close to a bullet. Andrews must have noticed that this wasn't just another one of Harry's tricks though and now she was on his tail seeing as she had been closer in the first place.

Urging his Nimbus faster Harry reached out with his right hand, Andrews doing the same. She was still further away than Harry but her arms were also longer and so they reached the same distance as his own...

They were almost there, a mere fifty feet away, straining his arm just that little bit more...

Harry rolled away on instinct as a bludger soared through the air where his head had been moments before.

Harry's roll forced him into Andrews who was forced to turn her broom away or be barreled over by the small first year.

Righting himself midair Harry turned back around only to find the snitch gone.

With a frown Harry turned his broom to raise back up into the air so that he could start his search all over again. He was halfway to his previous height when his broom gave a sudden lurch that managed to release his grip.

For a split second Harry could feel his heart stop before he quickly scrabbled to find purchase on his brooms sleek handle as he clenched his thighs to the wood as tight as possible.

This was wrong, what was going on? Brooms didn't just stop in midair or try to buck off their riders!

When the broom still wouldn't move Harry threw all of his weight forward in an effort to at least even it out so that he was not in danger of falling backwards but that just seemed to make it worse as the Nimbus tipped forwards and kept going so that Harry was forced to hold on for dear life.

This was terrifying! Why has no one noticed yet!?

Now Harry was hanging upside down like a sloth as the broom began to jerk from side to side, it felt like some sick game of tug of war and Harry was the prize, what on earth was going on!?

No one seemed to have noticed that Harry's broom was behaving strangely as it pulled him higher and higher from the game, jerking and twitching as it went.

"Dunno what Harry thinks he's doing," Hagrid mumbled as he stared through his binoculars, instantly grabbing my attention as my gaze zeroed in on where my little mate was riding his broom upside down. "If I didn' know better, I'd say he'd lost control of his broom but he can't have..."
No, that wasn't possible! Brooms couldn't do these things on their own and no one here were crazy enough to curse his broom!

As if everyone had heard Hagrid people were now pointing up at Harry from all over the stands as his broom starting speeding in jerky zigzags with him still upside down and only just managing to hold on. People were gasping in fear now as Charlie stood up and started to make his way to the front of the stands his eyes locked on Harry at all times, he might have stepped on a few people.

The broom gave a viscous swipe forward and Harry's legs came to dangle and kick helplessly in midair.

No, this couldn't be happening! Whatever else was going on Harry should have been safe!

Where are the closest stairs!? Teachers side!

Charlie charged, he didn't give a damn who he hit as he ran through the people who blocked his way!

Vaguely Charlie realized that his foot had kicked the new defense professor in the back of the head as he jumped over the man and that he had shoved Professor Flitwick into his old head of house but that was just too bad!

Finally Charlie reached the stairs just as Harry managed to swing himself back onto his broom much to Charlie's relief.

Before he could relax too much however Harry dove to the ground, one hand firmly clutched to his mouth and the other holding onto the broom for dear life.

With a sudden back Harry tumbled off of the broom and onto the plush grass of the pitch, as Charlie ran towards him as fast as he could he vaguely registered the single hand that Harry held in the air but it wasn't a wave.

Harry had the snitch.

After all of that Harry had still managed to catch the snitch!

"In his mouth!"

"Harry!" Charlie called out in the gravelly voice of Balaur as he dropped heavily to his knees and pulled his small mate into a desperate embrace, "I'm so glad you're safe! But never do that again! Do you understand!??"

"Yes Balaur," Harry said with a tired giggle as he snuggled further into Charlie's embrace.

"So yer Balaur," Hagrid said through narrowed eyes as he poured tea for the small group of six not including himself. Despite the apron, Hagrid looked extremely frightening and Charlie couldn't help but gulp in slight fear. It appeared that Hagrid was extremely protective of Harry, a fact that he would appreciate far more if he weren't at risk of being shown just how much Hagrid cared.

"Yes," Charlie managed to say and was immensely thankful that the voice charms stopped the fear from shining through.

At his confirmation Hagrid seemed to grow larger so that he seemed to fill the hut entirely as his usually kind and friendly eyes shone with malicious glee.
"You bes' nev'r hurt him. Or ye'll be hearin' from me an' Fluffy."

**Authors Note:** Aww~! :3 Don't you just love Hagrid?

Now, here are the teams mentioned, took me a while to figure out the roster (mostly), these two teams are hardly mentioned in canon so I had to do a LOT of research! Anywhozles, I got it done and only a few names are true OC's so I think this is a win! ^-^

Ravenclaw Team:
Chasers: Roger Davies (3rd year), Randolph Burrow (5th year), Jeremy Stretton (6th year).
Beaters: Jason Samuels (6th year) and Duncan Inglebee (3rd year).
Seeker: Emily Andrews (7th year, captain).
Reserve Seeker: Cho Chang (2nd year).
Keeper: Grant Page (4th year).

Hufflepuff Team:
Chasers: Cedric Diggory (3rd year), Gabriel Truman (5th year), Johnathan Cursty (No relation to Austin, 7th year, captain).
Beaters: Austin Kirsty (7th year), Matthew Taylor (7th year).
Seeker: Harry Potter (1st year).
Keeper: Herbert Fleet (5th year).

~!*Happy Reading*!~
Authors Note: So the title may be simple but I'm still rather proud of it anyways! ^-^

I am so very sorry about the long wait! I wound up having a bad case of pancreatitis and wound up in the hospital for a week and had to get my gallbladder and some gall stones taken out. Not fun! I promise that I'll try to get the next chapter up soon!

Disclaimer: If I were lucky enough to own Harry Potter then all of my dreams would have come true. That and Fred would still be alive, and Hedwig, and Siri, Remmy, well... A lot of people. That is all.

Chapter 19: Srorrim dna Pihstruoc ,Sreirrac

"Here are the names of all students who will be going home for the holidays as well as those who will be staying," Minerva said at the end of the staff meeting as she pulled out two rather lengthy rolls of parchment from her bag and placed them on top of the table before Albus.

"Very well," Albus said with a sigh as he took the two scrolls and stood, "That will be all, I shall make the necessary preparations and-"

"There is no need for that Albus," Minerva said as she turned and looked at him, her lips thin and the warmth in her gaze that Albus had grown accustomed to lacking. It had been this way since before the school year had started and grown worse with each passing day. "I have already made the necessary preparations and it is too late to change them I'm afraid."

Ah, so she really did not trust him anymore it would seem...

"Very well, then all is settled. Good day to you all," Albus said as he once again rose from his seat and walked quickly from the staff room to his personal chambers.

Once there Albus quickly unrolled the smaller of the two lists and quickly scanned it, upon reaching the bottom of the parchment Albus gave something similar to a snarl and nearly tore the second scroll in half as he forced it to open far too quickly in his haste to read over the list of names for students who would be returning home for the holiday.

There. Right there under the list of every Weasley who attended Hogwarts and before Longbottom and Granger. Harry Potter.

No. He could not leave the school! Too many things had gone wrong already, how would Albus possibly get him to look at the mirror otherwise? Voldemort would try to take the stone and Harry would have to know how the mirror worked, otherwise all of Albus' preparations would be for nothing! But then, what would Harry see within the mirror?

Perhaps he would see that 'Balaur' character, and if Harry believed that he was alone then perhaps he would let something slip? Yes, he would just have to move up his plans! Perhaps a compulsion charm would work? Yes, not on the boy himself though... He needed to behave and that would just cause more trouble for him if anyone were to find it...

On the mirror itself? Yes, that might work. Especially if it were tuned directly to work only on
"Why does Astronomy have to be so late?" Ron groaned as he and the rest of the first years trudged up the many sets of stairs required to reach the Astronomy Tower.

"So that we can see the stars obviously," Hermione huffed from beside him as she rolled her eyes at him yet again. "You can't very well study Astronomy very well during the day can you?"

"I actually agree with Ron on this one," Harry murmured as he stifled a yawn and Neville had to catch him before he could trip. "The late hour just messes with our chances of memorizing anything, you go there tired and come back exhausted. It would be okay every once in a while but apart from that it just messes up your internal clock."

"Well how else would we study?" Dean asked as they started up yet another set of stairs. "We can't really get much out of books, they teach you the same but it's a lot more boring."

"True, but I would much rather they use some sort of observatory and study that after our usual classes like with the flying lessons. That way everyone is awake enough for the class and can appreciate it more."

"That's actually a great idea Harry! I wonder how they could make it work though since electricity doesn't work around magic..." Hermione trailed off with a thoughtful look on her face.

"I'm not sure, we could ask about it later though-"

"Okay, what's an observatory?" Neville asked cutting Harry off mid sentence with a look of confusion firmly in place on his face.

"An observatory," Hermione corrected with a small smile as they finally reached the door of the tower and waited for it to open, "Is a place where they study Astronomy but what Harry was talking about is where they put a projection or an image of the sky and stars onto the ceiling and walls of a dark room so that you can study them whenever you wish like, as Harry said, during the day."

"Wicked! We should definitely do that! Then we could get more sleep and actually remember what we learned!" Ron cheered and the others joined in on his excitement.

With a smile Harry looked around at the group of first years, pleased to see that even the Slytherin's seemed to be pleased with this idea. Perhaps now would be a good time to try and talk to them?

Before Harry could even finish contemplating his options his gaze was drawn to a door that stood innocently off to the side and yet... Harry felt drawn to it, not as he had been drawn to Charlie or even his own wand but yet... Something was urging him forward...

"Harry," Hermione said as she grabbed his arm and pulled him towards the tower door and effectively snapping him out of whatever daze he had been in before. "Come on, Astronomy is about to start."

With that the two joined their classmates on the climb of yet more stairs.

In the shadows behind them icy blue eyes narrowed in anger and a silent curse was hissed as yet
another of Albus Dumbledore's plans failed.

The great hall seemed to be empty despite the cluster of children currently inhabiting it. Those students who were still in their first year at Hogwarts had been gathered together for the one lesson which they had all been dreading with all of their beings. Of these first years none were dreading this lesson quite as much as Harry Potter and Ron Weasley however.

It had taken weeks after the failed attempt of 'The Talk' for Harry to once again grow comfortable with human contact let alone hugs and for Ron to finally believe that humans didn't hatch from eggs. Needless to say they would have much preferred if they could get on with life instead of be reminded yet again of that dreadful day.

However, here they sat, clustered in a huddle with the other first years in much the same way as they had while they awaited their turn to be presented to the rest of the school for the sorting ceremony. Odd how the mere thought of the unknown caused them to cluster together for support and, for the first time that year, there were no house lines to cross. Merely the silent comfort of another's presence at your side.

"Welcome," Professor McGonagall called out in her firm crisp voice and effectively silenced the few futile attempts at conversation. Instantly it were as though the air within the great hall had both dropped in temperature and gained in density until each of the students seemed to slump with some unseen weight.

After a moments pause in which the hall was filled with an unnatural stillness Professor McGonagall seemed to give in and, with a rueful twist to her lips, she waved her wand at the table the first years had gathered around and the table were instantly laden with large mugs of hot chocolate and platters of biscuits.

"That's better," She said with a soft and gentle smile that both shocked and set at ease each of the first years as they each claimed a mug, "This talk is awkward enough for all involved, we may as well make it as enjoyable as possible," She continued as she then went about conjuring a seating area for herself which included a high backed reading chair, which she gratefully sank down into, as well as a small side table complete with a steaming tea set and her very own platter of Ginger Newts.

"Now, as you are all aware you have been gathered today for... What the muggles would call 'Sexual Education'. While this is true, there is much more that we will be discussing today. You see, we as magical beings have a slightly more complicated system than muggles do. For instance, with muggles they are able to split their students into groups based on gender, it is not this simple for us. While we do in fact have male and females, as well as certain information for each of them, we also possess a third category of you who are known as carriers.

"Carriers are those of you who are male, but who also possess the ability to give birth. That is not to say however that they are female or even expected to give birth. It, as it is for women, is a choice.

"In the muggle world Carriers do not exist. Male pregnancy is thought of in much the same way that magic is. Impossible. However, as you all know very well, that is not the case.

"Now, for those of you who are wondering how Carriers are even possible, I shall tell you now. While we are all in the womb, that is to say your mothers stomachs, there is a short time in which our genders are not chosen. Some say that during this time we are all, in essence, female. Or at least that those of you who are male went through a short time where you were female. Carriers are
those of you whose magic reacted, or whose mothers magic reacted, during this phase and in essence changed it so that while they are male they also have the necessary organs and functionality that will allow them to give birth.

"Carriers possess a womb just as females, though it is accessed differently. If a Carrier becomes pregnant then they will give birth either through a Caesarean section, or a cut through the stomach to gain access to the womb which would then be healed in a way far simpler and much safer than it is for muggles. In other cases however it is possible to 'create' an alternate birth channel for the child. This is usually accompanied through the use of potions or a series of spells that will create the birth channel temporarily and can be reversed after words.

"Now, females are already equipped with a natural birthing channel and the use of Caesarean section is used only in extreme cases.

"For both Carriers and females the geostationary period lasts for eight months and-"
another the political and personal backlash could be far worse than the unwanted bond itself. This is why I urge you all to tread lightly. If you wish to speak to someone on these matters in greater details then I encourage you to seek out one of your professors and speak to us about it. Do not enter lightly into a bond or courtship and think deeply of your feelings for the other person before taking your relationship further."

As the first years left the great hall, some fleeing quickly and others moving sluggishly as though dragged down by the weight of what they had just learned, Harry and his friends made their way slowly towards the library where they would settle into their usual table and attempt to finish their homework and forget about the whole ordeal that they had just been forced to suffer.

On the way however Harry came to a stop before a room whose door stood slightly ajar, that same strange pull that he had felt that day while they waited for astronomy calling for him to enter the room...

"Harry?" Ron asked as he came over and placed his hand on Harry's slight shoulder. "You okay mate?"

"Hmm, oh yeah Ron. I was just thinking, why is this door open? It's just an empty classroom right?"

"Maybe Peeves?" Neville suggested as he and Hermione moved closer to the pair.

"Yeah maybe," Harry said getting ready to turn around when the door slowly swung open of it's own accord and the feeling grew stronger.

As the door opened fully the torches within the room lit and Harry found himself staring straight into his own reflection caused by a towering ancient, ornate, golden mirror with clawed feet and the words ‘Erised stra ehru oyt ube cafru oyt on wohsi’ enscribed about its frame.

"That's strange," Hermione muttered from behind him as she pulled out a small piece of parchment and wrote down the inscription. "I wonder what it means," But Harry was unable to find it in himself to reply to his friends as he continued to gaze into the strange mirror.

Harry could see nothing strange about the mirror or even his own reflection and yet, as he continued to stare at his reflection, Harry couldn't help but think about his new life.

He had a family now, the Dursley's would never hurt him again, he would be spending the coming holidays with his new family and friends. Harry was happy! So very happy and he wouldn't trade his new life for anything.

"Harry?" Hermione asked in concern as she gained his attention back from the odd mirror and his own thoughts. "What is it? What's wrong?"

"Hmm," Harry hummed as he finally looked away from the oddly entrancing mirror and back towards his friends. "Oh, nothing Mione, the mirror is just weird is all, it must be a seventh years newt project or something. I wonder what it'll do once it's finished?"

With that they went on their way, each completely unaware of the icy blue eyes that glared at them from the shadows as they left...

Authors Note: And done! It took far too long but I hope you all have enjoyed this chapter anyway! ^_^
Coming up next chapter, the winter holidays begin! Enter some more Charlie/Harry fluffiness! :3
Mistletoe Mayhem

Authors Note: You guys are all so sweet! Thank you all for your concern and well wishes! To the lovely Guest reviewer who pleaded with me to not work until I was better so that I would not make myself worse you need not worry! :) I'm nice and rested and I even took an extra week for recovery already. My 'glue stitches' are out and the only thing left for me to do is go to my follow up appointments in a week. Thank you so much for your concern though!

I can't believe we're up to 20 chapters already! This is amazing you guys, if it weren't for you and those lovely reviews we wouldn't even be to chapter 10 yet!

Now as far as this chapter goes, there is a series of unfortunate events that are caused by a prank gone wrong. A little angsty, I'm mean to poor Harry, but there's a nice bit of Charlie/Harry fluff to make up for it at the end! Enjoy! ;D

Disclaimer: I own nothing, the characters, Harry Potter, the music I'm listening to, the socks I'm wearing (stolen from my dad because their fluffy inside), nothing. That is all.

Chapter 20: Mistletoe Mayhem

The remainder of term went relatively the same as all the days before it though the first years were oddly subdued much to the amusement of the upper years.

Today however, was the day that many of the students had been looking forward to with the fervor usually reserved for Quidditch matches. Today the scarlet steam engine known as the Hogwarts Express was scheduled to transport a large portion of the Hogwarts population home for the winter holidays.

"Check mate," Ron announced with a satisfied smirk as he watched Harry's king toss of its crown and bow. This was the third straight game of chess that Ron had won this morning and it was enough to convince Harry that he would much rather be an observer than a player for this particular game. Honestly, Ron was just too good, not even Hermione, who had taken to reading books on chess strategies in an effort to dethrone Ron, could last very long against the youngest Weasley male.

"How about we play some exploding snap instead?" Harry suggested before Ron could finish his set up and begin the next round of torture.
"That's a great idea Harry!" Hermione piped up with a grin and a knowing glint in her eyes that told him that at least one other person knew just what he had been attempting to do. "Why don't we ask the Twins to join in too? They're only a few compartments down aren't they?"

"I'll go!" Harry chirped with a grin as he hopped up from his seat and headed towards the door of the compartment. "I thought I heard something happen anyways. I wonder what it was?"

"This is brilliant brother mine."

"Absolutely, I love us so much."

"Yes, I can't believe we didn't think of this sooner."

"Alright, that's that set. Hand me the vial then."

"Here you are handsome."

"Thank you handsome."

"Remember, only one drop."

"I know I- Oh bloody hell!" Fred cursed as a small body rammed into his back causing the hand that held his precious bottle to jerk forward with enough power to spill far too much of the precious liquid it held.

Both Weasleys watched in horror as the delicate green leaves and plush red berries glowed an unpleasantly bright pink before they faded back to exactly as they had been before. Once the glow faded they looked into each others gaze only to find the panic that they themselves felt reflected back at them.

"Not good!" They both said together before they moved to hold the doorway closed and prevent the victim of their planned prank from befalling the horrors that were sure to happen now.

Before either of their hands could reach the handle the compartment doorway slid open and the very person they were trying to protect fell victim to their trap.

Harry's emerald green eyes widened in a moment of panic as he ran into what appeared to be a pale pink barrier, stumbling backwards he met the same force and his panicked eyes sought out the Twins horrified expressions.

They were too late.

Harry was trapped.

"Fred? George? What's going on?" Harry asked in a confused voice as his eyebrows scrunched together in confusion. "Why can't I get out of the doorway?"

"Sorry about that Harry," Fred said with a grimace before he turned away from Harry's sad and confused face and instead examine the sprig of mistletoe that hung above the compartment doorway and trapped Harry.

"Yeah, it was only supposed to take effect once we reached the station but since miss Chang here bumped into Fred," George continue as he glared at the small Ravenclaw second year who blushed and looked down at her feet as she shrunk under his gaze.
"She caused me to dump the whole bloody vial on the mistletoe," Fred growled as he tried to yank the mistletoe down by hand with no success.

"Unfortunately," George continued as he turned away from Cho and looked back at Harry with such a sad expression on his face that Harry could feel any anger that he had with the twins melt away, "We don't really have any idea what this much of the potion will do. We had meant for it to compel... You know, into giving you a little peck. With this much though, who knows what'll happen?"

"Don't worry though Harry!" Fred piped in again as he jumped down and rubbed at the palms of his hands which were now red from his attempts at physically prying the mistletoe down. "We'll just have to play guard is all, it should be fine."

A moment later Fred would regret that he ever said that phrase...

"So... He's trapped under that mistletoe?" Cho asked carefully as she examined the three students before her.

It was only luck that she had come out of her compartment moments ago, she had decided that she would go and see how long it would be until the sweets trolley would be coming through and had instead found herself running into someone else's back and caused him to spill something.

It was luck that that someone happened to be one of the Weasley twins. It was even better luck that her running into him had caused this to occur.

If it were true... Well, if it were true then people needed to know! After all, if Harry Potter, the dear of Hogwarts, were trapped under the mistletoe then traditions needed to be followed.

Moving quickly Cho dashed back into her compartment and quickly told her friends the news.

"Harry Potter is trapped under the mistletoe across the hall!"

"Where are all of these bloody girls coming from!?!" Ron snarled as they tried to fight their way through the rabid crowd of females who were currently swarming his little brother.

It had started slowly with only a few second year Ravenclaw's but like moths to an open flame more had followed.

It had all been so peaceful, the girls were calm and would give Harry a quick peck on the cheek before moving aside so that they could all coo at his blush which was actually pretty funny to see. Fred and George were on one side and he, Neville and Hermione were on the other just incase they were needed to step in and save Harry which after about twenty girls it was.

A Ravenclaw fifth year was the one who started it and she would be lucky if Ron never saw her again.

She had walked up for her turn just like everyone else but instead of giving a peck on the cheek and walking away she had grabbed both of Harry's cheeks and kissed him right on the lips!

After that chaos erupted. He and the others moved to block Harry from the others while Fred and George pulled the woman off of Harry but the girls didn't take well to that, it was scary.

Before they knew it they were being pushed and pulled away from the compartment doorway,
away from Harry, and found themselves fighting through the crowd to get back to their place to help Harry.

Somehow in all of the commotion it seemed like some of the male population of Hogwarts had joined in the fray. Some were fighting their way through the crowd and back to their compartments with looks of horror on their faces, clearly they didn't want any part in this for which Ron was thankful. Others however were forcing themselves back to the front of the crowd as well and Ron doubted that it was for the same reasons as he, Neville and Hermione were.

Through a small gap in the others' heads Ron could see one of the twins pull a sixth year Gryffindor off of Harry who looked absolutely terrified as he tried to wrestle the other teens hand away from his side and Ron saw red. The family knew about what that monster had done to Harry, Ron himself had played witness to some of the nightmares his little brother had when Charlie wasn't there and had heard from Neville that they still happened from time to time. If this person caused Harry to remember that then Ron would gladly show him the full extent of the Weasley temper!

With new energy Ron made his way through the crowd with his wand drawn and jinx's flying. Between his wand and the elbows he threw when needed they made much quicker progress than they had before.

As the Hogwarts express pulled to a stop inside Kings Cross Station confusion wracked through those who were currently awaiting their family on Platform 9 3/4.

Why was no one getting off of the train?

They could clearly hear voices from the train though they couldn't quite make out what they were saying.

Finally one of the doors towards the front of the train opened and a few students practically fell through the open doorway bringing their trunks with them as they lay there and panted.

After a minute they stood, straightened their robes and made their way to their confused family where their explanation drifted through the silent station.

"It's like a madhouse in there but they should be done soon."

What exactly did that mean?

Slowly a small trickle of students found their way off of the train and back to their worried families. Many of these students looked ruffled, some of them were sporting the beginnings of bruises and others carried with them the aftermath of jinx's having been cast on them. Oddly however, most of them had an odd glaze in their eyes or a goofy smile as they mumbled things about having actually gotten a kiss or how cute someone's blush had been as well as, oddly, the mention of mistletoe.

Just what was happening on that train!?

"Perhaps one of us should go and look for them?" Molly wondered out loud as she and the remaining members of her family stood together and waited for the others to come off of the train.

"What on earth could be taking them so long?"

"They might be looking for Trevor," Charlie said from beside her, his eyes still firmly locked on
the train as he spoke. "Harry told me that they had to shrink his tank for the ride home. If they
didn't put him into the cage, or even if they had he's quite the escape artist, he might be hiding."

"Oh look!" Ginny cried out happily as she pointed towards a head of red hair as it made its way
towards them.

"Oh good," Molly said with a smile as their focus shifted from the train and to Percy who was
quickly drawing near with a frown firmly in place. "Perhaps he could tell us what's happening on
the train."

"Thank Merlin you're here Charlie. You need to get onto the train now! Harry's in the last
compartment and a good percentage of the Hogwarts population is trying to give him a kiss. It's out
of hand, no one can even get close enough to see what's going on and that's all I've been able to
figure out."

With a quick look in Bills direction the two set off quickly and crossed the platform to the closest
compartment door before they wrenched it open and even here the bodies were packed so tightly
that if not for their larger statures they would have easily been forced back out of the door they had
just come through.

As they forced their way through the throng of students Charlie could easily feel his temper flare
up. More than once he had been compared to the dragons that he worked with and that was just
fine with him. Dragons were fiercely protective and guarded what was theirs with their very lives
just as he did and Harry was his. His soul mate and at the moment these people were after what
was his.

This wouldn't end well for them.

Finally reaching the end of the last cart Bill and Charlie stopped short while they took in the scene
playing out before them.

Close to the front and making their way forward were Ron, Hermione and Neville. Each had their
wands out and were mercilessly using a combination of jinx's, hexes and elbows to steadily make
progress towards the front.

A handful of feet away from them there was a gap in the crowd where Fred and George were
fighting against several others who were much bigger and much older than them but, despite the
bruises which had already beginning to form the twins stood their ground. As they watched Fred
quickly reached towards the compartment door, grabbed the back of someone's robes, and used an
impressive amount to swing the much larger man backward and to the floor.

As they were pulled away Charlie was able to see quite clearly that his mate was trapped inside the
doorway of what must have been his compartment by what seemed to be a pale pink and
translucent barrier.

For a split second their eyes met and Harry's mouth opened as if to call out to him only for it to be
invaded the next second with someone else's tongue. As Harry's eyes filled with tears Charlie's
vision went red.

Before Charlie could give it a second thought his wand was in his hand and a stunner had hit the
fool in the back causing him to crumple to the ground in a boneless heap.

Charlie quickly followed this up with more stunners, stinging hexes and a variety of other non
lethal spells performed on whoever was unlucky enough to be in his way as he made his way
forward and to where his little mate sat huddled against the doorjamb of the compartment watching him with his beautiful emerald eyes.

Charlie.

Charlie was here!

He would help me, he knows spells and he's so strong, he'll be able to help!

Before Harry had a chance to think his mouth, which he had kept firmly shut this whole time, opened on it's own accord and Charlie's name was on the tip of his tongue only to morph into a silent scream as something big and wet was shoved into his mouth and yet another one of the upper year students took their place under this mistletoe that trapped him here.

No. I don't like this! The other person's tongue was moving and gross and it felt wrong, so very wrong! Tears welled up inside of Harry's eyes which had somehow managed to stay locked with Charlie's own and Harry was shocked to see the anger shining through in Charlie's own blue eyes.

Was Charlie mad at him? Why would he be? Harry didn't do anything wrong unless Charlie thought that he wanted this? No. Charlie knew better didn't he?

Harry watched in fearful fascination as Charlie lifted his wand and pointed it at the person who was still doing that gross thing with his tongue and wouldn't let go of him. So Charlie wasn't mad at him, that was good.

A flash of red whizzed through the air from Charlie's wand and landed square in the center of the other person's back before he went limp and fell to the ground taking his slimy tongue with him.

As Charlie continued to send out those bright flashes of light Harry fell to the floor and pushed himself back against the doorjamb while using his sleeve to wipe out the taste of that other man, either he didn't believe in oral hygiene or he didn't have any luck with Bertie Bott's.

As people continued to fall to the flashes of light Charlie made his way forward somehow managing to step on almost each of the fallen teens hands.

As Charlie knelt down in front of him Harry vaguely registered the fact that most of the other students were quickly fleeing the compartment while Bill and the twins were bringing the others back from whatever state of unconsciousness Charlie had sent them into.

"Are you okay?" Charlie asked, his blue eyes soft and full of concern as they looked at him and Harry couldn't help but smile at him.

"Yeah, but that was gross. It just felt... Wrong. You know?" Harry asked as he wiped at his mouth yet again.

"Yeah, it's not always unpleasant though, you just need to do it with the right person is all."

"Like you?" Harry asked as he cocked his head to the side as he thought. Doing that with Charlie sounded oddly... Pleasant. Perhaps Professor McGonagall was right, most eleven year olds probably didn't think like this but then again, most eleven year olds weren't involved in a soul bond. No eleven year olds were involved in a soul bond! There was no precedent for this. In the eyes of the law Harry was already an adult, in the eyes of the wizarding world who knew him as only an eleven year old he was old enough to make his own decisions and Harry chose Charlie so was this really so wrong?
Harry's question was rewarded with a possessive gleam in Charlie's eyes as he moved closer and kissed Harry on the tip of his nose.

"Yes, like me."

Authors Note: Darn you Charlie! You just had to say the perfect ending! My fluff is ruined! Until the next chapter that is... The winter holidays might take three chapters. I plan some lovely dragon interactions, fluff and frantic gift shopping.
Christmas Surprises

Little Dragon

Authors Note: Here's the fluff that I wanted to put in the last chapter! :) For those of you who wanted a nice Charry kiss there's one in this chapter. For those of you who don't... Well, skip it. Your choice, just remember, they're technically married. I could have them doing a LOT more at this point. ;) Enjoy!

Oh, Cedric gets put back to normal in this chapter! Yay!

Disclaimer: The only thing on my Christmas list this year is the rights to Harry Potter. Santa sent back a letter saying that he wanted them too. -.-

Chapter 21: Christmas Surprises

"Now, what exactly happened on that train?" Arthur asked when the family was gathered and settled in the Burrows living room.

"It was kind of our fault," The twins said in unison as they bowed their heads in shame.

"We were setting up a little prank-."

"But that second year Cho-."

"Caused the potion to spill and-."

"Only a drop was needed but-."

"The whole bottle got dumped."

"We're really sorry Harry!" They finished in unison.

"Why were you even pulling a prank on them!?" Molly began as Charlie himself stood and towered over the Twins' cowering forms.

"Do you have any idea how irresponsible that was!?" He growled out.

"Thank you," A small voice rang out from behind the two furious Weasleys and caused them to turn around in shock.

"What do you mean thank you!?" Charlie asked incredulously as he looked at Harry who merely sat there with a small smile as he watched the scene in front of him. "Do you have any idea what could have happened Harry?"

"Yes," Harry said as he stood up and crossed his arms in front of his small chest as he continued to smile and slowly walked around both him and his mothers shocked forms. "But it didn't and that is because these two protected me. So, thank you."

With that Charlie watched in shock as Harry leaned down and kissed both of the Twins on the cheek with a smile.

"We knew you loved us," The Twins chimed together while they grinned up at Harry who once
again turned and faced the gathered crowd of Weasleys.

"I think that they've been punished enough too, not only did they beat themselves up but they got hurt too. So could we just let this all go?" Harry asked with the most adorable expression on his face as looked at them with his impossibly big emerald green eyes and a small frown on his face.

"Oh all right," Molly huffed with a fond smile and Harry's eyes lit up like the fairy lights his father had placed on the tree as a wide grin spread across his face.

"Thanks mum," Harry said as he wrapped his arms around Molly's waist before peeking out at Charlie, "You forgive them too, don't you Charlie?"

It had to be illegal to be that cute, Charlie thought with a sigh.

"Oh alright, yes, I forgive them."

"I wonder what it is that Bill's helping Sirius with," Harry mused as he and Charlie sat in bed later that night.

Just after dinner Bill had received an owl from Sirius and had quickly left without mentioning what time he would be back. It had been odd but according to Ginny this wasn't the first time that it had happened.

"It's something about his new assignment from Gringotts, apparently their searching Sirius' house for something but they don't know what it is without performing certain spells," Charlie said with a smile as he ran his hand through Harry's hair.

"So has there been any more news on the missing egg?"

"No, and the mother isn't happy about it, she was so upset when it happened she came close to squashing one of her eggs. Since that happened no one's been able to get close," Charlie said with a frown and Harry was instantly mesmerized by the movement of his lips.

Would that have felt good if Charlie had been the one to do it instead of that other guy? After all, kissing Charlie was so much better than all of those other kisses from yesterday...

"Harry?" Charlie asked looking at him with concern shining in his eyes.

"What is it?" Harry asked slightly dazed as he cocked his head to the side.

"You zoned out there, is everything alright?"

"Oh! Yeah, yeah everything is fine," Harry said as he looked down at his knees, his face hot with embarrassment at being caught.

"About what?" Charlie asked and when Harry didn't respond Charlie continued, "Harry? You know that you can tell me anything right?"

"I was just thinking about that guy on the train, the one who stuck his tongue in my mouth. How is that supposed to feel good? It was just slimy and gross and seemed wrong."

"Well, like I said before, it's not always unpleasant. You just need to do it with the right person."

"Like you."
"Yes, like me," Charlie said with a soft chuckle as he leaned back against the pillows.

Looking at him Harry felt an odd thrill run down his spine as he leaned forward so that he was kneeling on the bed and facing Charlie head on.

"Then show me," Harry said feeling far braver then ever before.

"What?" Charlie spluttered at sat up so that he could look at Harry better, "What exactly are you asking Harry? I want to know that you understand exactly what your asking me to do."

"Show me what you meant. I want you to kiss me like that guy on the train did. Show me what you meant," Harry said while looking straight into Charlie's blue eyes.

After what seemed to be forever staring into each others gaze Charlie sighed and shook his head once before pinning Harry with his amused gaze.

"Fine, I told you before that we would take this at your pace and if this is what you want then fine, but, if at any time you want to stop you let me know. Do you understand?"

"I understand," Harry said with a small smile, this felt right. It felt right for him to ask Charlie to do this and Harry could feel something inside of him hum in satisfaction as Charlie's large hand came up and caressed his cheek causing Harry to let out a content sigh and close his eyes while leaning into the touch.

This was right.

"Alright," Charlie murmured as he leaned forward and his warm breathe ghosted across Harry's face, "Remember to tell me if you want to stop and this isn't going to be an every day experience, at least not for a while. Now, keep your eyes closed," He whispered and a strange chill coursed down my spine as his fingertips grazed across my neck before his other hand buried itself in the hair at the nape of my neck.

Harry's heart rate picked up as Charlie slowly tilted his head up and the hand which had once been on Harry's cheek moved to settle on Harry's waist instead.

Gently, Charlie pressed his lips to Harry's as he had done so many times before and yet this time it felt different, more intense and Harry's heart settled into frenzied pounding as Charlie increased the pressure of his lips and angled his head to the side.

With a smirk Charlie took Harry's bottom lip in between his own teeth and sucked causing Harry to gasp at the pleasure and tighten his grip on Charlie's shirt in an effort to anchor himself down.

Charlie pressed his lips back against Harry's own again and Harry's head began to swim. Harry's lips parted and their breaths intertwined as they both panted, Charlie's lips moving to mimic Harry's own and keep them connected.

Emerald eyes met blue and Harry could feel that same wicked feeling he got whenever he planned a prank with the Twins or teased Ron and Harry couldn't help but smile.

"I thought you were going to use your tongue?" Harry asked innocently and was instantly rewarded with Charlie's lips crashing into his own and Harry let his eyes fall closed so that he could savor the feeling.

When something warm and wet ghosted across Harry's bottom lip Harry let his lips part without a moments hesitation and was rewarded when Charlie's tongue darted inside of his mouth and Harry
couldn't stop the soft moan that escaped him at the feeling.

This was right, Charlie's warm weight pressed against his body, his taste exploding across his taste buds, chocolate, honey and just something unique to Charlie that was exotic and safe and reminded you of home. Charlie's scent in his nose and the soft hum that rested just under his skin that came alive whenever Charlie was near.

Charlie's tongue was exploring Harry's mouth, mapping out every rise and fall, caressing Harry's own tongue and causing it into a secret kind of dance before finally, finally, he started to withdraw. Not wanting it to end but knowing nothing that could possible convince him to say Harry opened his eyes and met Charlie's own blue orbs before sucking on Charlie's tongue much as he would a preferred piece of candy and was rewarded with a soft moan from the man above him before they pulled apart, a small strand of saliva the only thing that connected them as their breaths combined yet again.

"You're right," Harry gasped out as his heart slowly returned to normal yet again, "That was rather pleasant."

Christmas eve at the Burrow was spent primarily outside and in the snow courtesy of Fred and George who had decided to instigate a snowball fight just after breakfast had ended.

When Sirius and Remus had apperated into the middle of the field the fight had instead turned into a war that had only ended once Percy was effectively buried in snow and Molly had been forced to intercede before they buried each other.

Now the group of snow warriors sat around the scrubbed table in the Burrows kitchen as Molly bustled around and prepared hot chocolate as Fred and George recounted their tale in exceptional detail.

"So then the valiant Gred, despite odious amounts of snowballs to the chest-.."

"As well as the dashing Forge, who himself had been wounded with several icy projectiles-.."

"Snuck up behind the one known as Percy the Prefect-.."

"Count of the Hogwarts halls and punisher of ne'er-do-wells-.."

"And encased him in his icy prison!"

"Before they could finish off their other opponents, however-.."

"The maiden of the house returned and put an end to the battle."

"Percy the Prefect was freed-.."

"And an accords was reached between all sides."

"The end," They chimed together and bowed as applause rang out through the small kitchen accompanied by wolf whistled and cries of 'encore' courtesy of the resident Marauders.

"Oh! Harry," Bill murmured to as both he and Charlie leaned over from their own seats on either side of him, "How do you feel about a visit to Cedric's house after lunch? Since most of the holidays are going to be spent in Romania we figured that it would be best to give him the antidote for that problem you told us about. Then he can have the rest of the holidays to settle back down
"That sounds good," Harry said with a smile. It would be nice to get to know the real Cedric without whatever was compelling him to act so odd.

"Alright, I'll send an owl to Amos Diggory and let him know that we're coming."

"Harry!" Cedric said as he flung open his front door to greet their guests. He hadn't expected to see the first year until they were both back at Hogwarts. The last time Cedric had seen Harry he had been trapped under a sprig of mistletoe and when Cedric had attempted to brave the crowd and offer Harry some help he had instead found himself thrown back into his compartment and unable to get out again before the crowd had cleared. "How are you doing and what are you doing here?"

"Hello Cedric," Harry said with a smile and he looked absolutely adorable with his hair covered in snowflakes. "Do you mind if we come inside? I have a present I wanted to give you and it's not very good with the cold."

A present? Harry had gotten him a present!?

"Of course!" Cedric said with a grin as he lead Harry and his friends inside where his father stood waiting for him.

"Ah, I was wondering when you would show up! You lot didn't waste time now did you?" His father laughed when he saw them.

"Hello again Mister Diggory," Bill Weasley said as he and Charlie shook his fathers hand. It had been a while since Cedric had seen either of these two since their work had taken them so far away. "Mister Diggory I would like to introduce you to Harry Potter."

"It's nice to meet you sir," Harry said with a smile as he shook his fathers hand. That was nice to see, his father and Harry getting along.

"A pleasure to meet you as well Mister Potter. Now, if I understand you have something for my boy here."

"Yes sir!" Harry chirped before he reached into his pocket and pulled out a vial of amethyst colored liquid which he held out to Cedric with an adorable little smile. "This is called Contraindre Ancien Redux, it's a special potion. Will you take it?"

"What does it do?" Cedric asked despite the voice that was telling him to do whatever Harry asked him to without question. To his surprise Harry seemed to be pleased with his question, that is if his grin were anything to go by.

"It will keep you safe."

That worked for him, without a second thought Cedric pulled out the cork that was used as a stopped and downed the liquid in the vial barely giving the flavor a chance to register on his taste buds.

With a smile Cedric looked back at Harry, his eyes meeting Harry's own emerald green gaze.

That was the last thing Cedric saw before his vision went black...
"Cedric," A voice called to him through the darkness, "Cedric, how are you feeling?"

Letting out a soft groan Cedric sat up from his place on the couch, when had he gotten there?

"Harry?" Cedric asked in confusion, what just happened? "What was that potion?"

"Exactly what I told you it was," Harry said with a small smile as he plopped down on the couch beside him, "You had a really powerful spell on you and the only way to get rid of it was with that potion."

"Spell? What spell and why didn't I know about it?"

"Cedric, look at me," Harry said firmly and smiled once he complied, "Don't you notice something different?"

There was something different... He didn't feel the bone deep need to make Harry his own any more. In fact, Cedric seemed to gain a whole new clarity on everything that had happened.

He had stalked a first year! What the hell was wrong with him!?

"Oh Merlin," Cedric groaned as he put his head into his hands, images of the previous term running through his mind. "Harry, I am so sorry about everything that I've done this year. I swear that I would never, well I did but I usually wouldn't, well... That's not me and I'm sorry."

"I already know Cedric," Harry said with a small laugh as he looked at him, "That's why we got you that potion. Not only does it make you well, you again but it also stops you from being controlled like that again. I'm willing to forget the whole thing as long as you're willing to not be creepy."

"Deal."

"Oh, Harry dear," Molly said while wiping her hands on a dishtowel once the three came in the door from their trip to who knows where, "Sirius and Remus had to leave but they left that package you asked for on the table."

"Thanks mum!" Harry chirped and Molly could feel that same surge of affection that overcame her whenever Harry called her that.

"What's in the box baby brother?" Bill asked as he leaned against the table beside him while Charlie peered over his shoulder.

"Presents," Harry chimed before deftly blocking the two hands that had automatically reached for the box before they could even touch, "Do you think that you could keep them safe for me mum? I don't trust these savages not to peek." Harry said as he grinned at her from his spot on the table.

"Of course dear, would you mind watching this for me while I go and put it away?"

"Of course!"

Christmas morning dawned bright and early at the Burrow, the rays from the sun drifting through the window panes to wake the sleeping inhabitants to greet the excitement of the day.

"Morning Charlie," Bill said with a yawn as the two eldest Weasley brothers woke at the time they had long since grown accustomed to while living with Harry as a room mate.
"Morning Bill. Merry Christmas," Charlie said with a grin as he sat up. "Morning Harry... Harry?"

Looking down at the bed beside him Charlie couldn't help but smile at the sight before him, Harry lay curled into a ball and holding his pillow like a child would a stuffed animal.

"Looks like someone missed the memo about it being Christmas," Bill chuckled as he climbed out of his own bed. "Hmm, I do believe that we need to wake the dear boy up don't you?"

"My thoughts exactly brother mine," Charlie chuckled as they both took up positions on either side of Charlie's bed.

"On three?" At Charlie's nod Bill continued, "Three, two, one!"

With fingers moving like deft snakes across the small figure beside them Harry was quickly awakened though only once tears of laughter had started to fall did they stop their attack.

"Good morning brother dear," Bill said with a chuckle as Harry sat up and glared at them though the effect was ruined by the adorable way his hair stuck up more than usual and the slight flush of his cheeks. "You know Harry, you're probably the only person who can sleep in on Christmas. Even Ron wakes up early today!"

"I still think that it would be best to eat breakfast before we begin on the gifts," Molly protested as she stood before the Christmas tree with crossed arms.

"Oh come now Molly, it's the first Christmas we've all been together in quite a while. Not to mention the fact that it's Harry's first Weasley Christmas. Breakfast can wait," Arthur said patiently as though he had been prepared for this very conversation to happen.

When Molly was about to retort a knock on the door was heard before Sirius and Remus entered the room, each wearing cheerful grins as they took in those gathered before them.

"Oh, look Remmy! We're just in time for prezzies!" Sirius cheered as he flew onto a spot beside Harry before turning to look at Molly with a pleading look.

"Oh all right," She huffed with a smile before she walked over and sat down on her chair, "But after this I'm making breakfast!"

A cheer went up around the room and Harry felt excitement course through his veins, he couldn't wait to see how everyone liked their gifts.

For Molly Harry had gotten a simple silver charm bracelet with a charm that represented everyone in the family including Harry himself as well as a charm for several of the important occassions that had happened in her life as well as a gift certificate for she and Ginny to go to a magical spa for the day. Harry had a small moment of panic when he noticed the tears in her eyes before he was crushed in a hug, he was glad that she liked the gift. After all, he had had problems thinking of what to get for this amazing woman who had done so much for him.

For Arthur Harry had gotten a plane model that he could put together himself and had even managed to get a rubber duck so that he could experience it's purpose for himself. Harry was pleased to note the absolute fascination that lit up his face.

For Bill, Harry had gotten a book on obscure and powerful wards that had been in his family vaults which Bill began to read immediately, Percy had also gotten a book though his contained a biography of past Prefects and Head Boys that had been successfull in life since Harry had seen just
how ambitious Percy was.

Fred and George were now the proud owners of a large assortment of Zonko's joke products. Harry was pleased to see the glazed look in their eyes once they saw what it was he had gotten them. For Ron and Ginny, Harry had gotten them each a box of chocolate frogs though he had made sure to include a special addition to Ron's gift which he was staring at right now.

"You got me an Agrippa card!?" Ron asked in amazement before tackling Harry in a hug. Oh yes, sorting through all of those cards was well worth the look on Rons face.

"I'm glad you like it Ron," Harry said with a smile as his thoughts turned to wondering if Hermione and Neville liked their gifts. For his other two friends Harry had gotten an assortment of muggle plant seeds for Neville, who had shown fascination at the small assortment in a corner of the greenhouses at Hogwarts, and for Hermione, Harry had gotten a book that went into detail on the various branches of magic and how they interconnected.

Sirius and Remus had been harder to shop for. In the end Harry wound up getting Sirius the same gift as he had gotten the Twins though he had also written a letter that told Sirius exactly how he felt about the man and, much to Harry's surprise, the man pulled him into a hug with tears in his eyes.

"I love you too, pup," Sirius murmured into his hair before pulling back and looking at him with a watery smile.

"Cheer up old man," Harry teased as he moved back into his spot, "Tears don't look good on you."

To Harry's satisfaction Sirius began to laugh before he started up a conversation with the twins on pranking material while Harry's attention turned to Remus who hadn't moved after opening his gift, a book that had been in his vaults about werewolves, lycanthropes and their cultures, it had even been written by a werewolf.

"Remus?" Harry asked as he placed a hand on the older man's shoulder causing Remus to look up at him with a watery smile of his own.

"James had mentioned that he had a book like this but they had to go into hiding before he could get it from his vaults, it almost seems like fate that you yourself found it," Remus said as he hugged him tight.

"Then that just means I picked the perfect gift for you," Harry replied with a smile before he turned to face Charlie with a hesitant smile.

"I got this specially made for you," Harry said while holding out a small package to Charlie, "Nothing from the catalogues seemed right."

From the small box Charlie pulled out a long silver chain with a medium sized pendant at the end. The chain itself was plain but the pendant was the main feature. On it a dragon lay curled around a crystalline heart, every few moments the dragon would let out a burst of flames which would curl around the surface of the heart.

"There are special spells on it," Harry murmured with a blush when Charlie didn't move, "It has some protective spells on it and there's even an enchantment for it to show both of our moods. Yours will be shown in the heart and mine in the fire, the colors are just like a muggle mood ring, there's even a chart-.."

Suddenly Harry found himself pulled into a hug that was very reminiscent of Molly's own.
"Does that mean you like it?" Harry whispered.

"I love it," Charlie replied as he pulled back and cradled Harry's face in both of his hands. "In fact, we think a lot alike."

"What do you mean?" Harry asked with a relieved smile, he was so happy that Charlie liked his gift.

"Here," Charlie said as he handed Harry a small box of his own. "Open it."

With an amused smile Harry opened the small box only to gasp at what lay inside.

Nestled inside on a bed of soft purple tissue paper sat a silver bracelet that was shaped like the same dragon as was on Charlie's necklace, it was curled so that it would fit his wrist, looking closer Harry noticed that the dragon's eyes were colored and the clasp was a crystal heart that sat under the dragon's head and on top of its curled tail.

"When you put it on that heart will be seamless," Charlie murmured as he reached around Harry and pulled it out of the box for him, "The heart will show your mood and the eyes will show my own. This bracelet also has protective charms and will act as an emergency portkey. All you have to do is press the heart and say 'dragons keep'."

"I love it," Harry whispered before holding out his wrist. "Put it on me?"

"My pleasure," Charlie replied before taking Harry's wrist and flipping it over so that his palm was up, kissed his wrist and deftly attached the bracelet so that the heart was just on top of where he had kissed leaving Harry to blush and try to ignore the snickers from the others.

"I think that now would be a good time to give Harry our gift Molly," Arthur said with a smile as he watched them before he and Molly came over and handed Harry a slightly lumpy package, Harry flushed as he suddenly found himself the subject of everyone's full attention.

Pulling open the package Harry was greeted with the sight of an emerald green knit wool jumper which he automatically pulled on over his pajamas as the others had done. Before he could comment on the jumper however something from the wrappings in his lap distracted him and Harry reached in before pulling out a shiny silver spoon that had his name engraved into the handle with an image of his face smiling back at him from the bowl of the spoon.

"It took a while to do the charms, but you belong up on that clock, you have since the first day you were brought here," Arthur murmured as he wrapped an arm around Molly's waist and before Harry could stop himself he had thrown himself at them both in a desperate hug, that overwhelming sense of home settling over him with a finality he couldn't help but cherish.

"Well as touching as this all is," Fred began with a smile as he looked at Harry with understanding in his eyes as George continued.

"There are still presents to be opened."

Thank Merlin for the Twins! They always seemed to know when he needed them to cause a distraction.

By the time he had opened all of his other gifts Harry was having a hard time believing that he wasn't just dreaming.

Bill had given each member of the family small talismans that would protect from minor mind
magics and warn the wearer of them being used, he had also given him a book on Egyptian offensive and defensive spells using the excuse that they could come in handy some day when Molly had looked as though she would berate him. Percy had given him a book on magical etiquette while he had gotten a decent supply of pranking materials from the twins. Ron had given him a box of candy along with a promise of chess lessons while Ginny had given them all personalized bracelets made from twine and beads, Harry's own featuring green, black, yellow and red.

From Neville he had received a book on various magical plants with healing properties and Hermione had sent him a book that contained information of the different magical creatures of the world as well as their cultures and customs but it was Sirius and Remus' gift that effected him the most.

Inside of a box sat an old beat up journal on top of a sheer silver material that felt like liquid when Harry ran his fingers over it.

"Your dad would have wanted you to have those," Sirius murmured from beside him with a small sad smile, "That fabric is an invisibility cloak that's been passed down in your family for centuries and that," He said pointing at the journal, "That is the Marauders Journal, we put entries in it for every single prank we ever did and there are quite a few notes in there as well. These are part of your inheritance so now their back where they belong."

Later that morning, just as the family was finishing their late breakfast a large brown owl swooped into the kitchen and delivered an unexpected Christmas present to the head of the Weasley family.

As Arthur read through the letter his eyes became as large as that of the owls and he looked up at his family before reading aloud what had caused him such shock.

"Arthur Septimus Weasley,

It is my pleasure to inform you that progress has been made in the case concerning your families stolen wealth. While the case is still far from solved I have been granted permission in informing you that a small portion of your families former wealth has once again been obtained.

This percentage after being liquefied equals a value of 5,000 Galleons, 13 Sickles and 21 Knuts. Your case is still underway, however, this wealth is accessible to you upon the reading of this letter.

Griphook,

Account Manager."

Authors Note: Yay for a long chapter! :3 No complaints about the kiss dears, I gave you the option to skip it and like I said before, I could have them doing a LOT more at this point. For those of you who say Harry's too young I would like to remind you of the fact that Harry is legally an adult and that mentally he is far more mature than a mere 11 years old. That and the bond is also effecting them. That 'hum' mentioned above (if you read the kiss scene) was the bond. That is all.

I hope you enjoyed it! ^-^
"Alright," Molly announced once they had all gathered in front of the living room fireplace, "Harry dear, you will follow after Charlie so that you don't get lost. Bill will follow behind you with the first round of luggage. Then Ron, you go then Ginny, Percy, Fred and George. Arthur and I will bring up the end with the last of the luggage."

"Alright mum," Charlie said with a fond smile as he stepped onto the mantle and looked at Harry while taking a bit of sparkling green powder from the flower pot sitting on top of it.

"Remember what I told you?" He asked Harry with a raised eyebrow and Harry smiled despite the soft blush that had spread over his cheeks.

"Don't breathe in, elbows in, eyes closed, don't panic," Harry recited. Charlie and Bill had spent the morning drilling those four rules of floo travel into his head so that there wouldn't be any accidents.

"Exactly, remember everyone the address is 'Dragons Lair.' I'll see you all on the other side." With that Charlie turned to face the fire and, after throwing the powder into the flames and waiting for them to turn green, he stepped inside, said the address and spun out of sight right before Harry's eyes.

With a deep breath Harry stepped forward and took a small handful of the powder that felt as soft as flour on his skin, following Charlie's example Harry flung the powder into the grate and watched in fascination as the flames changed from glowing orange to bright green. Taking a breathe before stepping into the flames Harry almost released it in shock as instead of the blistering heat he had half expected there was only a slight tingle where the flames licked at his skin.

"Dragons Lair," Harry half shouted with his eyes closed and elbows held close to his body. Remembering the advice he had been given Harry tried desperately to ignore the rising panic as he felt himself spinning through nothing but air as bursts of light met his eyelids. Finally after what seemed to be a few minutes of spinning Harry's feet met with a firm surface and despite the soft landing Harry stumbled forward completely disoriented as the world began to tip forward.

Instinctively Harry twisted in midair as he continued to fall so that he wouldn't face plant onto the floor but before he could land a pair of strong familiar arms wrapped around his waist and upper back holding him close to a chest that was currently rumbling with its owners chuckles.

"If I had known that you would try crash landing," A deep rich voice chuckled in Harry's ear
causing him to blush in embarrassment, "I would have just taken you with me."

"It was my first time using the floo," Harry grumbled as he looked up at Charlie with an obvious pout and crossed his arms over his chest.

"And you're not nearly as graceful with it as you are on a broom," Charlie teased as he sat Harry firmly onto his feet and quickly banished the thin layer of soot that covered them both.

A few minutes later found the entire family being led out of the small one room shack they had come in and into the wonder that was the Romanian Dragon Preserve.

"What we just left is the only floo that's connected to the reserve," Charlie explained as they walked down a dirt path that rested between the rows of small cabins. "It makes it easier to keep track of and keeps any potential incidents down to a minimum. Now, these are the houses, this whole area is heavily warded to keep the dragons out, so don't worry mum. That big tent up ahead, since your cabin only has four rooms," Charlie said as he finally came to a stop between two of the cabins, one looking quite small and cozy while the other was obviously the one meant for the other Weasleys. "Why don't we go and put our stuff up and then I'll take us around the reserve before lunch?"

"That sounds like an excellent idea Charlie," Molly said with a large smile as she quickly gave them a kiss on the cheeks before ushering the others into their cabin. "Come along you lot, don't just stand there!"

With a chuckle Charlie turned to Bill and Harry before bowing them inside as he held the door open.

The inside of the cabin was done in warm brown tones with splashes of rich reds and various other colors, the first room that met Harry's eyes was the living room which consisted of a large fireplace surrounded by twin chairs and a loveseat set on either sides of a small coffee table. To the left of the room was a doorway which led to a simple kitchen that looked much like that of the Burrow with a small scrubbed wood table and a stove in his immediate line of sight. Further down the wall from the kitchen sat the entrance to a hallway that led to three separate rooms.

"At the end of the hall is my room, Harry you'll be bunking with me like at the Burrow, next to that is the bathroom and the closest room here is yours Bill," Charlie said before taking up his own and Harry's luggage and heading towards his room. "I'd say with the twins we have about ten more minutes until the others will be ready to leave."

Charlie's bedroom was much like the rest of the house, small, cozy and containing the essence of Charlie, so much so in fact that Harry found himself grinning as he looked around the room. A rather large bed sat in the middle of the space with a bedside table on each side, across the walls hung pictures of the family and various ones of Charlie and his friends, many of which contained either a dragon or a small woman with bubblegum pink hair who had a habit of changing her facial features to make the others in the pictures laugh.

"That's Tonks," Charlie said with a grin as he watched Harry stare transfixed at the woman who was sporting a bright orange duckbill. "She's a metamormagus and Sirius' cousin."

"Yeah, that's why he and Remus didn't come along, Sirius said that he wanted to visit them and set something or other up," Harry murmured distractedly before finally pulling his attention away
from the picture and gave Charlie a smile, "He wouldn't tell me what he was up to but I'm not too worried. He said I'd find out soon enough."

"True, come on, we better make sure that the others don't go taunt the dragons," Charlie said with a laugh before grabbing Harry's hand and pulling him out of the room where they were met by Bill who was just leaving his own room.

The rest of the day was spent touring through the reserve and Harry had to admit, it was amazing. The small hut that contained the floo was surrounded with the various cabins belonging to the other dragon keepers as well as multiple cabins that were kept empty just in case of visitors.

Just down the way from Charlie's cabin stood the mess hall as well as the first of three medical tents that were scattered throughout the reserve as well as a medium sized field which served for recreational purposes. Placed directly outside of the wards was a large open area containing many different terrains ranging anywhere from a desert to snow capped mountains with a magical blizzard which the dragons were able to freely roam between unless they had to be quarantined for one reason or another one of which was the mother who's egg had been stolen. She was currently contained in one of the pens located closest to the wards so that the keepers were better able to monitor her without the risk of her hiding her other eggs as she had been attempting to do before they secluded her.

"So this is your little mate Charlie?" Said a rather attractive witch in her early thirties with sun tanned skin and short spiky brown hair that turned up at the ends into spikes. Harry was instantly fascinated with the scarlet dragon tattoo which wrapped around her upper left arm.

"Oh Mary," Charlie said with a smile as he turned to face this woman fully while he pulled Harry more firmly into his side, "Yes, this is Harry. Harry, this is Mary, she and her husband Darius are the two I work with most often," Charlie introduced them with a grin.

"It's nice to meet you," Harry said with a smile as he held out his hand to the woman, much to his surprise however instead of shaking his hand as Harry had intended, she instead gave his arm a tug and Harry found himself with his face firmly planted in Mary's chest and a blush on his face so intense that it would make any Weasley proud.

"Aww, isn't he just adorable?" Mary cooed as she held him tightly against her despite Harry's attempts for freedom.

"Quite," A new voice spoke from behind Mary as a strange hand came from nowhere and ruffled Harry's hair before it moved on and the voice continued. "It looks like your mate is quite the beauty Charlie, soon you'll have to duel people away by the dozen."

"Darius!" Charlie cried out happily as he deftly pulled Harry away from Mary and into the safety of his own arms. "It's good to see you again. Harry this is Darius, he's Mary's husband and the other one that I work with the most. Darius this is my mate Harry."

Darius was a tall man who somehow managed to look both imposing and friendly at the same time as he towered over you. He too sported a rich tan and his long brown hair was pulled back and fastened securely at the nape of his neck with a length of leather rope.

"It's nice to meet you," Harry said holding out his hand once again and hoped desperately that Darius wasn't as big of a hugger as his wife was. Darius took his hand but once again did not shake it as he instead bent down and placed a chaste kiss to the pale skin on the back of Harry's hand.
"The pleasure is all mine, Micul frumusețe," Darius said once he stood back up and valiantly fought the obvious urge to laugh at Harry's renewed blush.

Late that night Harry woke to the strong urge to go outside. Why his magic seemed to think that this was the perfect time to guide him into the unknown and away from the warm embrace of Charlie's arms Harry had no idea though as he continued to lay there he could hear something on the wind that wasn't there at all during the day. It sounded almost like... A voice?

Yes, that was most definitely a voice but why was it happening now? In fact, it seemed almost... Like a woman? Yes, it sounded like a woman and she sounded like she was crying...

Deciding to follow the feeling, after all it hadn't led him wrong yet, Harry slowly wriggled out of Charlie's hold and, biting his lower lip, slipped silently through the door and outside of the house.

As Harry exited the cabin and began to make his way down the path the voice grew stronger and Harry could just make out a few of the words as they floated on the wind.

'My baby... That man... Baby... Why?'

Speeding up his pace Harry quickly moved through the camp and to the edge of the wards. Why would someone be out there with the dragons at this time of night?

The woman was quiet now, only the sound of her sobs carrying on the wind letting Harry know that she was still there.

The tugging stopped just as Harry came to the edge of the wards and his eyes landed upon the massive form of a dark brown dragon with black ridges along it's spine.

The Norwegian Ridgeback mother.

Harry must have made some noise or another for not even a second later Harry's eyes were locked with large orange ones that were narrowed in suspicion.

"You won't get any more of my babies!" She hissed out in warning as her long body wrapped protectively around her clutch of eggs.

Harry was beyond shocked that he had understood her, was this normal?

"I'm not after your eggs ma'am," Harry said calmly as he showed her his empty hands and slowly sank down so that he was kneeling before the mighty woman. Different species or not, Harry knew a mother who would kill to protect her children when he saw one and this was definitely one of them. He would not anger her.

The dragons eyes widened further as she looked down at Harry in shock as though she could not comprehend the sight before her.

"You speak with the tongue of the serpent. Explain," She ordered leaving no room for refusal.

"I'm not really sure myself ma'am," Harry said carefully as his eyebrows creased in confusion and he thought back to the one time he had encountered a snake, the trip to the zoo in London on Dudley's birthday. He had spoken to that snake and understood it, was that what she meant? It must be, there was no other plausible explanation. "I've had very limited contact with serpents, however on the last occasion that I did have contact with a snake I did speak with him briefly."
"Very well. Then where is my egg? Why was it taken from me!? I demand it back!" The dragon said as a cold fury burnt in her eyes and steam began to issue from each of her large nostrils.

"We do not know where your egg is but we are looking. Someone took your egg and left with it before they could be caught. The people here are looking though, including my mate Charlie."

"I want to be involved in the search!" She said immediately as she stood began to look around herself as though she could follow some clue that would solve all of their problems.

"You need to stay here and care for your other young," Harry said immediately as he himself stood and motioned at the clutch of eggs that was encircled protectively by her powerful tail. "You leave and those eggs are left unprotected and defenseless. Without your warmth they'll likely die. Are you willing to risk that?"

"No, but-" She began in confusion only for Harry to cut her off again.

"But nothing! You need to stay and watch over the others and trust that they'll find your missing egg. While you're here you also need to start eating. My mate has told me that you've eaten hardly enough to sustain yourself and soon you will have them to care for as well. Your eggs are going to need you nice and strong. Do you understand?"

"I understand," The dragon said before giving an unexpected chuckle and looking at Harry with a slight tilt to her head before nodding as though she had come to a conclusion. On what Harry didn't know. "Your mate is very lucky to have such a fierce barer for your children. Your bond is oddly strong for one that is so new to this world but that should not surprise me. You have the heart of a dragon little one, and there is no higher compliment."

"Thank you," Harry said in shock before he released a yawn and stood to leave, before he could turn a sudden thought struck him and Harry looked back up at the dragon who was looking at him with a soft look in her eyes. "Can I ask you your name? I don't think that I know it."

"I am called Strom, little one. In your language it means power," Strom said and Harry could hear the smile coloring her voice.

The next day when he woke up again Harry made sure to tell Charlie everything that had happened and, after being scolded for leaving without at least waking Charlie up as well, the two spent the day with the head keeper for an interview with Strom on what the thief looked like and did as well as seeing if any of the other dragons had seen anything.

Charlie and the head keeper or Sef as the other keepers called him, found the whole thing very funny. They had also explained the prejudices that most of England had towards those with the ability to speak parseltongue while in almost every other country in the world it was considered a huge honor.

Once the interviews were finished Harry was rescued by Darius and Mary who had decided to take it upon themselves and provide Harry with tutoring in the two aspects they claimed everyone should know, only one of which Harry agreed with.

Darius had taken it upon himself to give Harry a crash course in various physical defense tactics that neither required a wand nor much physical strength to accomplish for which Harry was immensely grateful.

Mary however had taken it upon herself to teach Harry the tricks on how to charm a lady and appear to be a perfect gentleman, a lesson which she had forced him to practice on the women who
had gathered around to watch and if Harry never saw Molly with a blush telling Harry he was far
too young and her own son again then it would be too soon.

Later that night Harry and Charlie lay in bed and talked about their days.

While Harry had been getting 'lessons' from Darius and Mary, Charlie had been in the fields
attempting to find a sick dragon that was in fact pregnant.

"So, who would have thought that your a parselmouth," Charlie mused as he looked down at Harry
from where he lay on his side with his head propped up with his hand.

"Yeah, I didn't know it was rare," Harry said with a smile as Charlie reached over and played with
the ends of his hair. "I've only spoken to a snake once before though so I didn't really notice
anything."

"Do you think that you could say something?" Charlie asked with a curious glint in his eye, "In
Parseltongue I mean."

"I'm sure that I can," Harry said thoughtfully before he grinned up at Charlie with a mischievous
smile. Picturing the snake from the zoo and Strom in his head so that he could be sure he was
speaking Parseltongue, Harry continued. "I love you Charlie Weasley."

Harry watched in fascination as a strange shiver ran down Charlie's spine before a grin split across
his face as he bent down and pecked Harry on the lips. Faintly Harry noticed the soft glow of
Charlie's necklace.

Charlie's heart was glowing purple while Harry's own fire was a calming blue as it washed over the
hearts surface.

Cocking his head to the side in confusion Harry couldn't help but voice his thoughts.

"Hey Charlie?"

"Yes Harry?" Charlie asked, confused at the sudden change in Harry's voice and posture as he
continued to look at the necklace that hung around Charlie's neck with a startling intensity.

"What does purple mean?" Harry asked and then watched in fascination as the purple bled out into
a mix between yellow and amber while the fire just darkened slightly at Harry's curiosity.

"What do you mean?" Charlie asked still confused as he tried to make sense of just what Harry was
asking him.

"Your necklace," Harry replied simply as he sat up so that he could see Charlie better. Why was he
so nervous all of a sudden? "It was purple a minute ago, what does it mean?"

"I, uh, I... Well," Charlie started nervously as he sat up and continued to stammer, "I don't think
that you're old enough to know."

"What? Why? Do you not think I can handle the purple?" Harry asked as he crossed his arms in
front of him with a huff.

"Harry, I can't even handle the purple. Especially when you do that, stop pouting!" Charlie
practically begged him.

"So... I make you purple?" Harry asked slowly as his head tilted to the side once again in
confusion. What did he do? It couldn't be fear, or sadness, maybe it was happy?

"Yes Harry, you make me purple. Far more than you should until you're older," Charlie said with a sigh. He was obviously happy that Harry was no longer upset with him.

"Funny," Bill said as he pushed the door open the rest of the way as he leaned against the door jamb with a smirk on his face. "I always thought that the saying was blue b-," Bill was suddenly cut off as one of the pillows landed firmly in his face compliments of one Charlie Weasley.

"So Charlie," Bill said from across the kitchen table the next morning as he sipped at the cup of coffee he had just poured himself.

"What is it Bill?" Charlie asked as he looked up from his own coffee as Harry quickly finished his food having a decent idea on what was about to happen.

"I was just thinking... Should I tell mum to start making you purple jumpers instead of brown?" Bill asked with a smirk and a mischievous glint in his eyes.

"Hey Bill?" Harry asked before Charlie could respond as he took his own plate over to the sink and set about washing it quickly.

"Yes Harry?" Bill asked curiously as he looked away from Charlie to meet Harry's gaze as he turned away from the sink.

"How do you keep a Gryffindor in suspense?" Harry asked and took delight in the confusion that flashed over both of the men's faces. Harry would have to thank Jonathan for telling him this joke later, it was definitely coming in handy right now.

"How?" Bill asked as he looked at Harry expectantly.

Giving the two men a sweet smile Harry quickly exited the kitchen and was forced to instantly stifle his laughter at the confused questions which were being raised inside the kitchen.

Suspense indeed...

Authors Note: Yes, I found that joke online and couldn't help myself. It was perfect revenge for Harry. I hope you guys enjoyed this! Let me know what you thought. Next chapter Harry learns the meaning behind the color purple as well as our favorite baby dragon! :3
The Missing Egg

Little Dragon

**Authors Note:** I am so so so sorry you guys! A bunch of things came up and unfortunately this story was pushed back. A few days ago my computer also decided to die and took all of the files I hadn't managed to back up (most of them) with it. :( To make up for this have a nice long chapter with a special dream scene at the end! :3

**Disclaimer:** I wish more than anything that I owned Harry Potter! I don't even own the movies or the books! (My sister stole them). I tried to steal Sev's set but he caught me and said that I could have them if he could use me for potion ingredients... I may have been tempted... I may have lost a limb or two and he may have been lying. Live and learn I say. In other news, does anyone have any skelygrow I could use?

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**Chapter 23: The Missing Egg**

The last day spent on the Romanian Dragon Reserve was bittersweet for everyone involved. The mere ten days that were spent at the reserve had been an amazing experience and Harry knew that he would miss not only the other handlers, especially Mary and Darius who he had grown close to, but also Strom the Norwegian Ridgeback mother. Harry had spent a large amount of time with her and had the odd feeling that she, like most of the women in his life had somehow come to see him as one of her own.

"Remember to write to us every now and then, okay?" Mary murmured in his ear as Harry found himself once again held captive against her chest.

"I promise," Harry said with a smile as he pulled away to look her in the eye. "Take care of Charlie for me?"

"Of course we will, little one," Darius said from where he stood beside Mary saying their goodbyes.

Charlie himself was currently locked in his mothers embrace as they said goodbye, Charlie would be staying at the reserve while the rest of them would floo directly to the platform to catch the train back to Hogwarts. The time difference between Romania and England was truly a blessing at this point and allowed them plenty of time for farewells.

"Good," Harry said with a smile as Darius pulled him in for a quick hug of his own, "I know that he's sad about not seeing us off at the platform."

"Well that's to be expected," Mary said with a laugh audible in her voice, "It's insane to perform two long distance floo's in a short amount of time. Even one takes a toll on you, that's why it's not common, most people would rather avoid the side effects."

Well that was true, Harry remembered all too clearly the effects of the travel and their effects on the others, especially Ginny who had been sick from the after effects.

"Now," Darius said as he began to lead them towards the gathered Weasleys, "You make sure to continue practicing your defense little one. You never know when it will come in handy."
"I also expect for you to continue practicing your charm," Mary continued with a teasing smile on her face. "More often then not you will be forced to charm your way through something and it even has practical uses in battle. They expect violence, they don't expect you to sweet talk them."

"Alright that's enough you two," Charlie cut in with a laugh as he finally broke away from his mothers fussing.

"Alright, alright," Darius said with a laugh as he stretched his arm out to ruffle Harry's already messy locks affectionately. "Be sure to write then little dragon."

"Have fun at school!" Mary called out before both handlers made their way back the way they had come leaving Harry and Charlie to say goodbye alone.

"Are you ready to go back to school?" Charlie asked as he settled a hand on Harry's waist and pulled him into his side.

"Yes, all packed up and ready to go," Harry said with a grin as they began to close the short distance to the floo cabin.

"Good but I still think you're forgetting something."

"Really?" Harry asked as confusion swept over him. He had packed his trunk the night before and Charlie had summoned any of Harry's missing items for him. What could he have forgotten?
"What did I forget?"

"A kiss goodbye," Charlie said with a teasing grin that made affection surge through Harry.

"Well I can't forget that can I?" Harry said with a small smile as he lifted his head up to look at Charlie better.

He was going to miss this, miss Charlie, immensely when he was back at school.

"Harry, Ron, down here!" Neville called from the window of a compartment towards the back of the Hogwarts Express as the Weasley family began to make their way down the platform and away from the communal floo leaving the area free for the next family to come through safely.

"Looks like we've found our compartment," Ron said with a grin as they both waved to Neville showing their understanding and watched as he disappeared back inside the compartment window.

"Hey Harry!" A familiar voice called from down the platform before the sound of pounding feet drew nearer. Turning Harry was met by the sight of Cedric running towards him with a grin.

"Hey Cedric, how are you feeling?" Harry asked in concern as he looked over the Hufflepuff third year. The last time Harry had seen him was the day before Christmas when he had given Cedric the antidote for the compulsion spell he had been put under. It certainly explained why he had been so creepy before and speaking of creepy... "Why are you still wearing the bell?" Harry asked incredulously as Cedric looked down at the large bell that was now attached to a thick black necklace that clung to his neck and made it appear as though he were wearing a necklace.

"Oh this?" Cedric asked with a chuckle before waving his hand absentmindedly before himself as though to bat away the question. "My father and I figured that it would be best to pretend that the spell was never broken, that way, whoever did it wont try to put me under another one. That and I kind of like it, it's different!" He finished with a large grin that suited him so much better than the ones he had given before then.
"Yes, that is a good plan," Harry mused, resisting the urge to laugh as Fred and George positioned themselves on either side of Cedric and began to bat the bell between them to make it ring with such utterly serious expressions on their faces that it just added to the hilarity of the situation. "Well, we best go and say our goodbyes, I'll see you later then Cedric!"

Several minutes later found Harry and Ron ensconced inside of a compartment with Hermione and Neville happily trading stories about their holidays as the scarlet engine steadily made its way to Hogwarts.

Neville had spent the holidays with his Gran visiting his great uncle and aunt, Algie and Enid, at their estate in Wales. Both of his relatives were absolutely ecstatic with the changes that Neville had gone through and Neville had finally had the courage he needed to confront them on how they had treated him. Whatever they had said to him after that must have been the final piece in allowing Neville to shrug off the meek personality that he had hidden behind in the past.

Hermione on the other hand, had spent the holiday with her parents at home. She was ecstatic that her parents had gotten to see a part of her new world and they were now closer than ever before.

Both Hermione and Neville were fascinated by their tales of Romania and the magnificent dragons that they had seen but they too felt grief at Stroms plight, though Hermione's appeared to be tempered by her innate curiosity at the prospect of studying his Parseltongue abilities.

Soon enough the conversation changed to the topic of the upcoming Quidditch match that was scheduled for the end of February. Hufflepuff would be playing against Gryffindor and while he should have been nervous at the prospect of playing against the twins Harry was actually excited.

"Okay Harry, I have to ask," Neville said from across the compartment as he caught the chocolate frog that Ron had just tossed to him, "Why is it that you're not worried about going against the Twins? I figured that you would be more nervous than this?"

"Oh I was," Harry said with a smile as he snagged his a cauldron cake and nibbled on the edge, "The Twins and I made a deal though. We're going to do our best in whatever matches we play against each other and whoever's team wins gets a free 'no questions asked' favor."

"What do you mean 'no questions asked'?" Hermione asked, obvious confusion showing on her features as she absentmindedly began to chew on her bottom lip, something Harry had noticed she did whenever she was confused or in deep concentration.

"Well," Harry began as he tried to think of exactly how to explain, "It's like when you've done something embarrassing or need help with something that you can't tell anyone about or don't want someone to know you can ask them to do something 'no questions asked', and the other will do it and that's the end, no explanations, no chiding and no telling someone to get the other into trouble. It's a nice thing to have just in case, you know?"

"That sounds like it would be very helpful," Hermione said with a smile as she reached out and snatched a licorice wand from their rapidly diminishing pile.

"Oh it is," Ron agreed as he began opening another chocolate frog, "Fred and George have used them with me a few times. They've had me take the fall for a few of their pranks and I've had them prank Percy or Ginny a few times."

The Quidditch match was furious. It seemed as though both teams were attempting to end it and end it quickly. Lee Jordan had barely had time to take a breath between the announcements as the
crowd was whipped into a frenzy at the high speed match happening below him.

Yet again Harry forced his attention away from what was happening below him and instead focused his attention onto searching for the golden snitch.

The Gryffindor seeker had obviously learned from the last few matches Gryffindor had played seeing as he kept out of the way of the others on the field and kept the Hufflepuff beaters in view at all times. Of course his strategy left some rather obvious holes, he was not only too high up to have much hope of diving for the snitch without Harry noticing but by also keeping a vast majority of his attention focused onto the oppositions beaters he had severely reduced his chances of spotting the snitch without an insane amount of luck.

Oh well, Harry wasn't going to let an opportunity like this go to waist.

With renewed enthusiasm Harry began to search the field for that telltale glint of gold. Not by the teachers stands, opposite posts, no, student stands, no, there were Ron, Hermione and Neville, focus Harry. Game posts close by, no, the other side of the stands, nothing. Time to check the air then, by Oliver Wood, nothing... There! Right next to Katie Bell left elbow.

A quick glance at the Gryffindor seeker later and Harry moved, leaning forward on his broomstick so that he was rocketing forward at full speed, through the other two chasers and causing Angelina to fumble the quaffle in shock and straight at Katie Bell who now looked far too afraid for Harry's liking.

As Harry drew closer the snitch, as though sensing his approach, flitted away from it's position and instead went to the left towards the stands.

Harry put on an extra burst of speed and stretched his arm out towards the little golden ball and... There! The snitch was his!

Hufflepuff had won the game by a margin of 75 points and remained undefeated!

March came and with it came Ron's birthday. Since it was a Sunday and they did not have classes the group, which had been joined by the other Weasley children, spent the day by the black lake. The weather had grown warmer as the snow melted so that all that was required for a comfortable day outside was a simple light jumper. Though oddly enough through some unspoken yet unanimous decision they had all decided to wear their 'Weasley sweaters.'

As they were finishing the lunch that Fred and George had gotten from the kitchens Ron finished opening his gifts, from Hermione a book called 'Chess Tactics for the Advanced Player', a large assortment of Honeydukes' various confections as well as a box of pranking supplies from the Twins, several of which were their own inventions.

"So Ron, how would you-," Fred began when the last of the pudding was finished.

"Like to spend the last-," George continued as he leaned back against the small boulder he and Fred had been sitting against.

"Of your birthday?" They asked in unison with identical grins on their faces.

"How about some pick up Quidditch?" Ron asked hopefully as he looked at all of them, "Hermione, Neville and Percy can just watch though, since you three aren't very good at flying."
"That sounds great Ron!" Harry said with a grin as they climbed to their feet, "We'll have to ask Madam Hooch to watch though since you're not on a Quidditch team but she should be able to give you some tips, I heard that she was a keeper Kestrels."

"Yeah she was," Fred said as they began their trek across the grounds and to the Quidditch pitch.  

"She had to stop after a bad accident," George continued with a frown as he tried to remember just what accident it was.  

"It was a match against the Falmouth Falcons," Fred said as his eyes lit up in triumph at remembering the information.  

"One of the first games she played-"  

"Only ten minutes into the game-"  

"And BAM! Both bludgers-"  

"Hit her in the chest and shoulder."  

"She got knocked off her broom-"  

"Fell straight to the ground."  

"Her shoulder, collarbone and pelvis were shattered." Fred finished with a frown marring his features.  

"She quite the league after that and started teaching here." George continued.  

"Wow," Harry breathed out in the silence that had stretched out at the end of the Twins' tale. "I didn't know all of that just that she used to play. I figured she had just retired and decided to teach." For a few minutes they walked on in silence, each lost in their own thoughts until their concentration was brought back by the sight of Professor Quirrel walking towards them from the direction of Hagrid's hut.  

"Hello Professor Quirrel," Hermione said happily as they drew to a stop in front of the man.  

"G-g-good-d d-day ch-children," Professor Quirrel managed to stutter out with a thin smile as he looked at them oddly, "M-must be g-going, enjoy th-the r-rest of your d-D-day."  

With that he walked away from the group and back towards the castle leaving a feeling of unease niggling at the back of Harry's mind that only seemed to grow in persistence with Hermione's next words...  

"Whatever happened to him must have been dreadful, I've never heard of someone with a stutter like that."

The rest of March as well as the beginning of April seemed to go by in the blink of an eye between Hermione's insistence that they begin to study for exams and the increased workload they were now being assigned in their classes. Throughout the month they had been kept so busy that any visits they made to Hagrid were now few and far between, something that they felt immensely guilty about and vowed to themselves that they would visit him the next possible chance they had.
They received this chance on Sunday, April 19.

The weather was nice, the sky clear of all clouds and the sun shining down on them as they made their way across the grounds towards the welcoming cabin which lay close to the border of the forbidden forest.

As they drew closer the sight of the curtains, which were usually thrown wide open even on the most dreadful of days, had been pulled tightly closed so that not a single sliver of the room inside could be seen. Worry for their friend immediately began to assault them as they sped up their pace to sprint across the remaining distance.

Once they had reached the cabin's door Neville, who was closest to the door, reached out and knocked the times before he stepped back and waited for their friend to answer the door.

"Who is it?" Hagrid's thick voice called through the door sounding slightly... Worried?

"It's just us Hagrid," Ron called back without hesitation.

"Come in then, come in," Hagrid murmured urgently as he ushered them each inside the surprisingly hot cabin.

Harry cast a quick look around the hut and absently noticed that Hagrid had, for some reason, decided to light a roaring fire in the grate.

Just what was going on and what was with that fire?

"So, yeh wanted ter ask me somethin'?" Hagrid asked gruffly as he poured them each a cup of tea before putting a large plate of rock cakes on the table before taking a seat of his own with a sigh.

"We were just coming to see you when we noticed that your curtains were shut," Hermione said immediately as she wrapped her hands around the large tea cup before her. "We got worried."

"Oh well," Hagrid began nervously and Harry just barely caught the shift of his eyes as he quickly glanced at the fire.

Why would he...?

Harry's eyes swiftly moved over to the fire before, in the blink of an eye, Harry became aware of the fact that he had not only jumped up with such speed that he knocked over his chair but that he was also holding tightly to Hagrid's neck in an excited hug.

"Hagrid you brilliant, brilliant man!" Harry said with a grin as he pulled away from the half giant.

"Where was it? How did you get a hold of it? Is it okay?"

"Well," Hagrid began as he ran a hand through his hair and began to rub the back of his neck, "I won it las' night. I was down in the village havin' a few drinks an' got into a game o' cards with a stranger. Think he was quite glad ter get rid of it ter be honest."

"Of course he was," Harry said with a nod as he crouched down and looked at the egg that was nestled carefully between the flaming logs, its shell the same glittering black as the ridged along Strom's spine. "The whole Romanian Dragon Reserve is looking for him and if he's found he has an angry mother dragon to deal with. They'll be relieved to know that the egg is safe."

"It has to go back?" Hagrid asked sadly, "I mean, I could always-."
"I'm sorry Hagrid," Harry cut in as he stood from his crouched position and moved so that he could put a hand onto Hagrid's large shoulder in comfort. "That just isn't an option. You don't have any of the necessary supplies to properly take care of a dragon hatchling let alone the room. Besides that it's not fair to the mother is it? She's devastated and keeping her separated from her child any longer than necessary would be cruel. But," Harry continued with a soft smile on his face as he looked into Hagrid's kind eyes. "I'm positive, that the reserve would be more than happy to let you visit. You being the one who recovered it and all."

"You really think tha' Harry?"

"Absolutely," Harry replied with absolute certainty ringing in his voice.

That night before he climbed into bed Harry tied a small roll of parchment to Hedwig's name with instructions to take it straight to Balaur.

'Balaur,

The egg is at Hogwarts, it's safe, our biggest friend saved it last night.

Hope to see you soon!

Harry'

It had been a very long day. After their classes had ended Harry and the others had immediately made their way to the library where they had set up a system in which two of them would do the research for their essays while the other two would look through the books on dragon care for anything that could be deemed necessary to keep the dragon egg as healthy as possible until they could put it safely into the dragon handlers' capable hands.

Just as Harry was preparing to climb into bed a soft hoot sounded from behind him and Harry couldn't resist the grin that spread across his face at the sight of Hedwig standing tiredly on her perch.

"Hedwig!" Harry said softly as he soothed his fingers to over her feathers, "It's good to see you again girl, I take it the flight went well?"

With a low hoot and a bob of her head Hedwig held out her leg towards him, a note attached to it with his name written in Charlie's familiar writing.

"Thank you Hedwig, you've done brilliantly. Now, get some rest, you deserve it," Harry said with a fond smile and another stroke of her silvery plumage before he quickly untied the slip of parchment from her leg before sliding under the covers of his bed and reading the note in the dim glow of the torches on the wall.

'Harry,

Everyone here are relieved to hear that the egg is safe. A group of us will be coming as soon as possible by broom. Usually we would use a portkey but the paperwork to get one would take too long and time is of the essence since the egg could hatch any day.

We will be there tomorrow night at midnight. Tell the Twins that I'm calling in a 'no questions asked' on them. Their mission: To get you, Ron, Hermione and Neville to Hagrid's and back without getting caught.
No Harry, I haven't gone crazy in asking this. I know that you wouldn't just sit back and hope everything goes right and neither would the others, at least this way I know that you won't get caught.

See you tomorrow!

Love,

Charlie

With a smile Harry refolded the parchment and carefully slid it inside his suitcase before his fingertips stroked against his bracelet as he drifted off to sleep, the memory of the way Charlie had kissed him on the first night of the holidays swimming through his mind and lulling him deeper and deeper into a dream.

Harry was dreaming, there was no other explanation for why he suddenly found himself back laying in the bed they shared at the Burrow. This wouldn't be the first dream Harry had had that included Charlie though usually they were doing something, be it with other people or just the two of them, never just laying in bed like they were at the moment.

"Harry," Charlie murmured, his voice deep and rich with some hidden meaning that was utterly lost on Harry though he felt an odd tingle course down his spine as Charlie lifted his hand and lightly cupped Harry's cheek. A gasp of shock escaped him at the jolt of electricity that unfurled throughout his being from just that one small touch.

"Ch-Charlie?" Why was he stuttering? They'd done this before, lay in bed and talk, Charlie had cupped his cheek and yet... This was so very different from all of those times before and Harry was puzzled at the brief wave of disappointment that washed over him for a brief moment before Charlie drew him back to the present.

"I love you," He was leaning closer now, his body twisting so that it hovered over Harry's own and guided it so that he was now laying flat on his back without Charlie having to touch him a single time. Charlie was hovering over him now, one of his knees resting between Harry's legs as his other rested just beside his right hip.

For some reason their new position caused Harry's heart to pound and his breath to come out in one long shaky exhale.

"I love you too Charlie," Harry murmured and it was as if those words were a signal as Charlie's crashed down on his own and that same feeling of pleasure and right washed over him as Charlie took over his senses.

The moment seemed suspended in time, the perfect combination of blissful oblivion and belonging swirling inside of him that Harry felt he could stay like this forever.

That is, until Charlie moved.

One of his hands slid down Harry's side so that it rested against his hip and caused Harry to draw in a shaking breath as his head tilted back against the pillows. Charlie's lips were on his neck now, placing open mouthed kisses down the column of his neck and Harry felt torn between the need to moan or whimper for more. More what? If there was more Harry would surely fall to pieces. There couldn't possibly be more.

Charlie shifted his weight above him, pulling back so that he hovered over Harry looking down at
him with a look in his eye Harry had only gotten a vague glimpse of when he had spoken parseltongue. The night Charlie's necklace turned purple...

"Beautiful," Charlie murmured huskily before he shifted again, his knee shifting forward and resting firmly between his legs and causing what felt like a bolt of lightning to course through Harry's body.

With a gasp Harry's eyes snapped open and as the wave of shock slowly began to ebb away Harry slowly became more aware of his surroundings.

The room was dimly lit in the soft glow of the torches on the wall, the others in the room were still sound asleep if the snores were any indicator and since Hedwig wasn't hooting she was obviously still asleep. Nothing unusual there. What was unusual however was Harry himself. His breathing was coming in heavy pants and his mind seemed muddled, his limbs felt oddly heavy a sudden wave of exhaustion came over him as his heartbeat began to slow down into a more natural rhythm.

As his senses slowly came back to him Harry became aware of one other oddity that he had never experienced before...

**Authors Note:** If you don't get the last reference you likely shouldn't be reading this story...

For those of you who think Harry is too young for that last scene know that I do plenty of research for this story. For those of you interested my information lies below...

In terms of puberty most boys are generally between the ages of 12 and 16 years old when they first start to develop however the average boy could begin as early as nine years old.

This however, does not take into account several other key factors for development, especially Harry's. Harry was sexually abused and that causes some children to mature faster not to mention the magic. I would estimate that magic causes the children to mature around 2 to 3 years faster or so mentally.

Now for those of you who still wish to argue that he is too young, despite the fact that this is a fanfiction, there is a medical condition known as Precocious Puberty or puberty which occurs at an unusually early age. Several of the side effects for this condition are also some of Harry's attributes.

To those of you who are still skeptical, the youngest mother on record, a woman by the name of Lina Medina, was only five years, 7 months and 21 days old when she gave birth. If you have any further questions, or if you're just curious, just ask.

No they will not be going further than kissing right now but they will eventually. I could have them doing a lot more at this point so... Yeah.

Please remember, this is fiction. So don't get your panties in a knot okay?
Authors Note: Merry Christmas! Happy Holidays! Happy New Years and a happy birthday to me and anyone else!

I am so so so sorry for the wait everyone! It's been extremely hectic here and I have had zero access to any form of electronics besides an old flip phone that I could read on. :( Fear not however! I have indeed been writing! (In a spiral notebook, just as how I had written the first few of these past chapters). Other than the lack of computer access, I am also afraid that it would have taken a while for me to update regardless. Not only has winter rolled in and decided my driveway is the perfect place for an iced over snowdrift to settle every night but my grandfather also went into the hospital due to heart issues. Don't worry, he's perfectly fine now! Besides that it has been decided that my family and I are going to be moving to Arizona, so my free time has been a little dominated by going through the house and beginning the process of deciding what to take with us.

Huge thank you to everyone for the support you have given me these last few weeks and major kudos to Sarah for posting that note for me! I swore to myself that I wouldn't do it but alas it was unfortunately necessary. :(  

Anywhozles~! Enough of this extremely long AN and onto the story!

Oh! There's a nice little scene featuring a semi jealous Charlie at the end as a special gift in thanks for your patience with me! :3

Disclaimer: JK Rowling writes Harry Potter fanfictions and you don't see her putting up a disclaimer! I don't own this, never will. I do however own my daydreams of JK Rowling reading Harry Potter fanfictions just like the rest of us... In other news, if our dear beloved Rowling is reading this will you message me? Hint that it's you? Review as one of the characters? Something!?  

In other news I own only my guilt at my lovelies poor wait. :(  

Chapter 24: Of Letters and Plans

It was a typical day at the Romanian Dragon Reserve, the sun was shining brightly as the various wildlife who were willing to brave the dragons frolicked about throughout the grounds.

It was truly amazing to watch the interactions between the fierce and deadly creatures that the dragons presented and the more often then not purely mundane creatures which would play with abandon. If only the Ministry could see this side of the dragons instead of the fierce and vicious monsters which they would have you believe.

Yes, the dragons were deadly and each of the handlers had their fair share of burns and scars but more often than not they were caused by the younger hatchlings or those facing grief for a lost mate, anger over territory or after being provoked.

One of these dragons which had been the cause of many burns as of recently was the currently distraught mother, Strom.
Charlie Weasley seemed to be the only handler whom she hadn't tried to roast alive and as such he had been put onto 'Mommy Watch' as it were and had taken to spending his days with the mother in an attempted to console her.

Shocking not only the others at the reserve but himself as well, Strom had allowed him close to herself and, when he had explained that they wished to check on the health of the other eggs she had even allowed him close enough to the clutch of eggs to successfully perform the check up as well as to physically examine them.

The only thing that they could think of to explain this strange and unheard of behavior was Charlie's close relationship with Harry. Whatever Harry and the newly dubbed 'Strom' had spoken about, it had undoubtedly caused some form of bond between the two and subsequently Charlie as well.

Not only had this good fortune given the handlers on the reserve an invaluable access and safeguard towards the Norwegian Ridgeback mother but had also brought about numerous breakthroughs in the study of the behavior of dragons but had also proven many theories which had been hotly contested throughout the years for lack of study. The largest of these breakthroughs being that dragons could not only understand when they were being spoken to or about but also that they could understand exactly what was being said as proven by Strom's cooperation on various aspects which Charlie would have to perform but also by her reactions to when Charlie would speak to her and tell her stories whenever he was bored or there was a lull in the day.

To put it simply, Charlie was now the victim of much teasing from his fellow handlers for having a mate that could tame an enraged mother dragon. Needless to say, Charlie was now far more reluctant to anger his little mate in the future lest he have the proverbial 'guard dragon' sicked on him.

It was during a lull in the day in which Charlie found himself seated against the wall of Strom's pen when Hedwig flew down and landed with a gust of wind in front of Charlie where she waited impatiently for him to break out of his shock and take the parchment attached to her leg.

With trembling fingers Charlie quickly untied the missive as his mind raced only to settle somewhat when he caught the color of Harry's emotions, happy and excited. Whatever this was it was good news.

With a smile and a quick stroke of Hedwig's feathers Charlie relaxed and opened the letter only to nearly drop it in shock a moment later.

Impossible.

Reading the letter again Charlie confirmed that he had in fact read the letter right and with a whoop of joy Charlie stood and ran towards the main office, the words of the letter running through his mind.

'Balaur,'

*The egg is at Hogwarts, it's safe, our biggest friend saved it last night.*

*Hope to see you soon!*

*Harry*

"Sef! Harry found the egg!" Charlie cried out in excitement the moment he made it through the door leading to the main keepers office. "Hagrid somehow managed to get it and Harry sent me
"Portkey's are not an option," Sef announced in aggravation as he pulled his head back out of the flames, "The Ministry is unwilling to supply us with an emergency portkey until we file the proper paperwork."

"That could take weeks!" Darius growled in frustration from where he was pacing by the wall.

"Yes and that hatch date is drawing nearer every day. By the time we get the portkey it could be far too late," Mary added from her spot beside the door where she stood glaring at the fireplace.

"Why not floo?" Charlie said suddenly, "We could floo to the three broomsticks, then fly onto the grounds and use a crate a harness to carry the hatchling back. Best case is that it hasn't hatched yet and we can come back through the floo."

"That would work but how would we get onto the grounds without Dumbledore knowing? The wards would alert him the second someone steps foot onto Hogwarts grounds."

"Not if the Deputy Headmistress were to grant us access to the grounds," Charlie said with a smirk as he leaned back against the wall. "All we have to do is send an owl to Professor McGonagall and have her meet us at the gate to grant us access. The wards would accept it and wouldn't alert the Headmaster."

"Set it up then. You'll head out tomorrow," Sef said with a nod before his face spread out in a grin. "I look forward to the return of that baby, the old girl down in the pens is sure to calm down. Just make sure you let her know what's going on before you leave Charlie, we wouldn't want her roasting your replacement while you're out getting her kid."

---

'Harry,

Everyone here are relieved to hear that the egg is safe. A group of us will be coming as soon as possible by broom. Usually we would use a portkey but the paperwork to get one would take too long and time is of the essence since the egg could hatch any day.

We will be there tomorrow night at midnight. Tell the Twins that I'm calling in a 'no questions asked' on them. Their mission: To get you, Ron, Hermione and Neville to Hagrid's and back without getting caught.

No Harry, I haven't gone crazy in asking this. I know that you wouldn't just sit back and hope everything goes right and neither would the others, at least this way I know that you won't get caught.

See you tomorrow!

Love,

Charlie'

---

'Professor McGonagall,

I have a rather unorthodox request to make of you and I know that it won't make much sense but I beg of you not to question it.
There is a dragon egg on school grounds, one which a close friend of ours has recently taken into custody for safe keeping until we are able to retrieve it and return it to its mother. This egg is also close to it's hatch date.

As you know, the headmaster cannot be trusted and as such my team and I need access to the grounds without his awareness. This, as you well know, can not be accomplished without your approval.

I would like to ask that you meet us at the entry gates. Once access is granted we will handle ourselves and leave the premises with the egg as soon as possible.

Regards,

Charlie Weasley.'

By the time preparations had been completed for the following day including telling a now very anxious mother dragon that she would soon have her child back and, oddly enough, having to threaten said mother dragon with his little mate to keep her from flying off, a fact which still confused them all, Charlie was exhausted.

Madam Rosmerta, after a bit of begging and a promise to take come for a drink sometime, was willing to stay up and let them use her floo after closing time, no questions asked.

Sef had managed to acquire a crate with extensive cushioning and burn proof charms laced into it specially designed for hatchlings and their brooms were now outfitted with harnesses and cloaking charms to prevent them from being seen as they transported the hatchling back to the reserve.

All in all Charlie was happy despite his tiredness, within the next day he would not only recover the egg that they had been searching for these past few months, but he would also get to see his adorable little mate again.

It was with these thoughts in mind that Charlie drifted off to sleep...

Charlie woke with a groan and looked around in confusion. What exactly had woken him up?

Looking around Charlie's gaze was caught by a soft glow coming from under his shirt. With a jolt he sat upright and drew the necklace out so that he could see exactly what it was that had woken him.

There, flickering over the soft yellow that symbolized his concern and worry, was the glowing purple which represented Harry's emotions.

Cold fury gripped at his heart causing the soft yellow to swirl with a deadly black.

Who the hell was making his Harry purple!? No one was allowed to make Harry purple but him! Why exactly was Harry purple!? Was someone taking advantage of his sweet innocent little mate? They better not be. You can't work with dragons as long as he had without picking up some tips on how to be angry.

Calm down Charlie! Think. This is Harry after all, you're just overreacting. You know this! Doesn't mean that you're not still worried though... Okay, look closely at the color. Is Harry even awake? This could just be a wet dream, he certainly had them at that age. Bill had them sooner than that as well.
There, only noticeable if you were to look closely at the flames which represented his little mate's emotions, was a thin band of silver along the outer edges.

Relief flooded through his system followed by an odd sense of smug satisfaction as he realized just what was happening.

His little Harry was having a rather pleasant dream and it was almost assuredly about him. Oh he couldn't wait to see his little one again!

**Authors Note:** Once again thank you guys so so so much for your patience! You have no idea how much it means to me that you are all being so amazing about this! I've said it before and I will undoubtedly say it again, you are the best readers that I could ever ask for! Each of your reviews has brought an endless amount of joy to me and I hope that you all enjoy these two chapters! :3
Chapter 25: Hatchling

Little Dragon

Authors Note: Here you lovelies are, the second of the new chapters you were promised! Here we meet the precious hatchling that you all know and love, wee little Norberta!

I decided to have a special scene in Norberta's point of view as well! We get to take a look at the characters through her eyes! I thought it would be nice. :)

Disclaimer: I own only my immense love and gratitude towards my darling readers! All known characters belong to JK Rowling, I own only the plot and OC's.

Chapter 25: Hatchling

"Hello Professor!" Charlie greeted McGonagall with a smile once they reached the gates of Hogwarts in front of which Professor McGonagall waited clothed in wool cloak in an effort to stave off the slight chill that the night produced.

"Mister Weasley, I received your letter and am willing to grant access to you however I am also aware that there will be students out of bed this evening?" She questioned with a raised brown which would have had Charlie cringing if not for the glimmer of humor that he could see shining in her eyes.

"Well, it is an educational experience that the headmaster would have denied them otherwise," Charlie said with a wry grin as he rubbed at his neck. "Well, that and the bond needs renewed, why waste a perfect opportunity and risk possible punishment for not having adequate exposure? This is an unprecedented case after all," He finished hopefully and was rewarded with the slight upturn of McGonagall's lips as she shook her head with a fond expression.

"Oh Charlie, what am I going to do with you? Even out of school you still cause problems."

"Yes, but you love it," Charlie replied with a smirk.

"Oh very well, come in, all of you. I will make sure that Albus is kept occupied just in case while you extract the dragon. At least you're smart enough to ask for help instead of asking the children to smuggle it out. What would they do? Carry it to top of the astronomy tower?"

"Charlie!" Harry called out in excitement as he ran up and hugged Charlie around the waist tightly before burying his face into the strong broad chest and breathing in the familiar scent of his mate.

With a chuckle Charlie wrapped his own arms around the lithe form of his tiny soul mate and held him close. "It's good to see you too love," Charlie murmured into the silky locks of Harry's unruly hair.

"We'll go set up and check on the egg Charlie," Mary said with a wink as she pulled a chuckling Darius along behind her toward the group standing in front of Hagrid's hut.

"I've missed you," Harry mumbled when they had finally pulled away from desperately clinging to each other and were instead in a loose embrace.
"As did I," Charlie said pulling back so he could look down at those breathtaking emerald orbs, "Though I do have a question for you," Charlie trailed off as he thought back to just what had woken him up the previous night and how worried he had been.

"What is it?" Harry asked curiously as he tilted his head to the side in confusion.

"Well, I woke up last night to a glow coming off of my necklace. Imagine my confusion when it was purple... You wouldn't happen to know why that is would you?" Charlie asked with a smirk as his suspicions were confirmed with the crimson blush which spread across Harry's cheeks. This ought to be interesting...

"W-well... I-I had a... Wierd dream last night," Harry stuttered as he dropped his gaze to look at the ground and began to fidget with the hem of his jumper while he chewed nervously on his bottom lip.

"Hey, look at me," Charlie said gently as he gently lifted Harry's chin so that he could meet his gaze with a kind smile. "It's okay. It happens. Trust me, I know. I just figured that we could talk about it so that you're not confused okay?"

"O-okay," Harry said hesitantly as he chewed on his lip again before taking a deep breath and looking back up at Charlie, "So, you've had them too? The weird dreams?" He asked innocently and causing Charlie to chuckle.

"Yes, I've had them too. Quite a few actually, more so since I met you though," He answered truthfully. He wouldn't lie to Harry about this, or anything else really. Harry was making remarkable progress since their first meeting and he wasn't about to let his own embarrassment cause Harry to revert for something that was indeed natural.

"So it's not... Weird?" Harry questioned looking straight into his eyes.

"Not weird at all. It's natural, some of them are odd and things that you wouldn't do or would never think of doing, some are manifestations of your desires. It's purely natural," Charlie assured him with a grin as they both settled down on the lawn facing Hagrid's hut so that they could talk more comfortably. "So... Would you like to talk about it? Talking helps after all."

"I thought that was nightmares?"

"Those too, but it still helps. Not to mention we can talk about anything that may have confused you and I could answer any questions that you have?"

"Well... I dreamt about us," Harry started and Charlie couldn't help but grin at that. He wouldn't have minded Harry dreaming about anyone else, it wouldn't have been his fault after all but he couldn't help but feel smug about the fact that it had been him his little Harry had dreamt about.

"And?" He encouraged wrapping an arm around Harry's shoulders before smiling as Harry snuggled into his side.

"Well, we were lying in bed and you told me that you love me," Harry started and Charlie hummed while he began to run his fingers through Harry's hair. "I said that I loved you too, then you kissed me and it was..." He trailed off, his eyes going far away and Charlie couldn't fight off the fond smile that tugged at his lips.

"Was what?" He encouraged gently.

"Electric," Harry breathed out, his eyes still far away no doubt remembering the previous nights
dream. "Then you moved your hands and kissed my neck and your knee moved..." He trailed off with a shiver before his eyes focused again and a blush crept across his cheeks. "Then I woke up."

"And then you had to take a shower?" Charlie asked gently as he gave Harry an understanding smile.

"How did you-?"

"Because it's natural," Charlie said with a chuckle. "It's nothing to be embarrassed about. Now come on, we have an egg to get back to it's mother." Charlie said with a grin as he placed a kiss on Harry's forehead before pulling him to his feet.

As they made their way towards Hagrid's hut an excited shout spurred them to go faster. Before they could even reach the doorway Mary had run outside, grabbed them both by the wrist and pulled them inside of the hut with only the rambled 'it's hatching!' telling them the reason behind the sudden urgency.

Once inside of the hut they joined the others as they huddled around the table in the middle of which the glittering black egg was slowly rocking back and forth, deep cracks running along its length and slowly spreading with each click that was issued from within the egg.

As they huddled closer to the table, each with bated breaths, the three dragon handlers could be heard giving hushed explanations as their eyes remained zeroed in on the precious egg that resided in the center of the table where it was now shuddering.

"The clicking is being made by a sharp horn like attachment on the Hatchlings snout, it will fall off sometime in the next week, it's only purpose is to help penetrate the eggs shell. It's almost as hard as a rock, sometimes stronger depending on the dragon species."

With a sharp scraping sound the egg was finally split and the small hatchling fell out and onto the table in an ungraceful yet still beautiful pile.

The hatchlings scales were the same color of the egg though if you were to look closely the scales on he body were a shade lighter than the small bumps running along the spine. It's snout was long and narrow with large nostrils, showing that the dragon was a female. The horns which in time would be at least a foot in length were currently little more than half inch stubs and their eyes were a large bulging orange much like their mothers.

As the hatchling gazed around at them it let out a sneeze releasing a few sparks before it shook it's head and continued to observe it's surroundings.

"Isn't he beautiful?" Hagrid breathed out as he grinned at the small dragon on his table.

"It's a she Hagrid," Charlie said with a chuckle before looking at Harry. "Do you think she can talk yet?"

"Only one way to tell," Harry murmured with a smile before leaning onto his elbows with a smile and speaking in parseltongue to the hatchling. "Hello beautiful..."

Scents, sounds and colors overwhelmed my senses.

Where exactly am I? This place is so odd, it is small and weak, if I were larger I could smash it with a flick of my tail, and who are these people around me? They are very odd too.
Four of them have hair of fire, these are males, two of which look like egg mates. Fascinating. Judging by their scents they share a Sire and Mother as well. Their bond is close though they are all from different clutches besides the egg mates. Their Sire and Mother must have a strong bond, or be true mates for their Mother to have not forced the Sire away.

The oldest of these fire heads' mate is there as well, they are true mates, to have found each other so soon is very lucky. This one smells pure and like dragon as well. His mate and the other set of mates do as well but this one is different... Blessed and... Is he part of my clutch? No... But chosen. Yes, my Mother has chosen him. He must be a chosen one. We are very lucky.

The large man looks nice, he would make a good sire, though he seems attached. Since my Mother is not here is he the one who has taken care of me? Yes, yes I can smell it on him. I am thankful. Perhaps I will see this one again?

The young girl by the chosen and the youngest fire head had hair that could hold many nice mice in it. Though she does not smell like she does, I must remember this.

The other young one smells of nature, of these young ones only he and the chosen smell this way, why is that? I must remember to ask Mother when they return me, I can smell her on the oldest fire head, excited and anxious. She has missed me.

Oh! What is that scent!? Its... Earthy, and oddly... Peppery? Oh!

I sneeze and hear the large one make a comment before the old fire head speaks before speaking to chosen. Hmm, they are conversing. I must ask Mother if she can help me learn what they say, such a strange language.

Oh! Chosen can speak to me! Chosen has a nice voice, they would make a good Mother.

"Hello Beautiful."

"Hello, where is Mother? Why is it that she is not here?"

"A bad man took you from Mother, she is anxious to see you again though. My friend here," Chosen said pointing towards the large one, "has been taking care of you for her. My mate and his friends and going to take you back though so there is no need to worry."

"How will they do this? I can not fly."

"They will fly for you, darling. They have a special carrier which you will stay in while you fly and in a few hours you will be back with Mother."

"And in the meantime? What of milk?"

"We have no milk but there is a substitute here, it's of Brandy and chicken blood. Not quite as good but it will fill you until you reach mother."

"Very well. Do I have a name yet then?" I ask curiously. Has Mother given me one or am I to wait?

"Mother has not named you yet though Hagrid," That must be the large one's name, "Wanted to call you Norbert. For now you could use Norberta until Mother gives you a name."

"Why Norberta and not Norbert?"

"Because Norbert is the male version."
"Ah, I will use Norberta then. I would like to feed though, I am hungry."

"Are you sure I will not fall in this?" I ask in concern. This box does not seem safe.

"Positive." Chosen said with a smile as he set me down in the box. Oh, so it is nice and warm in here! I was worried. It is soft as well. I suppose it will do. "My mate and the other two will take you in this back to the reserve and Mother. On the way there I suggest a nap. There's not much else to do I'm afraid."

"Thank you. I think this will work. As long as they don't move me too much."

"I'm sure they'll do their best. Greet Mother for me when you get there," Chosen said with a smile before I curled up inside the box as a wave of exhaustion hit me. Yes, a nap would be nice just about now.

Authors Note: So there you have it! Two chapters typed up in one night! :3 I hope that you all enjoyed this! I certainly did even if these two chapters gave me some trouble to write. Can't wait to hear what you all think. :)

Now, a few items of concern have come to view through your reviews and I must issue an apology. I had thought that I had made it clear but I suppose I may have skipped over it a little.

Concerning the issues of:

*Punishment for those on the train from the mistletoe scene

*Harry having such strong allure for having 'veela' and this being a 'weak excuse'

*the Goblins and their acceptance and willingness to help based on Harry's actions alone

*ect.

The answers are simple. I am withholding these scenes and answers in order to do three things:

a.) Thicken the plot

b.) Create a mystery of sorts while leaving clues so that you may puzzle it out

c.) Allow for the scenes to be grouped together in such a way as to make the story flow, bring together various hints and clues and answer them together in such a way that it becomes a new clue and/or decrease over all amounts of POV swaps.

There is indeed a method to my madness my dears. I ask of you to only be patient. There are many levels that go towards each of these mysteries that cannot be adequately answered the moment they come up in the story lest the story become weak and lack substance.

There is more to this story than meets the eye my dears. But for now I shall give you a little more on the 'What exactly IS Harry' issue because that in itself effects nearly every other part of this story either directly or indirectly...

Harry is NOT a veela. He does, however, have some veela blood. Harry is something completely different altogether which, while not necessarily being enough to cause all of the reactions you have seen it does help to explain. No I will not tell you what he is, but I will remind you that there has almost always been a secondary factor at hand. (Soul Bond, Vernon Dursley being a sick
bastard, Dumbledore being a greedy bastard who thinks of Harry as the be all end all to him being the next Merlin, over powered mistletoe, ect.)

That is all I'll be giving you for now! ;) But please, feel free to contact me with questions or concerns instead of assuming that I'm using 'weak' reasoning and putting no thought into this story.

Until next time my lovelies~! I swear it wont take so long this time! :3
Memories and Manipulations

Little Dragon

Authors Note: Happy Valentines day my lovelies! Major shout out goes out to Sota115, she's both my sounding board for random ideas and a source of inspiration! Love you Pika darling! :3

I've got to say, I love the feedback! I'll admit, I was worried that you guys would have given up on me but you didn't and I'm ecstatic for it! Love you all, now, enjoy the chapter!

Disclaimer: ~Steps on screen before clearing throat and clasping hands in front of chest~ I own only this overwhelming love in my heart- ~Gets pushed off screen by Sota115 who holds up a 'Boo' cue card~ Ignore her, she's high on fluff and low on sleep. She doesn't own anything but her brilliant mind. I'm just here to make her write under threat of being locked in my basement. You're welcome!

Chapter 26: Memories and Manipulations

'Harry,

Norberta is settling in nicely here at the reserve. She now has five brothers and sisters three female and two male.

Everyone here is ecstatic about the outcome and Strom seems to be happy as well even if she's still refusing to let anyone else too close which is to be expected all things considered.

Sef has recently begun to 'hint' that he would like for me to write up some research papers on everything that I have been able to learn recently from my close proximity to Strom and I will admit that I am tempted. This could be an amazing opportunity for us, not only could this impact the voting on dragons rights but could possibly help peoples views! If these papers could make even a few more stop looking at dragons in fear then it could be worth it.

What do you think? If I go through with this then I may be called away to do a seminar or two out of the country. If it happens it would be while you were still at Hogwarts so we wouldn't lose any time together, though I wouldn't be too thrilled about the distance regardless.

Now, onto other topics then, hmm?

How is Hagrid holding up? Has anyone found out about what happened? If so the rumor mill must be amazing. I'm not sure but I believe that I heard the Twins talking about spreading around that they had seen a dragon in the lake wrestling with the giant squid? Please tell me that they did! I have five galleons resting on it against Darius, he seems to think that they would tell everyone they had seen the house elves skinny dipping and offering themselves up to their Dragon Lord the Mighty Squid Tickler!

Quite honestly I'm not sure which I would prefer though Mary probably has the more likely bet of both.

Oh! I have news on the family front though! I'm not sure if Mum and Dad have owled you all yet or not so I'll just let you know here. Apparently the Weasley Wealth (that's what the Goblins have been referring to it at least) was taken a long time ago by some family called Gaunt who turned
around and lost it themselves.

It seems like finding out where our wealth went is helping to solve several of the Goblins' own mysteries. You see around a century ago there was a streak of Goblin suicides followed by the loss of several families' wealth or the end of several lines. At the time it had been attributed to some odd form of guilt on their parts for losing this business needlessly and 'bringing shame' to their families.

Turns out that these goblins had been being controlled by the imperious and wound up killing themselves in an effort to stop.

Apparently the Gaunts were descendants of Slytherin that had been cast out of the family (hence Gaunt and not Slytherin), they figured that if they had managed to obtain a high enough status they could be accepted back in the family but the head of the house took to celebrating each successful gain by getting drunk and gambling and lost everything right after they had managed to gain it.

Oh well, the goblins are working on it but at least now we know what happened!

I have to go now, time to get back to work.

Take care Little Dragon,

Love Charlie'

"Are you sure about this Harry?" Hermione asked in concern as she watched Harry put his supplies back into his messenger bag. They had been in the library all morning as it was a rather dizzily Sunday and Harry had finished his homework ahead of time and, being anxious to tell Hagrid the latest news about Norberta, Harry had decided to head down and see Hagrid himself. "I mean, it's still not safe for you to go around alone is it?"

"I know 'Mione," Harry said with a smile as he stood up, "The Twins are going to be walking me down to Hagrid's on their way to serve detention with Professor Sprout in Greenhouse six and Hagrid has already told me that he's going to be walking me back."

"Well alright, I would go with you but these two," She said with a roll of her eyes as she pointed her quill at Neville and Ron who were both busy looking through her potion notes with their heads bent together and looks of utter despair etched onto their faces, "Have somehow managed to leave their potions essay untouched until now."

"How on earth did they manage that?" Harry asked incredulously. "Isn't that due tomorrow?"

"Precisely. You would think that for being in the library every day they would have managed to at least make a dent in it," Hermione huffed in exasperation.

"Well good luck Mia dearest," Harry said with a laugh as he saw Fred and George enter the library under the watchful gaze of Madam Pince. "My escorts are here it seems, I'll see you later!" Harry called over his shoulder as he began to make his way to the desk.

"Ah 'Arry, there ya are! Come on in then, what was it that ya were so keen ta be tellin' me?" Hagrid asked with a grin as he ushered Harry to take a seat at his table where a large plate of freshly made treckle fudge was placed in front of him much to Harry's relief. The fudge was delicious if only while warm, it was when the fudge was cool that it could break the eaters teeth.
"I got a letter from the dragon reserve," Harry said with a grin as he took a small bite of fudge. Charlie had sent a few letters since that very first one detailing what Norberta and her siblings had been up to and Harry had made sure to keep Hagrid firmly in the loop.

"You did!? That's wonderful! Wha' did it say? Wha' have they all been up to now?"

"Well, it looks like the reserve is going to have to add on to it's wards," Harry said excitedly before launching into an explanation of all that he knew on the subject. "Since the amount of Hatchlings have always been so low they've never been a problem especially since they tend to shy away from humans but it looks like Norberta grew very fond of Charlie and decided to show up at his house in the middle of the night and nearly gave them all a heart attack because they thought their wards had somehow fallen."

"They didn' did they?" Hagrid asked worriedly as he poured them both some tea.

"Oh no," Harry said with a laugh, "Because they never have hatchlings who were willing to go near the tamers the wards surrounding their settlement didn't work on them because they're all keyed into dragons who are old enough to want to. So basically teenagers and adults but they didn't know that. It looks like Norberta and her siblings are quite the troublemakers."

"Oh? What 'ave her siblings done?" Hagrid asked curiously as he shooed Fang away from the plate of fudge.

"Well, the other two sisters like to get into the recreational equipment and the three brothers have taken to sneaking into the mess hall after hours," Harry said with a grin and was rewarded with Hagrids booming laughter filling the small hut.

"Oh, tha' takes me back to when yer Dad was un school! He and Sirius were always sneaking into the kitchens! They even managed to convince the elves to help them with some of their pranks, it drove Professor McGonagall mad!"

"I didn't know they did that," Harry said with a small smile as he added the information to what he already knew of his parents.

"Ah, I always forget how little you know about' them," Hagrid said with a sad smile before his eyes lit up with a mischievous grin. "I know, how 'bout you stay here over lunch and I'll tell you some stories about them, how does that sound?"

"That would be amazing Hagrid!" Harry cried out happily as he got up and flung his arms around the large man. "I only have one condition," He said seriously as he stood back and rested his hands on his hips in an imitation of Molly's normal posture for when she wanted something.

"An' wha's tha'?" Hagrid asked as he wiped a small tear from his eye and grinned down at the small boy.

"I cook," Harry said simply only to beam as Hagrid let out another booming laugh.

"I can' believe I kept you out so late! I'm so sorry 'Arry!" Hagrid continued to apologize as the pair made their way up the lawn and back to the castle as dusk settled over them.

"I'm not," Harry said simply as he continued to grin the same wide grin that had been plastered on his face the whole afternoon. "I wouldn't really mind it if I got a detention either! I've learned more about my parents than I knew before today. I'm happy that we lost track of time."
"As happy as I am for you mister Potter," A voice called out from beside the entrance to the castle where Professor McGonagall now stood, "I am afraid that it is a detention you will be receiving. I believe that two hours with me should be sufficient. I'll be having you do lines. I believe that ten will be sufficient for the message to sink in," She said with a small smile and a mischievous twinkle in her eyes which immediately set Harry at ease. "If, however, you manage to finish your task early I may just tell you some stories of my own for the remainder of the time. Do you understand mister Potter?"

"Yes ma'am," Harry said with barely contained glee. "I look forward to it."

"Good, now I will escort mister Potter back to his common room Hagrid, this way he does not receive another detention," Professor McGonagall said as she rested her hand lightly on Harry's frail shoulder.

"Well, alrigh' I suppose. I'll just be headin' out to the Forest and look into tha' problem we've been havin'." Hagrid said with an amused smile before he went to walk away from the pair and back to his hut.

"Come along then mister Potter," McGonagall said as she lead Harry back into the entrance hall and towards the Hufflepuff common rooms.

Albus Dumbledore was frustrated and angry beyond all reasoning. The year was going by far too quickly and still he hadn't made any progress! How in Merlin's name a scrawny eleven year old could manage to elude him so completely he didn't know and quite honestly it was pissing him off! Everything he did, no matter what he tried, somehow continued to blow up in his face and the boy didn't even seem to notice!

With a strangled yell Albus finally stopped pacing and instead fell into the large large plush chair which sat behind his desk in his office.

Agonizing over this wouldn't help him. He had to think. The brat wasn't perfect and he was bound to make a mistake at some point! Perhaps there would be something useful in his file... Yes, that was what he would do. He would look over the file and hopefully there would be something there, some way to force a confrontation.

There had to be, it was for the Greater Good.

Authors Note: The next chapter is full of action and angsty goodness! Note: It's also going to be longer~! Like, really long. I have a lot I want to fit into it and I'm unwilling to split it up unless it gets to be ridiculous in length or I feel that I'm making you wait for too long.

In other news, I'm having a sleep over with a friend who needs some cuddles. Excited!

I hope you've all enjoyed this chapter!

Two new poll items:

1.) Should I give Hedwig 'battle claws'? (If confused youtube Legend of the Guardians: Owls of Ga'hoole), won't happen for a while. Just interested in your guys' thoughts.

2.) I'm taking ideas for dragon baby names. Three female, three male.
Have at it! :3
Detention Disruption

Little Dragon

Authors Note: Hello m'dears! I seriously can't believe how excited you all are for battle claws! Your responses have been absolutely amazing!!!

I just have two things to say before this chapter.

One: Some things are changed and with good reason, as of now the story is one day ahead of canon.

Two: From the sneak preview on the facebook page only two lines were cut and those two lines will be in the next chapter!

Now that that's done, enjoy! ^-^

Disclaimer: I don't own this, only my headache and gratitude to all of you readers!

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Chapter 2 7: Detention Disruption

"You can understand her position of course, not even James enjoyed that prank you see. Your father loved your mother and everything about her, so when he saw her walking down the halls with black hair he became quite upset. If my memory serves me correctly he had all but glued himself to her waist and continued to moan about the injustice of his love not loving herself enough to continue on as she was. I do believe that he had even gotten it into his head that she had somehow been bullied into hating how she looked. Well, when he said this it was too much for your mother to take and she stormed off. Later that day Lily's hair was back to normal and your father refused to remove his hat though he did come to myself for assistance in reversing your mothers charm work."

"What did she do?" Harry asked excitedly as he leaned forward in the plush armchair beside McGonagall before the fireplace in her office.

"Your mother had somehow managed to not only change his hair color into a bright pink but she had also caused it to style itself into a small animated swan that would continuously attempt to fly off and merely succeed in pulling his hair rather painfully," McGonagall answered with a soft chuckle as the memory played out in her mind and the delightful sounds of Harry's tinkling laughter filled her office.

Just as McGonagall was about to launch into yet another story the door opened and there in the doorway stood Professor Sprout with an uncharacteristic scowl on her face.

"Pomona?" McGonagall asked in concern at seeing her coworker so out of sorts. "What is it? What's wrong?"

"Dumbledore," she said simply as she came forward and gave a now clearly uncomfortable Harry a soft smile. "Albus has called an emergency staff meeting. Hagrid will have to take over mister Potters detention."

"He has already completed his assigned task," McGonagall said quickly, her face closed off as she thought of what could possibly warrant an emergency staff meeting this late at night. "I will merely
release him for the day and-.

"That won't work Minerva. It was the first thing that Filius and I checked on. Albus is insistent that if the scheduled amount of time specified for detentions tonight does not get completed tonight he will personally oversee all un-served detentions," Sprout huffed as she sat in the last of the open armchairs leaving Harry to remain awkwardly silent between them.

"Who else has detention tonight?" Minerva asked suspiciously as her eyes narrowed. Serving a detention with Hagrid in his hut would be far better than being within close proximity to Albus.

"Only mister Potter," Pomona said stiffly as she crossed her arms and glared at the fireplace. "Filius' only detention was served earlier, I had none set for today and all of Severus' were excused for some reason or another."

"And the rest of mine were finished earlier," Minerva said with a sigh as she began to rub at her temples. "Very well, mister Potter the rest of your detention will be served with Hagrid tonight, I shall write you a note so that you may safely-.

"I'm afraid that won't work either Minerva," Sprout interrupted blandly as she too stood and looked at Harry. "Hagrid's presence is required for the first part of the meeting tonight, for now you should return to the common rooms. At eleven Argus will be by to collect you and escort you to Hagrid's. I want you to stay close to both of them mister Potter. Do not wander, and if anyone besides Argus arrives to escort you including myself I give you permission to resist. Miss Lowell and mister Kirsty have also agreed to sit up with you as well. I advise for you to nap while you can and one of the two will be sure to wake you. I will not have you missing too much sleep because of Albus' ridiculous decisions. I would give you the morning off as well but my hands are tied I'm afraid."

"It's time to wake up Harry," Kristen said softly as she gently shook a sleeping Harry awake.

"Hmm?" Harry murmured as he stretched and began to sit up on from his place curled up on one of the common room couches.

"It's almost time for Filch to come get you for detention," Austin said with a chuckle as he eyes the first years sleep tousled hair.

"Oh," Harry said as he stood up and rubbed at his eyes tiredly before smiling at the two seventh years. "Thank you both for staying up with me."

"It's not a problem Harry," Kristen said with a grin as she began to fuss with Harry's hair causing him to blush. "Besides, it's not your fault this is all happening. Whatever's gotten into Dumbledore this year, well, no one likes it. Especially not the fact that he seems to be targeting you..."

"Harry," Hagrid greeted them with a relieved smile from his position beside the door of his hut.

"Hagrid," Filch huffed from beside them as Harry moved over to Hagrid's side. "I'll be back for him in a few hours."

"Thank you mister Filch," Harry said with a small smile. He never understood why people were so mean to the caretaker. Sure he was grumpy, but when you were surrounded by people who didn't like you then you were bound to be in a bad mood most of the time as well. That's why Harry made it a point to always be kind to the old caretaker.
"Alright' then," Hagrid said with a sigh after Filch had begun to make his way towards the castle. "If it were up to me we woul' jus' go in and I'd tell you more abou' your parents but Dumbledore's decide' tha' detention or no I have ta go and look inter the disturb'nces in the forres'. So, you'll be goin' in with me an' Fang. You'll be stayin' by my side the whole time, if I tell you to do somethin' then you do it. This is goin' ta be dang'rous 'nough as it is so stay close. D'you und'rstand?" Hagrid asked seriously as he looked Harry straight in the eye.

"I understand Hagrid," Harry replied just as seriously. Dumbledore was obviously aiming for something here and whatever it was Harry was afraid to find out. Even Fred and George were wary of the forest, yes they would wander in and explore the first few yards of it but always within sight of the castle or directly on the path. Harry didn't know much on what Hagrid was looking for but whatever it was they would be heading deeper into the forest and well off of the path. He wasn't going to risk his life for simple curiosity, not now.

"Good," Hagrid said approvingly as he began to grabbed his crossbow and led the way to the edge of the forest where the path narrow and twisting path made its way into the trees and out of sight. There, shining in the light of Hagrid's lantern and splattered across the pathway were droplets of what could have passed for molten steel. "Unicorn blood," Hagrid said darkly as he rested one of his hands protectively on Harry's shoulder and pulled him into his side as Fang moved forward, his thick fur brushing against Harry's shoulder and pulled him into his side as Fang moved forward, his thick fur brushing against Harry's side with every move the large Boarhound made. "This one's the sec'nd this week. There's summat in there tha's been hurtin' 'em. We're goin' in and lookin' for this one. Luckily it's only been hur' today."

"What could possibly hurt a unicorn?" Harry asked in shock as he thought back to what he had read on the beautiful creatures earlier that year. It took a lot to so much as injure a unicorn and it more than likely wasn't another creature since a unicorns presence can calm even a feral werewolf. No, not unless the school had somehow managed to gain a Wendingo or something similarly nefarious.

"I dunno, but what ever it is it needs to go, nothin' like that should be near a school full of kids," Hagrid said with a slight growl to his voice as they made their way deeper into the forest, "Keep your wand out Harry." He warned just as they stepped into a thicker canopy of trees and the moonlight was cut off. Darkness fell upon them like a thick blanket being kept at bay by nothing but the flickering light of Hagrid's lamp.

As they continued to walk deeper into the forest Harry could feel dread settle upon him like a weight and couldn't help but let his mind wander back to his bed back in the Den. Oh how he couldn't wait for this detention to be over with!

As they continued ever deeper Harry kept the glittering pools of blood firmly in sight and couldn't help but admire their terrible beauty as they shone like stars upon the inky blackness of the ground that lay beyond the lamps gentle glow.

They trekked deeper into the forest, every step showing a greater and worrying amount of blood, every minute a greater sense of dread until there was a sudden and unbalancing change brought about by a single almost innocent sound breaking through the still of the night and causing an immediate change of demeanor to occur.

A single hum of delight cut through the air more effectively than a hot knife through softened butter.

Hagrid quickly pulled them to a halt and lifted his large crossbow before him as he moved to stand in front of Harry with Fang curling himself protectively around his back with his hackles raised and a silent growl reverberating through his body. Taking a deep breath to center himself Harry quickly centered himself and adjusted his hold on his wand.
Hagrid turned his head ever so slightly to the side and was just preparing to whisper an order when a high pitched whinny cut through the night air and shocked them into movement.

In an instant they were running towards where the sound had come from and Darius' words continued to run through Harry's mind constantly.

'Magic is all about intent Little One. The words and motions help to focus you, that is why you practice them in school. They help you get a feel for your magic, but if you focus only on theory then you can not cast. So if you ever find yourself in trouble and need to fight don't panic. Just focus... And feel...'

After what felt like both forever and no time at all the pair came crashing through the thick foliage and into a small clearing. There in the center of the clearing bathed in a pool of moonlight lay a panicked and thrashing unicorn whose neck was clasped between two pale hands on either side of a cloaked head.

As the sounds of their arrival sounded through the clearing the cloaked head snapped up and shadowed eyes focused on them as silver painted lips twisted into a snarl.

Hagrid and Harry moved at the same time as the hooded figure began to stand. Hagrid released his hold on Harry so that he could more effectively aim his crossbow but Harry proved to be faster as he raised his wand and brought it back down in an arc.

'Just focus... And feel...'

With those words in mind Harry acted focusing only on his need to protect the fallen unicorn. To keep Hagrid, himself and Fang safe. To return back to Charlie. To Protect!

An electric purple glow shone through the air as Harry's wand sliced down in its precise ark and as the arc finished what appeared to be a bolt of purple lightning shot out and knocked the figure away in a blast of light and smoke.

"STAY HERE!" Hagrid bellowed as he took off after the figure when the blinding light had faded leaving Harry to stare in awe at his wand.

Harry only broke free from his haze when a firm nudge came in his side from Fang. With a start Harry quickly made his way to the mares side and examined the wound with a practical eye. Who would have thought that one day he would be thanking the Dursleys treatment of him?

There were several small punctures and scratches which were relatively superficial but the worst of the wounds were the two deep crescent shaped gashes at the base of the long slender neck.

Harry made quick work of taking off his jumper and removing his long sleeved over shirt. Quickly tearing the fabric into ragged strips Harry quickly put pressure onto the wound in an effort to stop the bleeding and began to run one of his small hands along the beautiful creatures neck and murmuring soothing words as he kept an eye out for Hagrid and a firm grip on his wand.

As the minutes past and the distant sounds of Hagrid's bulk crashing through the foliage faded Harry was relieved to notice that the mare was beginning to calm down.

Where once her sides were rising and falling rapidly with her breathing she was now breathing deeply and evenly. Harry was marveled at how calm she was being with him but he wasn't about to question it at the moment.

Time continued to pass and with it the pile of blood drenched rags grew. If Hagrid didn't get back
soon then Harry would have to use his undershirt as well, he just hoped the unicorn didn't bleed out first...

Authors Note: I had more planned but I think that this is the best place to leave off! ;)

I know, I know, you all hate me right now. But hey! No killing me or you'll never know what happens! Muahahahahahaha!

And now, to keep with this evil theme...

I killed a fly today and turned a penny into a horcrux. That penny was then deposited into a need a penny dish at the local grocery store. Why didn't Voldie think of this?
Outcomes and Fates Changed

Little Dragon

**Authors Note:** I have only two chapters more after this and first year shall be finished! Worry not my dears, ;) there is still much to go before Little Dragon is complete! For now, I feel we should continue with the story so that your fears for the dear unicorn may be laid to rest or confirmed. Muahahahahaha!

Yes, this chapter is a little short but I was anxious to get it out and if I were to include the rest of what I planned it would be twice the length of my average chapter... Anywhozles~! Enjoy!

**Disclaimer:** The author would like to apologize for her odd mood. She's running on little sleep and mass quantities of stress. As such, she has wished me to educate you on the fact that she owns not the characters or canonical plot lines and such merely the original ideas, characters and the therapeutic feelings which writing grants her. She has odd wording, no?

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**Chapter 28: Outcomes and Fates Changed**

Hagrid quickly made his way back through the brush and to the clearing where he had left Harry only to stop dead in his tracks at the sight that met him.

There in the middle of the clearing sat Harry, Fang and the unicorn mare. The unicorn looked exhausted and judging by the pile of torn cloth stained the pearly silver of its dried blood she had lost a good amount of blood but it seemed that Harry had managed to stem the flow quite well.

With a small relieved smile flitting about his face Hagrid stepped into the clearing and chuckled in amusement as Fang leapt to his feet and bound over to lick his large hand.

"Hagrid!" Harry called out in relief as he grinned up at the large half giant from his position beside the unicorn mare where he was pressing a length of torn fabric to the largest of its wounds. "Did you get them?"

"No," Hagrid grunted out as a scowl crossed his face as he thought of the monster who would willingly do something so horrible. "Bu' he'll be feelin' it in the mornin' I'm sure. I managed to nick his side with me arrow."

"Good," Harry said with a small scowl which only proved to look adorable on his small face before a soft whinny drew his attention back to the mare who was currently looking at Hagrid with fear in its eyes. "Hey now," Harry cooed out as he stroked down it's neck with his silver stained fingers. "That's it, you're okay. Hagrid's nice, he'll help make you feel better."

Much to Hagrid's shock and astonishment the mare quickly calmed under Harry's ministrations and ever turned her head to nuzzle at Harry's palm much to his delight.

"I think I've gotten the bleeding down pretty well but I'm not sure. I've just been applying pressure," Harry told him nervously.

"I shoulda known," Hagrid murmured to himself in amusement as he made his way over to the pair and began to ruffle through his pockets for the appropriate supplies. Soon he had the appropriate bandages and some wound cleaning potion that was safe to use on magical creatures placed down
on the ground beside them.

"Righ' Harry. You wai' like tha' until I say. When I do, you pull those off an' grab some of this here," Hagrid said quickly as he motioned to a pile of gauze with his large hand as he uncapped the vial with the other. "I'll pour summa this on it then you put tha' there back on. Alrigh'?"

"Okay," Harry said quickly as he shifted so that he could better reach the gauze.

"Righ' then... Now!" Hagrid said and grabbed the potion quickly as Harry pulled the cloth strips away. As the wound became uncovered the blood began to slow build up and prepare to well over the crescent shaped gashes. In one swift motion Hagrid poured the light blue potion over the wound and once the flow of liquid ended Harry gently pressed the new handful of gauze onto the wound. "Goo' Harry. Very good," Hagrid said with a bright smile before he reached over and began to prepare the bandages to wrap up the wound. "Give it a minute an' then we'll wrap 'er up, she'll be good as new!"

"Really? Just from that potion?" Harry asked curiously causing Hagrid to chuckle.

"Yep, tha' potion'll clean up the woun' and help it ta heal. If it were deeper then we'd use a differen' one," Hagrid told him happily.

"That's really cool," Harry breather before turning back to Hagrid and cocking his head to the side. "Hey Hagrid?"

"Yeah?"

"Why don't you teach the Creatures class? You'd be really good at it."

"Well, I would love to 'Arry, bu' I can'. Since I was expelled I can' teach."

"But Care of Magical Creatures doesn't need a wand. You should be able to..." Harry trailed off uneasily and decided that after exams he would get Hermione to help him look into the subject. "So she's going to be okay?" Harry asked in an effort to change the subject as he saw the pleading look that was currently on Hagrid's face.

"Yes, she'll be fine," Hagrid said with a warm smile as he gently pat the unicorns side.

With a grin Harry prepared to respond only to be silenced by the rustling of the nearby bushes.

Instantly Harry tensed and grabbed onto his wand once again as he aimed it towards where the disturbance was coming from and watching from the corner of his eye as Hagrid did the same with his crossbow.

Harry tensed as a group of figures slowly began to emerge from within the foliage, each extremely tall, bare chested and armed with a handmade bow and a quiver of arrows. As they stepped further from the foliage Harry was shocked to see that each of them were attached from the waist down to the bodies of horses.

Centaurs.

"Bane, Firenze, Ronan!" Hagrid greeted them as he lowered his crossbow and took a step closer to the three centaurs with a small relieved smile upon his face. "Wha' are you doin' here?"

"We were looking for the unicorn mare," The largest of the three, who had red hair and a beard along with a chestnut body that stood half a head taller than the other two who were both around
the same height, said with such a sorrowful voice that Harry ached to offer a hug of comfort to the stranger.

"I didn' think tha' you bothered with the 'fate of the stars'," Hagrid asked with an amused twinkle in his eye.

"Yes, we do look to the stars for guidance," The youngest of the trio said with his own amused smile while the last of the three snorted. His hair was so pale that it appeared almost white as it was bleached in the light of the moon, his eyes were an astonishing blue that made Harry think of Charlie and his body was a gleaming palomino that stood out against his companions darker colorings. The last of the three had dark black hair along with a beard and a sleek raven black body that melted into the shadows left behind by the night. "Then again, even the stars are undecided on the outcome for what is to happen here. It should not shock us however, for the Little One does make it a habit to write his own story," he said while throwing a small smile towards where Harry was currently positioned causing him to blink in shock.

Was it just him of could he hear the capital letters in 'Little One' as though it were some kind of a title? What exactly was going on here?

"So the mare is safe?" Came the gruff voice of the black haired centaur as he crossed his arms over his chest, his gaze resting on both Harry and the centaur.

"Yes sir," Harry spoke up before Hagrid could respond. "Hagrid and I have patched her up and she should be perfectly fine. Hagrid gave her a potion that disinfected the wound and started the healing process and I kept pressure on the wound to stem the blood flow. Besides being weak and dizzy for a few days she should be perfectly fine."

"That is good," The first centaur said with a smile as he gazed at Harry with a fond look in his eyes. "The stars shine brightly upon you Harry Potter, even despite their inability to tell your tale. I look forward to see what your story entails Little One."

Harry spent a large portion of the next day ensconced within the third floor corridor with Fluffy and Hedwig.

After Hagrid had escorted him back to the castle covered in the silver unicorn blood and dirt with a few twigs tangled in his hair and minus one shirt, a fact which nearly gave his poor professors a heart attack he was quickly ushered to the medical wing where he was given a thorough check up before being monitored for the rest of the night and early morning for any negative effects of coming into contact with such a great amount of undiluted unicorn blood and high amounts of stress.

Finally, after a good ten hours of peaceful sleep and a nice late breakfast, Harry had been given strict orders that he was not to go to class that day and to instead spend his time doing something fun and relaxing. Harry was relatively certain that this was due to a conspiracy of the teachers to allow him a day of peace outside of Dumbledore's manipulations but he was glad for it.

So, instead of spending his day attending classes and reviewing for exams he instead spent his time cuddling with the overgrown three headed puppy known as Fluffy and his darling Hedwig as he contemplated the events of the previous night as well as his latest dilemma.

How on earth was he going to make a friend in Slytherin?

Of course he couldn't just ask them the next time he saw them in Astronomy or the Great Hall, they
would more than likely wind up feeling pressured and resentful, possibly even thinking that it was some sort of a set up.

He would also have to be careful of what he asked them to do, studying would make them wary of being used for grades, the lake would be wary of pranks... No, he needed something neutral where they could talk without any pressure. Maybe invite them to join him for lunch?

Lunch would work.

Now, how should he go about asking? He would have to ask on neutral territory where there would be no pressure from teachers or other students. Maybe he could pull them off to the side discreetly after Astronomy? Hmm...

With a sigh Harry burrowed himself further into the warm fur at the base of two of Fluffy's necks as the third rested over top and Hedwig lay cocooned in his lap. He was quite comfortable at the moment, perhaps a nap would help Harry relax and think better.

Yes, a nap sounded perfect right about now...

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**Authors Note:** Yes, I know that I'm evil for cutting off the centaur scene but I couldn't give things away too soon now could I? ;)

I hope you enjoy and I would say that I would have the next chapter up immediately but I have promised to finish and post the next chapter of Emerald Flames before hand so it may be a few days or so. But worry not! It shall happen~! ^-^

Oh! If anyone is interested in an extended/in depth scene with the centaurs let me know and I'll work on a one shot for it. I had a nice big scene planned but it just didn't fit into the chapter.
Meetings and Slytherin's

Little Dragon

Authors Note: Thank you all for your amazing support in the last few weeks, it really helped me to pull through. This chapter I am going to dedicate to my father who passed away just a few days after my last update. He went peacefully and without pain for which I am glad. He is in a better place and I have found peace with his death even if it still hurts at times. Now, here is the long awaited next chapter!

Disclaimer: Harry Potter does not belong to me nor do the other characters and plot lines recognizable. I do however own my plot as well as a handful of original characters. Muahahahahaha.

Chapter 29: Meetings and Slytherin's

It wasn't until May that Harry got his chance to talk to one of the Slytherins as he and Neville made their way back to the Den from yet another study session.

It was as they were exiting through a shortcut on the second floor that Harry had discovered that they ran into none other than Draco Malfoy and Blaise Zabini, literally.

"I am so sorry!" Harry gasped as he helped the Malfoy heir up from where he had landed sprawled out on the ground.

"It's okay," Blaise said with a smile as he helped Neville get back to his feet, "We just weren't expecting two people to burst out from behind a tapestry is all."

"Yeah, sorry about that," Harry said sheepishly as he rubbed at the back of his neck, cheeks burning. "I sometimes forget that this one lets out straight into a hallway and not just an alcove like the others."

"Ah, so it's a secret passage is it?" Draco asked interestedly as he began to examine the tapestry more closely.

"It's a possibility," Harry said with a mischievous twinkle in his eyes. "Though if it is you are unable to enter it from here so that knowledge is really of no use to you."

"That answer was quite Slytherin Potter," Blaise said, impression clear in his voice.

"Not as much as my next proposal," Harry said, doing his best to channel the twins.

"Oh, and what is that Potter?" Draco asked intrigued.

"Simple," I want to try and make some friends in Slytherin and you no doubt wish for friendship as well, especially when said friendship is politically and socially beneficial. I'm offering a trial, one lunch. That's it. You accept and we see how it goes, you decline and that's it. No backlash what-so-ever," Harry said quickly and firmly, doing his best to ignore both his nerves as well as Neville who was currently snickering since Harry had been practicing this same speech every night before bed.

After a few moments of careful consideration and a shared look which consisted of a few raised
eyebrows and shrugs the two finally turned back and faced Harry and Neville once again.

"Very well Potter," Draco said with a smirk before the two began to walk away as he called back over his shoulder, "See you at lunch then!"

The next day the great hall was abuzz with excitement as the two Slytherins sat at the Hufflepuff table with Harry, Neville, Ron and Hermione.

At first the meal had begun awkwardly, with every move the six of them made being watched by almost every person within the great hall, some glaring, others simply curious.

Finally the tension was broken through talk of politics of all things. What had at first been a series of snubs exchanged between Ron and Draco soon turned into animated conversation.

"If you think about it, the reason that the magical world is getting smaller isn't because of loss of tradition or inclusion of muggleborn's, it's because of the blood purity," Harry interrupted what looked to be the beginnings of an argument between Ron and Draco. "The muggles have done research on family lines and genetics and while it's true that our magic prevents the usual deformities and such that could occur from incest it does nothing to broaden our genetic pool as including new blood into the lines would have happened."

"What are you going on about Potter?" Blaise asked sounding exasperated.

"Inbreeding results in homozygosity, which can increase the chances of offspring being affected by recessive or deleterious traits. This generally leads to a decreased biological fitness of a population called inbreeding depression, which is its ability to survive and reproduce-"

"'Mione," Harry interrupted with a laugh as he took in the looks of shock and confusion on the purebloods faces before turning back to Hermione. "I don't they they're appreciating your expertise I'm afraid. Let's see if I can put it in a way they'll understand better shall we?"

"You can try," Hermione huffed exasperated.

"Okay, let's put it this way you guys, a genetic pool is like a pond. there are many things in this pond and it's made up of different things from everyone that's added to it previously. Now, some pools like say Hermione's would be nice and large with every new addition to the family adding new things to it. Now, let's take someone's family that upholds the blood purity beliefs, only marrying other purebloods, then there children marrying other purebloods and so on. Eventually nothing gets added to the pool and it all gets repeated. Overtime the pool gets smaller and smaller until there's barely enough left. That's what blood purity does to us. Do you understand?"

And so lunch continued on as, with open minds and open hearts, six children began to form a bond...

As May drew to an end and exams approached Harry began to be plagued with nightmares. At first they were nothing but odd dreams which would cause Harry to wake in a state of confusion but as time passed the nightmares grew worse.

With exams only five days away Harry's friends grew more and more worried for him but, despite their pleadings, Harry refused to visit Madame Pomfrey and ask for a sleeping drought.

Finally growing tired of watching his friend suffer Neville decided to act and, after dressing himself for bed he instead headed straight to Harry's and held his small friend to himself as sleep
began to claim them.

"Thank you Neville," Harry said as he gave his friend a watery smile and for the first time in weeks he slept through the night without a single nightmare plaguing his dreams.

A week later Neville would receive a letter that would cause a grin to spread across his face as pride surged through his being.

Minerva McGonagall looked around her sitting room where she, Pomona, Filius and Severus had all gathered together.

"Just why is it Minerva, that you have called us together tonight? Surly it was not just for tea?" Severus asked from his position by the fireplace once pleasantries had been passed.

"You are correct Severus," Minerva said with a sigh as she though back to the decision she had made earlier that day. "As you all know the school year is nearly at an end and, with it, Albus’ freedom. I thought it prudent to have a plan in action for when this happens. We can not just be left floundering with all of the choices at the last minute as we would otherwise be doing."

"This is true Minerva," Filius spoke up as he gently set down his cup of tea and pulled a small roll of parchment and a quill from his robes pocket. "What is it that you had in mind exactly?"

"Well, first would be to bring back some of the courses that Albus has taken out through the years. As you no doubt remember Filius, back when Armando Dippet was headmaster we had far more courses than we do currently, that's one of the reasons the school has so many classrooms."

"Yes, I remember well!" Filius chimed excitedly as he began to scribble quickly at the parchment in his hands. "There were clubs as well, quite a few of them in fact, dueling, gobstones, wizards chess to name a few."

"If we were to implement these how would we get the faculty? The schools budget has been strained over the years, and we certainly wouldn't be able to take on many new responsibilities either with how full our own schedules are," Pomona asked worriedly. These ideas were fantastic but she could see no plausible way for them to be accomplished.

"That's just it Pomona, the clubs were student run and organized. As long as they presented a viable plan to us and one of our prefects agreed to watch over them for us on occasion we weren't involved. Yes certain clubs had a staff sponsor who would help out on occasion but otherwise it was run by the students," Filius said with a smile. "Muggle studies used to take one trip a year that was sponsored by the parents of our muggle born students who would also come in and speak with the classes on occasion. The schools medi-witch would accept a small class interested in becoming healers, certain advanced NEWT level students would even be able to assist the professors with the younger years come exam time so that the professors could help the older years study. It was a very self sustaining system and, if I remember correctly, Minerva and myself were two of those lucky enough to assist our professors."

"indeed we were Filius," Minerva said with a smile as she looked at her small coworker. "You for charms and myself for transfiguration. If I recall you were also the head of the dueling club weren't you?"

"Says the chess queen," Filius chuckled before looking back down at his list. "Let's see, there were also other courses that were offered to the students as well as they became older and showed promise in said subjects. In fifth year the students begin to learn the basics of nonverbal spell
casting. It used to be that come sixth year there was a separate class on it as well as one for wandless magic though that was far smaller."

"Why on earth were those ever taken away?" Severus asked, his eyes wide as he leaned forward in his seat.

"I am unsure as to why all of them were removed," Minerva said slowly as she leaned back thoughtfully. "Quite a few were removed by the time I returned to teach. I do know that Albus had removed the clubs due to supposed violations done by the students though I do not believe those excuses anymore however."

"I know that he petitioned the Board to remove the wandless and wordless magic classes claiming that they catered to a too small portion of the students and that it was not fair to the other students, he also ended the healing courses claiming budget cuts though I know that to be false," Filius included as he finally sat his parchment down and spelled the ink dry before pulling out a second page. "Now then, what other changes should be made? Let's focus on the current classes first and go from there."

"I have overheard some rather good ideas to improve Astronomy," Pomona chimed in with excitement as a large grin spread across her face. "I ran into young mister Potter and miss Granger in the library one day talking about it and I must admit that I was impressed. You see, the muggles study the stars as well but they are able to do so during the day using a device that projects the stars onto the ceiling much like the Great Halls ceiling. Miss Granger even suggested that it could be done by merely freezing the image of the night sky on the ceiling of one of the unused classrooms so that the astronomy classes could take place during the day and keep the students from being so tired during the class and during their classes the next morning. It was quite ingenious actually."

"That is an excellent idea, I have no doubt that our overall scores for the class would improve as well," Filius murmured as he began to write again. "Alright what next?"

"Divination," Minerva said quickly. "True seers are rare and, while I believe that they would need to be nurtured should they attend, we do not need a class fully focused on the art of divination when all it proves to do is frighten the students or put them to sleep."

"I agree," Severus said quickly before Pomona could say anything about Minerva's obvious distaste of the subject. "I have had dozens of students each year come to me with fears of their imminent deaths. It is an unneeded stress upon the students and only a small fraction ever even come close to passing their Divination OWLs. I suggest that we have a true seer that is willing come in and guide any who have the gift."

"Agreed."

And on the night went with the four dedicated educators planning for the future of Hogwarts and it's students.

Harry and Neville were slowly making their way back to the Den after separating from Draco and Blaise. Exams had just finished and the group had taken full advantage of the now empty library. In the time since that first lunch Draco and Blaise had incorporated rather easily into their group much to Harry's pleasure.

"So have you heard back from your Gran yet?" Harry asked as they neared the stack of barrels which hid the entrance to the Hufflepuff common room.
Just as Neville began to reply a bright red light streaked down the hallway and hit Neville in the back causing him to crumple to the ground in a boneless heap.

With his heart pounding in his chest Harry whirled around as he pulled out his wand fully intending an attempt at recreating that night in the forbidden forest. Before he could make out their attacker a blinding pain exploded in the side of his head and turned his world dark...

Authors Note: Dun dun duuuunnnn! You all probably hate me now don't you? Well, too bad my dears! You'll have to wait for the next chapter! Muahahaha!

Not all of this turned out exactly as I would have liked but I'm still happy about it. :)

This chapter will replace the last authors note which was posted in place of chapter 29. I hope however that it does not replace all of your amazing expressions of condolences which have humbled me.
Confrontations and Cowardice

Little Dragon

Authors Note: Hey guys, sorry it's taken so long. Between being sick (Cold, strep, pink eye, etc.) and starting my new job it's been pretty busy lately. (Don't move from humid climate to dry climate! You'll get super sick like me and it sucks!) But I haven't forgotten about you my dears! Now, from the reviews I did get for the last chapter (since you can't review a chapter twice on fanfiction and I just replaced the last chapter), I was suprised that only one of you guessed correctly on who did what! Though, I was rather confused on your take of Ron. In the last chapter Ron was interacting with someone his whole family hadn't liked in a while, of course there's going to be some animosity there. No worries however! It will fade soon. :) How can it not with Harry trying to make them friends?

Now, onto the story since I know you're all chomping at the bit to know what happened!

Enjoy~! ^^

Disclaimer: I do not own the amazingly wonderful world of Harry Potter. I do, however, own these cough drops I'm sucking on.

Previously on Little Dragon...

"So have you heard back from your Gran yet?" Harry asked as they neared the stack of barrels which hid the entrance to the Hufflepuff common room.

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Chapter 30: Confrontations and Cowardice

Harry woke to the feeling of floating. Though this was not the floating he had grown used to over the years, this was not floating in peaceful oblivion where all of his aches and pains were gone. No, this was very different and Harry did not like it!

Instead of feeling weightless and at peace his head was aching as though Vernon had shoved his head through the wall again and there was something heavy and rough tied around his arms, torso and legs. Focusing on keeping his breathing easy Harry cast out his senses to try and determine what was going on.

Just in front of him there was what sounded like footsteps, muffled and rushed, as though someone were trying to hurry without drawing attention to themselves. The sound of a cloak dragging along stone floors, so he was most likely in Hogwarts, that was good. Up ahead there was the soft grating and rumbling of the staircases as they were about to move.

So whoever had him was floating him, likely had him tied up and they were heading towards a staircase. Lovely.
Okay, think back Harry, what all can you remember?

They had just finished up their last exam for History of Magic that morning before lunch. At lunch they sat together and then, while everyone else went outside they had gone up to the library since the lawns were rather crowded and Hagrid had to help Professor Sprout to harvest some of the more vicious plants in bloom from the greenhouses. They spent the rest of the day in the library since it was empty and had decided to head to their common rooms after dinner instead of going back to the library or outside as they usually would. Everyone was tired and they wanted to sleep.

He and Neville had just said goodnight to Blaise and Draco before turning into the hallway that lead to their common rooms but before they got halfway down someone had attacked them. Neville was taken down by a stunner and when Harry had turned to confront their attacker he had been hit over the head by something hard and heavy and had only caught a faint glimpse of purple...

Who did he know that wore purple?

Only two people came to mind. Albus Dumbledore and Quirinus Quirrell and both were easily identifiable by there scent. Where Dumbledore smelt as though he spent his days in a sweet shop Quirrell smelt heavily of garlic, musk and a faint rotting smell...

Taking a discrete breathe in through his nose Harry's senses were immediately assaulted by the cloying scent of...

Neville woke with a groan as the cold hand against his cheek continued its assault.

"Thank Merlin," A voice breathed from above him as two cool hands came to rest on his cheeks. "Are you alright Neville? What happened?"

"Wha...?" With a low moan Neville lifted himself into a sitting position and looked around the corridor confused before turning and meeting the concerned eyes of Cedric Diggory. "I... I don't know? I was just talking to Harry... Where is he?"

"Harry was with you?" Cedric asked, his eyes going wide before turning and searching the corridor around them as though there would be some clue as to where the small boy was. "Come on, lets get you into the common room and call for Professor Sprout, she'll know what to do. Can you walk?"

"I think so," Neville said with a nod before allowing himself to be lifted up off of the floor and back onto his feet. His mind slowly clearing as worry for Harry began to set in.

Together Neville and Cedric slowly walked the remaining length of the corridor with Cedric helping to support Nevilles weight and to steady the slightly stumbling boy.

When they had finally made it inside of the Den they were quickly surrounded by worried house mates.

"What happened?"

"Are you alright?"

"Should we get the Professor?"

A cacophony of voices rang out, each heavily laced with concern for their first year house mate.

"We don't know what happened, someone get Professor Sprout. Use the floo. This house is on lock
down until we figure out what's happened. Has anyone here seen Harry since dinner?" Cedric said quickly but firmly as he watched one of the sixth year boys head for the floo to call for their head of house.

This was one of the reasons that Hufflepuff should have been feared. They rallied quickly and weren't afraid of what was ahead of them. Professor Sprouts words of wisdom which she gave at the end of every year quickly played out in his mind as he watched the others discuss the last time they had seen Harry.

'Hufflepuff house should be the most feared. Always remember that we are no door mice. We are as smart as the Ravenclaws, as brave as the lions, and in most cases more cunning than the Slytherins. Hufflepuffs are seen as weak and that works to our advantage for no one will see us coming. We are badgers, fierce strong and protective. Remember that, and you will be able to overcome any obstacle in your paths.'

"I know that you're awake Potter," A familiar voice sneered from in front of him, and yet, it was unfamiliar as well. No longer did the voice contain the horrible stutter which had graced it for the entire year previous.

With a jolt of fear shooting down his spine Harry finally began to struggle in a desperate attempt to free himself of his binds. Opening his eyes he glared at the man that had taught him this year as he opened his mouth to yell only for dread to fill his stomach as he realized that he had been silenced.

How was he going to get out of this!?

What did Quirrell even want with him!?

Trying to draw breath into his lungs as the ropes binding him suddenly constricted tightly Harry looked on through misty eyes at Quirrells now smirking face.

He would not back down! He wouldn't let Quirrell win whatever game it was that he was playing. Harry would be strong, he had to... For Charlie.

Charlie hissed as the pendant around his neck turned as cold as ice and pulled him from the conversation he had just been having with Mary and Darius.

"What is it? What's wrong!?" Mary asked in worry as they watched Charlie quickly reach inside of his shirt and pull the dragon pendant out.

All three of their eyes widened in horror as they took in the changed appearance of the pendant before they were all rushing to Sefs hut as fast as they possibly could.

The flames, which Charlie had taken to checking every few hours, were pitch black in terror and the normally still dragon was thrashing as though in pain.

Something was wrong with Harry and Charlie would be damned if he let it continue!

"What is the last thing that you remember Neville?" Pomona asked gently as worry for her smallest badger built within her and settled in her stomach like a stone.

"I-I don't know," Neville said in frustration as he forced himself to remember every detail of what happened. "Harry and I were walking back to the common rooms from dinner, we walked back
with Draco and Blaise most of the way and said night to them. We rounded the corner and Harry asked me if I had heard back from Gran and then... Nothing."

"I found Neville passed out in the corridor," Cedric chimed in worriedly, "There was no sign of Harry, or of a struggle."

"That is odd... Would you mind if I performed a diagnostic charm Neville?" Pomona asked the young first year as she drew her wand. When Neville merely straightened his back and gave a firm nod she felt pride well up for her young badger. "Very well, hold still, this will be over in just a second since I'm only looking for the last few hours."

Quickly performing the scan Pomona was shocked to see the single vertical red line that symbolized the use of a stunning spell.

Thoughts began to rapidly chase themselves through Pomona's mind as she though of the best thing to do to help her young badger. Finally with a steadying breath and a deep calming breath she stood and headed to the floo where she withdrew a handful of powder and turned to address her badgers.

"This common room is on lock down! No one is to come in or out without a professors assistance. All those currently not inside of the common room will be given notice to head to the kitchens where one of the house elves will escort them back using their own means. One of our own has been hurt, we will not take this laying down. Any who come through that portrait not accompanied by one of the four heads or a house elf is to be detained. Keep each other safe and watch your backs. I shall be back soon."

With that the professor disappeared within the emerald flames a look of cold fury settled over her usually benevolent face.

Tears were streaming down Harry's face as he was forced through the trap door which Fluffy had been guarding.

Fluffy who was currently laying in a bloody heap against the far wall where Quirrell had blasted him. Fluffy who had attempted to tear off Quirrells head when he saw Harry tied up and dragged into the corridor. Fluffy who's pained whine was still sounding in Harry's ears and Fluffy who even now trying to crawl over and help him.

As Harry fell down through the darkness he could feel his soul crying for his friends pain. He didn't care that he was falling into who knows what or where, that he was alone with someone so obviously deranged. He could feel a numb emptiness settling in much like that which he had hidden behind when his uncle had decided to 'play'.

This was his only protection now, he couldn't risk succumbing to unconsciousness and Charlie wasn't there to help him. All he could do was wait, wait and hope that he could find a way out of this situation somehow.

Harry was no idiot, yes he might be above average in the magic department but he was still just a first year. There were no matches for him to change or feathers to levitate. All that he had was intent and magic and right now he couldn't use that. It wasn't safe. He would have to wait and hope...

With a cry of pain that no one could hear Harry landed on something firm. They were at least a few floors down from where they had begun their free fall and Harry had no control of how he landed so he instead found himself landing painfully on his left arm which gave a sickening crunch
as evidence of the break which had just occurred.

Vaguely, despite the pain currently thrumming through him, Harry was aware of his bracelet going cold as ice against his skin before heating back up...

"Oh thank Merlin!" Pomona called in relief as she flood back to the teachers lounge and found the other three heads of house had indeed remained where she had left them when Uley had flooed her telling her that it was an emergency.

"Pomona, what is it? Why were you called away by mister Uley?" Filius asked in concern as he quickly got up from his seat so that Herbology professor could take his place only to be ignored as Pomona instead slammed her fists onto the table in an unusually aggressive action.

"Harry Potter is missing and Neville Longbottom was stunned!" Pomona said quickly as she watched the others pale in terror.

"How long ago?" Severus asked, obsidian eyes flashing in a mixture of anger and worry for the young man who had managed to worm his way into Severus' cold heart.

"Less than an hour, Neville was stunned not even fifty minutes ago and he said that everything was fine before then. I have put my house into lock down with orders to detain any who don't follow our procedures, but what are we going to do!? Harry could be anywhere with anyone!"

"We start with the two who would have the greater reason to take the boy," Severus said firmly as his mind automatically concluded on who would be the most likely.

"Albus and Quirinus," Minerva all but growled as her eyes narrowed into slits. "Very well. Severus, you, and Pomona go and get Albus. Filius and I will head up to the third floor. When your done meet us there. I don't care if he's stunned and bound or otherwise, as long as he's not able to interfere. Send a patronus if you require assistance and we will do the same."

"Take Hagrid with you, you'll need him for the beast," Severus warned before he and Pomona quickly made their way to the Headmasters office.

Minerva gasped in horror at the sight that met them upon reaching the third floor corridor as Hagrid let out a howl of grief.

The large cerberus which Hagrid had so lovingly named 'Fluffy', the one which Harry Potter had gained special permission to visit with, a picture of which was nestled safely inside of her desk, was lying crumpled and bloody against the wall. It's great chest rising and falling with each pain filled breath it took.

Out of the corner of her eye Minerva could see an equally shaken Filius casting a patronus and sending it off while Hagrid attempted to staunch the flow of blood from the large wound in the beasts side.

Casting a patronus of her own Minerva quickly sent it to Poppy with instructions to bring enough supplies for the injured cerberus before walking to Hagrids side. She hated to be so stiff and rushed when her friend was obviously torn between helping Harry and helping the animal that he had raised from a pup. It would be unfair to force him to decide between the two so Minerva instead chose for him.

"Hagrid you stay here and wait for Poppy and the others, Poppy will bring what is needed to help..."
Fluffy. Tell Severus and Pomona that we have already gone down. We'll dismantle all of the traps that we can save for the Devils Snare. We'll leave that for them so that there's still something to land on. We'll go after Harry, you wait here and come later if you can."

Severus and Pomona had just reached the top of the spiral staircase and had thrown the solid oak door open without a seconds thought only to enter into chaos.

The portraits on the wall were running between each other and screaming profanities at insults as Fawkes attacked a large black chest with what appeared to be chains wrapped around it almost desperately, some of the portraits were even cheering him on and offering advise while still others appeared to be trying to leave their portraits and growing frustrated as they only came into their neighbors frame.

"What in Merlin's name is going on in here!?!" Pomona finally managed to yell above the din and for a single second all was quiet as every inhabitant of the room turned to face the pair.

That is until Fawkes flew at them with a screech and began to unceremoniously pull on Severus' robes, flapping his powerful wings and effectively dragging Severus towards the large chest as the portraits once again began to scream what was obviously meant to be an explanation.

"QUIET!" Pomona called out with a sonorus charm efficiently amplifying her voice. Once the portraits had all fallen silent she cast a quick 'quietus' before continuing. "Now, Headmaster Sinclair, could you please explain to us what exactly is going on here?"

"Dumbledore has fled!" Headmaster Amicus Sinclair all but screamed, his usually calm and collected disposition replaced with one of hysteria and panic.

"He's somehow managed to block us from leaving this room, even to go to our other portraits," Phineas Nigellus spoke from the opposite side of the same wall.

"What exactly is in this trunk?" Severus asked suspiciously as Fawkes yet again attempted to push him closer to the blasted thing.

"The Sorting Hat," Henrietta Marchbanks spoke from beside the door. "Albus has kept him there since the beginnings of the year."

"Why has Albus fled?" Pomona growled as she watched Severus begin to cast charms over the trunk.

"One of the schools monitors activated!" Dunamis Pritcher croaked out from where he was almost hidden behind a tapestry. "It alerts of when a teacher attacks a student and who. He saw it and knew that he was done for so the coward fled."

"He's gone!?!" Severus snarled as he kicked out at the chest in frustration.

"Yes, made himself a portkey and left the country. He's not in the UK anymore," Armando Dippet said with a scowl.

Authors Note: I am really sorry that it has taken so long to get this chapter up but unfortunately the only time I've found to really sit down and write has been while cooking dinner (as I am doing currently). Hopefully the next chapters will come out faster~!

Well, I had planned to go on further for this chapter but I think that I have kept you all waiting for
far too long! I hope that you enjoy and that you're not too upset with the wait!


**Of Traps and Trapdoors 1**

**Little Dragon**

**Authors Note:** I know that I was supposed to update the other day and I'm just as upset at myself as you guys are but the only thing that I can say is life is a bigger bitch than Umbridge. -.-

Anyways, I've been squeezing in as much writing time as possible and am pleased to say that the chapter is finally done! :D

Despite the lateness I hope that you all still enjoy this! In this chapter we'll have some POV from both Dumbles and Quirrell so hopefully I can pull off two separate brands of crazy in one chapter! ^-^

**Disclaimer:** If I owned Harry Potter I could afford the Cheetos which I am currently craving. Ah, it is for naught though. Perhaps one day!

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**Chapter 31: Of Traps and Trapdoors**

Quirrenus Quirrell smirked as he glided silently through the shadows, his master was quite pleased with the proceedings for which he was relieved.

For months they had tried to get the Potter brat on his own, especially after that day in the Forbidden Forrest. How the brat had managed to harness such raw magic was a source of great disdain for his master, one which he was severely punished for.

He wouldn't fail again!

Casting a quick muffling charm upon his feet as well as a notice me not charm cast upon himself Quirrell set off after the four first years who had just left the library, only one of which was important. Harry Potter, the brat who lived was currently making his way down the stairs along with three of his... Friends.

Of course his master was furious when he had first found out that two of the pure blooded Slytherins had taken to spending time with the whelp but there was little that could be done for it at the moment.

'Remember the plan Quirrell,' the voice of his master echoed through his mind causing his footsteps to falter for a moment before resuming their previous pace, 'Do not fail me again! Do, and you will not appreciate the consequences,' the voice continued in a harsh tone which left no doubt behind as to what would happen should he fail again.

As his prey neared the Hufflepuff common rooms Quirrell could feel his pulse speed as he began to contemplate the best course of action he should take. He would need to remove the Longbottom disgrace from the picture before taking out the Potter brat as well.

A simple stunner would work on Longbottom but Potter would probably be able to fight his off within minutes and they couldn't have that now could they?

No, the crude but efficient muggle way would have to do. A knock to the head would no doubt but him out for a decent amount of time. Now, what could he use to do it? There were no rocks... Perhaps an extinguished torch?
There! In the center of the corridor between it's entrance and the kitchens stood a suit of armor complete with a shield. Perfect.

Speeding up his steps as the two first years continued their leisurely walk just ahead of them Quirrell quickly cast a silencing charm on the suit of medal and took the shield from its clutches.

Within seconds he had cast a stunner at Longbottom and, as his prey whirled around with a shocked expression lighting up those emerald depths Quirrell took great joy in raising the shield high above his head before forcing it down onto the Potter brats temple and watching as he crumbled to the floor with a satisfying thunk.

Taking only a moment to savor the thrum of approval that he could feel coming from his master Quirrell once again set to work as he silenced Potter and cast a spell which bound him in thick ropes. With one last spell to disillusion him Quirrell quickly turns and makes his way back to the third floor corridor.

They had work to do...

Albus Dumbledore was sitting at his desk with a look of contemplation upon his fave as he once again focused on just what he could possibly do to maintain his role as headmaster.

He was no fool despite what others seemed to think, he knew that unless something major happened to prove his worth, to prove that the wizarding world needed him (and they did) he would instead be spending the rest of his natural years within the confines of Azkaban...

No, he couldn't let that happen. The greater good needed him!

With a growl of rage he grabbed a random item off of his desk and just as he was preparing to throw it into the flames he was brought to a stop as a loud clanging sounded throughout his office.

Moving quickly Albus made his way towards the source of the noise, wishing all the while that he was wrong. If this was what he thought it was he would have to move quickly, if he was right then his time of freedom had come to an end.

As he drew even with the trunk that he had stored the Sorting Hat after the beginning of the year, the blasted thing had the nerve to defy him after all, Albus quickly shot a stunner at Fawkes who had taken to attacking the trunk. The blasted bird was destroying their bond with it's disobedience!

On the far end of his office sat one of the many items which upheld the schools various monitoring systems. This particular one was in a far corner and had been tied to a rather ghastly grandfather clock who's face was currently depicting those of Quirrenus Quirrell, Neville Longbottom and Harry Potter.

This was not good! He had to act fast otherwise he would be caught and sentenced. No, Dumbledore had to leave now, but where? His manor was here in England and the goblins had blocked his access to the various properties he had been using from the boy... No, he needed somewhere more secure than that, somewhere only he knew about...

That's it! He would go to Gellerts old manor! He was still keyed into the wards after all and it wouldn't be hard to kill of the few elves that may still be there. Yes, that's what he would do but he would still have to have time to do it. He needed to buy himself time...

"What is it Albus? Who was attacked?" The voice of his predecessor Armando Dippet called out from the wall behind his desk bringing him out of his thoughts.
He couldn't let them know! They would surely run to the ministry just as soon as he did! No, he needed to stop them. It was for the greater good after all...

As we finally neared the entrance to the third floor corridor Potter finally began to stir. Good, I'd rather he not miss the destruction of that mutt that he was so fond of.

"I know that you're awake Potter," He sneered without the damnable stutter he had taken on throughout the year to help avoid suspicions.

Quirrell felt a spark of amusement roll through him as the brat began to struggle uselessly against his bonds. Foolish boy, did he really expect to be able to escape so quickly? The fool.

Smothering a cackle of amusement as the brat attempted to scream, possibly for help, Quirrell flicked his wand at the ropes and watched as they constricted harshly around the pale skin of the boy robbing him of precious air.

Quirrell smirked as he met the large tearful eyes of his captive, reveling in the feeling of approval which his master granted him.

Flicking his wand once again in order to both loosen the binds, it wouldn't due for the brat to pass out from lack of oxygen and miss all the fun after all, he also made it so that he was floating upright and in perfect view of the next festivities.

Oh yes, he was quite looking forward to the next proceedings...

Fluffy jumped to his feet with a growl as the door to the room that he was in was thrown open.

It couldn't be master or his pup after all, they were always considerate and knocked so that he knew it was them. He missed his pup, it had been a while since pup had last come to spend time with him. He was worried about pup, he seemed so tired...

Looking towards the door Fluffy let loose a snarl as he saw pup tied up in a leash behind a man who smelled of evil and death. Whoever this was they would pay for hurting his pup!

Pup was squirming in the air and tears were falling down his face as he looked at Fluffy in anguish, this man would pay. *No one* hurt his pup!

With his hackles raised Fluffy lunged at the man with the odd purple fur on his head with every intent to tear his head off and present it to master as the ultimate prize. After all, his pups was masters pup too.

Quirrell raised his wand with a cruel cackle as the great beast lunged at him only to be thrown back against the far corridor wall through the use of a simple reducto.

Of course he could always employ the use of the beasts pathetic weakness but his master was so enjoying the look of pure anguish on the boys face.

With immense satisfaction Quirrell took care to make sure that the next spell he cast was seen by the boy as he cast a dark spell reminiscent of the cutting curse only so much better as it opened hundreds of cuts upon the victims body. Reveling in the howl of pain from the mutt as well as the tell tale dimming of his captives eyes Quirrell blasted the trapdoor open and unceremoniously through Potter through it...
Severus and Pomona were just preparing to leave the headmasters office when the flames in the fireplace turned green.

Pointing their wands at the fireplace they were both shocked and confused when Charlie Weasley and two others came tumbling out of the fireplace with looks of desperation plastered on their faces.

"Where is Harry!?!" Charlie croaked as he looked at Pomona with such a fierce look of agony on his face that it caused the two professors to freeze momentarily until Pomona broke out of her shock first and gave a quick explanation before they were all racing out of the office and towards the third floor.

Severus' motions were mechanical as he ran with the others, everything that they had learned today finally catching up to him at this most inopportune of moments. The largest of the days revelations however was that Charlie Weasley could be none other than Balaur Harry's soul mate.

No wonder Albus was never able to figure it out!

Once they had managed to reach the third floor corridor they were further shocked at the condition that the Cerberus was in with Poppy and Hagrid tending to his wounds all the while shooting longing and helpless looks to the trapdoor.

As they entered the pair looked up with looks of obvious relief.

"Quickly, they've all gone down to follow. They may need help though Severus. Yours is the only obstacle they don't know the answer to!" Poppy said desperately before reaching out and stopping Hagrid from following. "No Hagrid, I need you here to restrain Fluffy. Harry will be fine, the others are going and Harry would want for you to help Fluffy, you know how much Harry cares for him."

Casting one last look back at the pair as he followed the others down through the trapdoor Severus gained new respect for the man he had previously considered an overemotional brute. The man looked honestly torn between helping Harry or helping his beast. In fact, Severus had a suspicion that if it weren't for Poppy's comment on Harry's wished the man would be free falling with them.

How very Slytherin of her...

Authors Note: Yet again I must apologize for the delay in getting this chapter out! Not only has my laptop been out of commission but my niece has also begun school and I have had to go with her as well as the latest possibility of me getting a new job! Whoo hoo, lol. Well, hopefully the next chapter will be out faster than this one!

That being said the next chapter will be the finale of first year! We'll find out what's happened to Harry, how the rescue goes and get to see a furious soul mate defying logic! Tune in next time!

Thank you all for reading, stay safe and happy reading! ^^-^  

*Note: Notice Me Not Charms work to keep you 'hidden' from the sight of those not looking for you or with no idea where you are. If seen it also acts to distract someone from remembering the place in which it was if they lose or try to switch their focus as Harry did. Just in case you're wondering.
Authors Note: I am really sorry about the long wait everyone! I just got a new job and it's exhausting me. Add onto that doctors visits, eye visits and trying to find a dentist that takes my insurance and is open when I can get there and it's been hectic. But, I have updated now so hopefully I can get things back on track!

In other news, I'm afraid that I probably won't be able to update more than once a week or so, depending on if the story will cooperate with me or not.

Now, I've kept you waiting long enough so, onto the story!

Disclaimer: I tried to buy the rights to Harry Potter on eBay but got sniped at the last minute. :( Now some guy called EstraGaku873 owns it. -.-

Chapter 32: A Dragons Rage

Harry took comfort from the gentle warmth that his bracelet was currently exuding. Despite the pain he was in from Quirrel's rough grip on his now broken arm as he drug Harry through the dimly lit corridor they were now in Harry could still take comfort in it. The warmth reminded him of Charlie and, if he focused enough, he could swear that he felt a soft pulse coming from the bracelet as well, as though it were mimicking Charlie's heart beat...

Harry didn't think he could have made it through the past half hour without that warmth, everything that had happened was currently a blur to him.

He vaguely remembered the vines that began to wrap around him and how he had started to sink down through the vines but he hadn't had the energy to struggle. Quirrel somehow landing next to him on top of the vines completely upright and seemingly without a care in the world.

Quirrel had watched him sink into the vines for a minute before all he could remember was heat. Heat and light and the vines parting as though burned before he was falling again. This time he hit the floor causing him to cry out in pain as he fell on his broken arm yet again.

Quirrel had quickly drug him into a room which contained hundreds of glittering bird like objects which had quickly caught Harry's gaze in awestruck amazement when he finally took in the whole picture and realized that they weren't birds at all but rather keys! Keys with multicolor wings were flying high above their heads in graceful patterns that kept Harry's rapt attention.

At least until a long stream of flame materialized from Quirrel's wand and engulfed the keys in its fiery grasp singing the wings to a crisp and leaving behind none of their former beauty.

Quirrel had promptly stepped into the scattered pile of ashes and keys before choosing one which was rather rusty and old to unlock the door on the other end of the corridor.

After that there was a chess board only the pieces seemed to tower over him... Had they been shrunk upon entering through the door? Some sort of enchantment perhaps? Either they were shrunk or this chess board was massive! Even the pawns which were hunched over stood at least three feet higher than Harry himself!
Harry had soon learned that this was not just an immensely proportioned chess board but rather a larger than life version of wizards chess which had to be played with a live body acting the part of one of the pieces.

Quirrel, upon realizing this fact, had forced him to play the part of a pawn all the while laughing maniacally as the shards of various chess pieces sliced through his pale skin and thin clothing leaving behind crimson trails of blood to well up and spill over.

By the time Quirrel had won the game of chess and they had begun to make their way through to the next chamber Harry was once again numb, the only thing keeping him moving was the painful hold that Quirrel kept on his arm.

Harry was unsurprised when upon reaching the next chamber who's only inhabitant was a rather grotesque troll, no larger than the one that he had encountered on Halloween, Quirrel had brutally bludgeoned it to death with its own club all the while laughing cruelly.

Distantly Harry realized that he should have felt something for the death of this poor creature, but... He just couldn't bring himself to do so. Not because he felt himself above the troll or thought that the troll deserved to die. He just... couldn't feel anything.

In fact, as he watched Quirrel continue to bludgeon the troll with its own club Harry realized that he had accepted what was to happen.

Ironic, how throughout the years of living with the Dursley's Harry had always feared the possibility of death. Had always wanted nothing more than to live. He had been so alone, hurt and afraid that he was desperate for love or affection of any kind. He would dream of the future and how he wished his life could be.

Then he had met Charlie and everything had changed. He suddenly had a family. A family who loved him more than anything and he loved them too but it all paled in comparison to how he loved Charlie.

He loved the Weasely's with all of his heart but he loved Charlie with his very being. He had no doubt that if anything were to happen to Charlie he would surely die.

But despite all of the love that he felt and how desperately he wished to spend the rest of his life with him he felt at peace with the idea of dying at Quirrel's hand.

Not because he wished to die, but if that was what it took to keep those he cared about safe and happy then he would gladly do so without a second thought for himself.

Belatedly Harry realized that Quirrel had once again begun to move them into yet another room inside of which stood only a table and various vials of potions and a single spare bit of parchment.

As Quirrel read what was written in the Potions Masters spidery scrawl Harry took in his surroundings and realized that they were trapped for both doorways were covered in flame.

For minutes they stood there, Quirrel attempting to decipher the answer while Harry examined the flames. The doorway through which they had entered was covered in thick purple flames whilst the exit was covered in black.

Looking over to the table upon which Quirrel was examining two different sized bottles Harry's gaze was drawn to the smallest bottle laying third from the left.

As he continued to gaze at the small innocent looking bottle Harry felt the familiar tug of his magic
attempting to lead him but Harry its urging. Whatever Quirrel wanted was behind that door and it could probably grant him the power to hurt those that he loved. No, Harry would wait. If he chose that vial then Harry would just have to try and stop him.

Taking as deep of a breath as the ropes tied around him would allow Harry began to concentrate on his magic. Building it up but not letting it out, he didn't for Quirrel to be able to sense it and put a stop to what he was doing.

Focusing on his magic Harry never noticed Quirrel finally settle upon a vial and make his forward, he did however notice when Quirrel cruelly forced his mouth open and made him swallow half of a vials contents.

So foul was the concoction that he had been forced to swallow that even as ice raced through his veins Harry paid it no mind in his efforts to clear the taste from his mouth.

Mere moments later a sense of vertigo crashed upon Harry as he was suddenly flying towards the flames...

Minerva was quick to create a flame once she and Filius had landed upon the Devils Snare that Pomona had created as the first barrier.

As they landed upon the floor they took but a moment to regain their balance before they took off in a dead sprint for the next chamber.

Panic was in Minerva's heart as they ran, fear for what was happening to the boy that she so loved. Quirrinus Quirrel should be very afraid for he had a fate worse than death awaiting him...

As they drew upon the next chamber they stumbled to a stop in shock at what awaited them.

"Oh my," Minerva could hear Filius murmur as he took in the room with wide eyes.

Hundreds of keys lay on the floor in soft piles of grey ash and almost every surface outside of a small circle within the middle of the floor was charred to a crisp with smoke still smoldering from within the stone walls themselves.

Shaking himself from his shocked stupor Filius quickly made his way across the room and began to undo the various enchantments that he had placed upon the door when he saw that the key to open it was missing.

Quickly they moved onto the next defense, the one which she herself had made.

With actions fueled with anger at herself Minerva quickly won her battle, all the while cursing the fact that the game had to be won before it could be taken down.

Harry lay upon the cold stone floor breathing deeply and attempting to hold back tears of pain. His arm felt like it had been run over by the Hogwarts Express and was throbbing painfully. Added to that, along with various cuts and scrapes caused by the chess board was the sharp throbbing coming from his head.

After throwing him into the flames Quirrel had grabbed a fist full of his hair and proceeded to drag him across the stone floors and down a set of steps by his raven locks.

Harry was in agony. Of course he had felt worse before but he was not quite as used to pain as he
had been the summer previously. A whole month at home with the Weasley's and most of the school year gone by with hardly any accidents or pain and Harry's body had slowly lost its extraordinary tolerance for pain.

As Harry's breathing finally began to slow and the stinging in his eyes began to ebb away Harry looked over to where Quirrel was standing and examined him.

His left hand was lightly touching the side of his purple turban while the right hand clutched almost desperately at his left forearm. Looking at Quirrel's reflection in the mirror Harry could see that he looked almost as though he were in pain, even as he mouth continued to move almost as though he were talking to himself.

Looking more closely at the mirror Harry realized that he had seen it before. This mirror was in fact the large ornate mirror that he had once assumed had been a seventh years NEWT project, but surely he was wrong. After all, why on earth would a simple NEWT project be down here and what could Quirrel possibly want with it!?

As though sensing his gaze Quirrel's eyes slowly slid upon the mirrors surface until they landed upon his reflection.

Spinning around in a move oddly reminiscent of Severus Snape, which sent his cloak to flare out behind him, Quirrel faced Harry and after a short moment of contemplation he strode forward with purposeful strides and yanked Harry to his feet once more.

Beating down his rising terror Harry kept his wide fear struck eyes firmly glued to the reflection shown in the mirror before him. If he could keep Quirrel in sight then he would have at least a small amount of warning for whatever he decided to do next.

"Tell me Potter," Quirrel growled sounding much more like a rabid dog instead of a human being that Harry had a slight difficulty understanding what he said. "What is it that you see in the mirror?"

With confused emerald eyes Harry gazed upon the mirror once again, trying desperately to understand just what it was that Quirrel was asking.

Upon seeing no change to the shimmering surface of the mirror Harry's gaze slid back up to meet Quirrel's in the mirror.

"I... I don't understand sir," Harry whispered, fear and confusion lacing every word, "Wh-what is it that I'm supposed to be seeing? All it is, is a mirror. It only shows your reflection!"

In the next moment Harry would realize how foolish his words were as, with a cry of fury and his face contorted in a grotesque mask of anger Quirrel threw Harry down to the floor and with a resounding cry of a simple one word spell all that Harry knew was pain.

"Crucio!"

Charlie waited impatiently for his companions to extract themselves from the Devils Snare which they had landed upon. As desperate as he was to simply continue on by himself Charlie was no fool and he knew that if he were to attempt to go on by himself it would merely cause more trouble than it was worth.

As they finally began to make their way towards the next chamber a distant scream reaches their ear and they move faster than they had thought possible.
Sprinting through a room full of ashes and keys they run, they run so fast and so hard that the muscles in their legs burn and each panting breath that they take causes a jolt of discomfort to surge through their chest but they don't slow down. They run, driven by the force of the fear that they felt for Harry driving them ever faster.

Through a giant chess board covered in bits and pieces of stone and the occasional splatter of blood that they force themselves to ignore. They can't afford to think about what had happened here. They have to keep going!

They sprint through the next room, hands covering their mouth and nose to protect themselves from the vile scent that its only inhabitants corpse is exuding they finally reach the last obstacle, the last chamber that separates them from Harry.

As they entered the final chamber they were greeted by the sight of Minerva and Filius pouring over a small piece of parchment.

"There will be no need for that anymore," Severus said absentmindedly as he moved over to the table filled with seven different vials. "The fool mixed the vials up. It is a good thing that I do not make a habit of putting things into random containers. This," Severus said as he held up the smallest of the various bottles, "Is what gets you through the black flames however if you care to look it is empty."

"You wouldn't happen to have a spare vial would you severus?" Minerva asked desperately.

"Unfortunately no, Albus took my spare vial. There is a counter charm but I'm afraid it takes upwards of an hour to cast. By which time young mister Potter could be no more."

Charlie felt hallow. There was nothing that he could do and he knew it. If it weren't for Darius and Mary physically holding him upright and supporting him between themselves Charlie had no doubt that he would currently be sprawled out on the floor.

With slumped shoulders Charlie was resigned, that was until his necklace once again to burn white hot and a scream of agony that could only belong to his sweet Harry rent the air.

The oppressive feeling of Charlie's magic quickly filled the air as his anger at the bastard who dared to hurt his soul mate grew. So focused was Charlie on his anger and fear for his love that he did not notice just what had begun to happen to his surroundings.

Within the small chamber the very walls began to tremble with the force of the red heads anger, the bottles of potion which had remained on the table began to fall as his anger grew. A chilling wind picked up within the confined space forcing his companions to cower against the walls.

As one particular vial hits the floor it begins to sizzle and form a hole within the ancient stone but none of the rooms occupants bother to pay it a single glance as yet another scream of pain cuts through the air followed by a sob.

All grows quiet but the rescue party knew better than to relax for with a cry of rage of his own Charlie's magic explodes.

Authors Note: Yay! It's finally done!

Next chapter brings about the end of the first year! I hope that you all have liked this chapter and I hope that I don't keep you waiting too long for the next one!
Now, I would write a longer final note but it's almost time for me to start walking to work and I want to get this up and posted so that you can all enjoy!

Happy Reading my Lovelies!!! ^w^
**Authors Note:** Hey everyone! I know, it's been far too long since my last update and there is really no excuse. Yes, life has been hectic, but the fact of the matter is that for a while I had lost my spark. I couldn't find it in myself to write or do anything creative really. But, I am happy to announce that my creative spark is back thanks to my darling Muse Master Pika! :)

So, this is my promise to you on this Christmas day, I shall endeavor to be better. Both in writing and in keeping you all updated and even replying to reviews seeing as I have been remiss in that as well.

Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah and Merry Kwanza my dears!

*WARNING: This chapter gets a little dark, gory and gross in parts… If you have a weak stomach you may want to skim over it. I don't think it's too bad, but then again that's me. There will be more dark parts in future chapters but it will be fairly spread out for a while and I will attempt to give you a warning when I remember.*

**Disclaimer:** I own only the story idea, original characters, any made up words and my own irritation at myself and Overstock. That is all.

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**Chapter 33: The Greater Good**

Harry panted as the painful curse was once again lifted and his body went limp against the rough stone that made up the chambers floor.

Quirrell was speaking again but Harry just couldn't make himself focus, his body was still shaking from the pain that had just been inflicted upon it and, if he were being honest with himself, Harry didn't really care what the bastard did anymore.

It was obvious that the Defense Professor had gone mental. Who else would go to such obscene lengths just to find out what he saw in a stupid mirror? It was a mirror! All that he was going to see was his own reflection.

With a groan of pain Harry managed to turn his head so that his feverish forehead was pressed against the cool stone floor, the muscles in his body aching in protest.

Quirrell was talking still, his voice an unpleasant drone in the background much like the buzz of a fly inside an otherwise silent room.

It was obvious that the Defense Professor had gone mental. Who else would go to such obscene lengths just to find out what he saw in a stupid mirror? It was a mirror! All that he was going to see was his own reflection.

With a groan of pain Harry managed to turn his head so that his feverish forehead was pressed against the cool stone floor, the muscles in his body aching in protest.

Quirrell was talking still, his voice an unpleasant drone in the background much like the buzz of a fly inside an otherwise silent room.

Slowly Harry's gaze was drawn to the bracelet resting against his wrist, the jewel now a fiery red which was continuously shifting as though it were attempting to express the anger of the one who's emotions it was linked to but couldn't quite manage.

Looking past his bracelet towards the flame covered doorway Harry couldn't help but think of how pretty the flames looked when they flickered in the draft…

Draft? That wasn't right. The air down here was stagnant and filled with dust motes that tickled his nose and made it increasingly difficult to feel as though he were getting enough air without the pain...
that racked his body and his continuous screams. There was no possible way for a draft to be down here!

The bracelet that rested on his wrist was getting hotter the longer that his gaze rested on the flame covered doorway. Glancing down at his wrist Harry's eyes widened when he noticed that the stone was beginning to glow. What on earth was going on!?

Once again Harry found himself being hauled to his feet by Quirrel who he vaguely recognized was yet again demanding that he look in the mirror but Harry's gaze was stuck upon the doorway where the flames were nearly extinguished.

He needed to move. Now! He couldn't stay where he was, he needed to find cover! Something was going to happen and he needed to move now!

With a mixture of adrenaline and panic pumping through his veins Harry finally gained the strength to fight the hold that Quirrel had on him.

Wriggling his arms from the hands that were currently clamped on them Harry began to pull with all of his might and kick out when Quirrel would attempt to come closer. He needed to move now! Right now!

With a snarl of rage Quirrel finally managed to gain enough leverage and throw Harry onto the floor in front of the mirror so that he was standing between Harry's now prone form and the doorway and Harry could feel himself relax ever so slightly.

The curse was once again cast on Harry, his already abused vocal cords once again working to express the agony that he felt but this time it seemed to be far worse than before as he had used up his remaining strength to fight mere moments before. The spell seemed to last for hours but Harry knew that it couldn't have been more than a few minutes at most.

A mixed sob of relief and pain made its way past his lips as tears finally began to spill from his eyes and Harry's world began to grow darker.

Vaguely, as though from a distance Harry was able to tell that the room was shaking, dust and bits of the ceiling falling down onto the floor below, covering the rooms occupants with a thin covering before, in the space of a single second, everything exploded.

Harry could feel his body being thrown backwards and into the base of the mirror though it did not truly feel like his own body.

As the darkness finally consumed him he could hear a voice that both soothed his soul to hear but brought him more pain at the anguish that it contained calling out to him…

Albus Dumbledore arrived at the once great manor which belonged to Gellert Grindelwald, at one time he had been happy within these walls, deliriously so in fact. How stupid he had been, a silly little boy who had been in 'love'. Hah!

Well he had gotten a brutal wake up call about that didn't he?

Though, he did get his revenge on his dear Gellert didn't he? Now Gellert was locked up in Normungard, and Albus was hailed as the hero that they had both wanted to be.

Albus could still remember those days as though it were just yesterday, Gellert had drawn the public's attentions toward himself with his shows of power and magic while Albus would work in
the shadows manipulating the laws and twisting how witches and wizards viewed certain creatures and practices with hardly any opposition.

Yes, their plans were working perfectly and Albus had been looking forward to ruling the world at Gellert's side... At least until that night.

May of 1945 is when Dumbledore's perfect world collapsed. When he arrived at the manor to surprise Gellert he had instead played witness to his lover being with another.

Of course Albus couldn't stand for that. No, instead he played along with Gellert's lies until the perfect opportunity presented itself and he struck.

Within a few minutes Gellert was stunned and bound and three hours later Albus was being hailed as a hero and Gellert was imprisoned within Normungard and allowed no visitors by magic herself, or so everyone thought.

No, Albus quite enjoyed having Gellert reliant on him. It was through his mercy alone that the man was still alive. Albus would go once a week to visit the fool, bringing a small parcel of food and various necessities he deemed to give Gellert and reveled in the subservient behavior that Gellert had gained over the years.

Shaking himself out of his thoughts Dumbledore quickly drew his wand and walked through the wards of the manor where he was quickly greeted with the arrival of several house elves.

"What is you's doing here!?" One of the elves managed to growl out, its voice raspy with age.

Albus couldn't help but smirk as he fingered his wand. It would be only too easy to kill these pitiful creatures, after all, their true master had ordered them to do whatever he commanded.

"Stand in a line before me and be quiet," Albus commanded in a benevolent tone and watched in amusement as they hastened to obey, looks of contempt upon their faces the whole while.

Within moments the five elves were before him in a perfectly formed line. Now, how to kill them? He could always be merciful but then again he had quite a bit of anger which he needed to get rid of…

"You four are not to move," Albus commanded with a malicious smirk plastered upon his face.
"You will make no move to help, you will watch and stand frozen until given further instructions," Albus said absently as he moved until he stood before the fifth elf that had not been given those orders.

Yes, this would do quite well to rid himself of some of his frustrations.

"Crucio!"

The moment the smoke and dust began to settle from the explosion that he had just caused Charlie raced through the newly created opening with a desperate cry of Harry's name.

As he drew closer to the center of the cavern like room Charlies gaze was drawn to where a large golden mirror stood, looking as pristine as if it had never seen the inside of such a dirty room but the mirror was not what caused Charlies heart to both race in relief at finding his mate and constrict in terror at the sight of him.

Harry had dirt and blood covering him, the beginning of bruises covering his arms and face, small
scrapes and cuts were visible and his arm was lying at an odd angle that spoke of a break. Those were bad enough but the sight of his chest hardly rising as he drew breaths that were far too small and the thin trail of blood that was leaking from the corner of his mouth made Charlie feel frozen inside.

Just as Charlie was about to step forward towards his mate a spell was fired from behind the small group that had come to rescue the small Hufflepuff.

With a snarl of rage Charlie whirled around on his feet so that he was facing Quirrinus Quirrell who was currently standing near the hole in the wall that Charlie had created mere moments before.

As he gazed at the smirking Defence professor Charlie saw red. This was the bastard who thought it was a good idea to harm his soul mate, his Harry!? He would tear the man apart limb from limb much like one of his dragons would do.

As the others behind him readied their wands for the coming confrontation as well Charlie glanced back at his little Harry who looked far smaller as he laid in a heap against the mirror. They had to finish this and quickly…

As he shifted his weight Charlies attention was momentarily drawn to a small weight inside of his pocket. Reaching in slowly so as not to draw the others attention Charlie wrapped his fingers around the object inside…

A rough chalk like texture and the cold hard feeling that comes from metal… One of the keys? Charlie remembered that he had absentmindedly picked one of them up in his brief moment of shock, he must have shoved it inside of his pocket when they had began running again.

As Charlies attention was drawn to the figure in front of him again he could see that he was slowly beginning to creep towards the exit as the Professors accompanying him were asking questions about why he had done it.

With a quick glance at Darius who nodded they both moved quickly and cast protective wards that were strong enough to keep a dragon at bay, Charlie on the entrance and Darius over Harry since he was closer.

Charlie could see that Quirrell knew what had just been done as a look of rage tore across his expression and he began to fire hexes at a surprising speed, lacking the stutter that Harry had felt bad about him having. Harry was far too caring for his own good.

As Charlie dodged a blasting curse that had been thrown with a deadly accuracy he took a moment to once again survey the situation they found themselves in…

The Professors were all spread out in front of Quirrell, firing spells and deflecting them at an impressive rate, Darius and Mary were across the room on Quirrells other side and Charlie was the closest to Quirrells back just out of his peripheral vision now that he had turned ever so slightly to more fully face Flitwick who was launching an impressive barrage of spells himself.

Casting a quick illusion of himself to make it appear as though he were standing guard over his downed mate Charlie began to slowly edge himself further behind Quirrell being careful to not draw any attention. If he could get close enough he could take Quirrell down the muggle way since he appeared to be able to sense when spells got near him and move out of the way just in the nick of time.
Yes, if the others could keep Quirrell’s focus on them then he could do it, it was their best chance!

Edging closer Charlie had to hold back a curse of frustration as Quirrell flung himself forward to avoid a disarming charm that instead hit Charlie and sent his wand flying to the far corner of the room. For a brief second Charlie could see the panic which had entered into Mary’s eyes as she watched his wand fly but he was quick to reassure her before Quirrell noticed. He couldn’t be able to use it now anyway.

As Quirrell stood once again Charlie vaguely noticed that his turban was beginning to fall apart as his hand drifted towards his pocket.

Quirrell was standing straight once again and Charlies gaze was focused on the purple fold that began to fall away from the rest. Time seemed to slow as Charlies heartbeat sped within his chest at the sight that awaited him.

A face, its eyes closed but its brows furrowed as though it were focusing quite hard on something else.

Charlies gasp seemed to echo loudly within the room, it was the only thing that Charlie could hear as the previously closed eyes opened to reveal scarlet eyes which glared at him.

A hiss like voice came from the mouth and Charlie could feel his heart come to a sudden halt. He knew that voice! He had only heard it once before but it was burnt into his memory. That was the day that he had seen someone die, the day he understood why his uncles helped to fight against the evil man and the day that he truly understood that their world was at war.

"Voldemort," Charlie breathed out as his hand clutched around the singed key within his pocket as though it were a weapon.

"Kill him!” Voldemort hissed and, as Quirrell began to turn towards him, Charlie did something very brave and stupid that was driven by desperation, fear and anger.

With a cry of rage and reflexes honed through years of Quidditch and being surrounded by tempermental dragons Charlie shoved Quirrells shoulder away so he was turning in the opposite direction while he drew the key from his pocket with his other hand and, as the scarlet eyes were once again looking at him Charlie lunged.

Grabbing onto Quirrells shoulder to hold him still Charlie raised the key up and forced it forward with all of his strength until it was firmly positioned through one of those scarlet orbs which had widened in shock at his actions.

Twin screams of pain sounded from the figure as it crumpled to the ground and Charlie stumbled backwards. He was covered in splatters of blood from his attacks, most of which seemed to have focused on his face and hair.

As the figure continued to scream and writhe on the floor a black smoke like substance began to leak out of it and form into a black goo like ball which quickly seeped into the floor.

Charlie could feel his stomach constricting and the bubbling feeling in the back of his throat that was a tell tale sign of his impending vomit. As he fell to his knees heaving a lock of his previously red hair fell down from where it had been matted to his head and scarlet drops of anothers blood began to fall.

With a choked sob Charlie lost his battle against his stomach and vomited the contents of his stomach until nothing was left but dry heaves and the slight burn of stomach acid.
As he drew in labored breaths Charlie could just barely make out the sounds of the others moving around and the hushed sounds of stilted conversation.

Darius was working on taking down his shield so that Snape could check on Harry, McGonagall was casting a preservation spell on… The body, so that she could call in the proper authorities for this situation.

At the thought of the corpse laying mere feet from him Charlie could feel his previous nausea return but just as he was about to lose himself to his guilt and grief a small hand rested on his shoulder, shocking him out of his previous thoughts.

Looking up Charlie could see both Sprout and Flitwick kneeling beside him with understanding looks upon their faces, searching deeper Charlie could not see even an ounce of pity there. Just pure understanding and support.

"Sit up lad, I believe that we need to have a bit of a chat," Professor Sprout said softly as she reached forward to help ease him up as Flitwick summoned his wand.

"Harry-" Charlie began only to be cut off by Flitwick.

"Is in good hands. Right now we need to take care of you."

"But I'm perfectly fine. I'm-"

"You have just killed a man Charlie," Pomona Sprout said softly. "There is no use in sugar coating it. However, you did the right thing."

"How is that the right thing!? I just-"

"You protected your soul mate, friends and others. From Voldemort himself. You did a great thing Charles Weasley and we can not fault you for it. If any of us had been in your shoes we would have done the same thing and indeed we have quite a few times," Flitwick stated calmly as he moved so that he was sitting on the floor with his legs crossed. "I have lived through three wars, two fought between witches and wizards and one between goblins. I have had to take lives before, quite a few of them infact. It never gets easier, it never should. When you are no longer effected by the deaths of others that is when you need to move on."

"I myself have lived through two," Sprout continued, "Not one member of this staff has never taken a life, the difference between us and those who we fought against is that we did not want to kill. Killing is a last resort, but sometimes like right now for instance, it is the only one. Do not hate yourself for taking a life to protect those dear to you."

Charlie could feel his shoulders slump as a weight that he had never known was there slowly began to fade. "How did you-"

"Pomona! Filius!" McGonagall's slightly panicked voice called out causing the three to look up to where the others were standing around Harry and Severus' forms. Severus was currently force feeding Harry several potions as he muttered inaudibly to himself.

Standing quickly the three hurried over to the group, worry clenching at their heart once again.

"What is it Minerva?" Pomona asked quickly, the fear she felt for her little Badger growing exponentially as she saw the unshed tears that welled in the Transfiguration mistress' eyes.

"Severus has found evidence of multiple cruciatus curses cast upon Harry for an unknown length of
time, but even if they were only applied for a few seconds each the amount there could still prove a risk to his mental health. Add that on top of everything else that has happened today...."

"What can we do?" Filius asked quickly as a sob tore itself from Pomona's throat.

"We need to make an emergency portkey to the infirmary. I have already sent a patronus to warn Poppy. We need to act quickly."

"Of course Minerva," they said immediately as they began to cast the spells necessary as Charlie raced to his mates side.

As he walked to the main doors of the manor Albus absently spelled away the splatters of blood and viscera which clung to his robes from his previous… Recreational activities.

The first thing that he would have to do would be to get some money as well as a few more house elves. He, of course, could not access his vaults at the moment, far too risky after all. The goblins, insignificant beasts that they were would have no qualms against turning him in for the right price… No, he would get the money he needed in the same place that he would get his new elves.

With that decided Albus walked quickly to where Gellert had kept some of his more valuable items and, grabbing some that were unimportant and useless to himself, Albus left yet again, walking past the scattered bits that were left of the previous batch of elves.

Cleaning their remains up without magic would be his new elves' first task, it would serve as a lovely reminder of what would happen to them should they disobey or displease him.

Just before exiting the protective wards of the manor Albus cast a strong glamor upon himself that would give him the appearance of an average and plain looking man, how utterly boring but it had to be done.

Apperating himself to Schatten Alley, Germany's version of Nocturn Alley, Albus moved quickly with the hood of his now brown robes pulled up and his head bowed down.

Visiting each of the various shops which would buy 'procured' items Albus soon had a featherlight, undetectably expanded bag of galleons safely nestled within his inner robe pocket so that none of the pickpockets that littered the street would be able to get to it.

With that task done Albus began to walk further down the alley to where the less reputable businesses lay, making note of what was there so that he could come back in the future as he passed a brothel which advertised that they had young muggle children available. How positively delightful, he thought with a smirk as he passed, his eyes lingering on a small boy who was peering nervously from on of the upper windows. Interesting indeed.

Further down the alley he finally reached the business that he had come here for. Though it wasn't considered to be illegal like many of the other businesses located within the Alley the way that they went about their business was… Unpleasant for many.

Very few witches and wizards who were in search of house elves would actually visit the shops, instead they would hire someone else to or send an owl with their order and receive their purchase on a trial basis. The few who came to examine the elves at the shops were those who truly wished for a specific… Upbringing.

Not all of the shops that sold house elves were proper however. Quite a few of them were far too lenient with their elves. It was disgusting!
Upon entering the shop Albus found that he was quite pleased with what he saw though. *This* was a proper shop!

Lining the walls of the dimly lit room were wire cages stacked three high, each one containing anywhere from one to four elves each of varying age. None of the elves were wearing clothing and they appeared to cower away from him as he walked through the long and narrow room, pausing occasionally to peer inside a cage more closely and taking morbid pleasure from the fear that shone in their eyes.

Halfway through the room, as he paused to look at a cage filled with four elves, Albus couldn't help but chuckle as the only male elf within attempted to shield the three females with his own body. Looking closer at the elf Albus couldn't help but notice the similarity between this one's eyes and a certain emerald eyed boy.

Looking more closely at the elves wide green eyes that were equal parts fear and determination and he couldn't help but think of a different set of green eyes looking at him from behind the bars of a cage…

He could see it now, Harry huddled in a small ball against the bars of his cage, not even big enough for him to stretch out in. The beautiful emerald eyes filled with crystalline tears as he looked up at him, his skin exposed, nothing covered bar his wrists where magical suppressing cuffs bearing the Dumbledore symbol would lay, glinting in the flickering light of the single candle which he would so mercifully provide for the boy…

"I see you've taken an interest in this one have you sir?" An oily voice asked from behind him, effectively breaking him out of his pleasant day dreams.

"Yes actually I have," Dumbledore replied, reveling in the panic that entered the elves green eyes and how the others in its cage desperately clung to it. "Tell me, who are the three bitches in this cage to him?"

"His mate and two daughters sir," The man replied with a smirk as he moved forward, shooting sparks from his wand into the cage and cackling as those within shook in fear. "Don't you worry none though. I don't much care if you take em all, just him, or him and others. I don't bother with their 'emotions' they're nothing but beasts."

"I admire your ethics," Dumbledore said with a smirk as he backed away from the cage.

"I require four, one set of mates so that I might have more in the future and another bitch, I require that she is seperated from her mate here, and then I want him."

"Excellent choices sir," The man said with a cackle in his voice as he moved to a wall to gather together four lengths of rope before moving to a cage which contained two elves, one male and one female and tied the ropes around their throats before using it to drag them from their cage where they landed on the floor with a smack.

"What are their names?" Dumbledore asked absentmindedly as he watched the male hugging the bitches within his cage tightly.

"This pair here are Maggie and Earn, this bitch here is Opal," The man said as he tied another length of rope around said elves throat.

"And him?" Dumbledore prompted curiously.

"Dobby."
Charlie paced along the length of the infirmary in agitation. It had only been minutes since Madame Pomfrey had kicked him out of the small makeshift room that she and Severus were treating Harry inside. He shouldn't have asked all of those questions but they were shoving so many potions down his poor Harry's throat that he panicked. *Especially* after what Minerva had said about there possibly being mental damage!

He just wanted his Harry to be safe and happy and healthy, was that too much to ask for?

"Charlie, you need to sit down!" Mary finally snapped as she grabbed his shoulder and forced him to stop. "Look, when Harry wakes up he's going to want to see you, but how do you think he'll react if he sees you looking like this!? You at least need to clean yourself up a bit!"

"I am not about to leave this infirmary Mary! I can't! Not until I know that he's safe." Charlie yelled, his voice dropping down to a whisper as his shoulders slumped and he seemed to curl into himself.

"I'm not suggesting that you leave the infirmary Charlie," Mary said, her voice far more gentle now that she had his attention. "I'm suggesting that you ask one of the house elves for a bowl of soapy water, a washcloth and some clean clothes so that you can wash up here while you wait."

With a small sigh and a nod of his head Charlie did just as she had said, taking the requested items from the smiling elf and going behind a separation divider so that he could wash up.

It hadn't been very long since they arrived at the infirmary, not even half an hour at least. The other professors, apart from Snape, had gone to inform the rest of the staff what had happened and to call the appropriate authorities while Darius had gone back to the preserve to inform Sef that the three of them wouldn't be there for a few days as well as to gather some supplies for them.

At the beginning Charlie had been standing by Harry's side and watched as the potions master and the medi-witch worked on Harry; Poppy casting diagnostic spells to check what was wrong and what would need to be done while Snape had vanished all of Harry's clothes besides his underwear and began to spread a blue lotion like substance over every visible inch of Harry's abused flesh which vanished the dirt and debris while beginning to fade the multiple bruises and cuts.

Then they began to put potion after potion into Harry. So many that his stomach was filled and slightly bloated looking. That was when Charlie had panicked and was promptly kicked out.

With a tired sigh Charlie spelled the water clean yet again while trying to keep thoughts of why it was now red at bay as he did so.

He would have to speak with Flitwick and Sprout more later about what had happened and what he should do. His first instinct was to deny that anything had happened and try to forget about it but every time he'd consider it he would think about it being Harry who was going through this and the idea of him pushing something like this aside and suffering through it alone was like a lance through his heart.

No he wouldn't do that, not to Harry or to himself.

"Charlie," A soft voice called from the opening between the dividers, Charlie looked up to realize that it had been Poppy who spoke and he straightened up instantly earning a gentle smile from the Medi-Witch. "He's awake and perfectly fine, though he will be quite tired and rather sore. I'll give you a few minutes alone before he has to take a sleeping drought, he needs the rest."

With an excited shout Charlie rushed forward and picked the now shocked witch up before...
spinning her in a circle, kissing her cheek and rushing over to the dividers that hid his little love.

"Harry," He breathed out as he met the tired but happy emerald eyes of his soul mate.

"Charlie," Harry said with a small grin as he reached out for Charlie. "I knew you'd save me."

Authors Note: Whew! That took quite a bit to write but you lovelies are most definitely worth it! May this be your holiday present from me as well as an apology for my severe lateness and my promise to do better.

I hope that you enjoyed this story and I apologize for how dark this chapter got but that's just how the story is working out in my head. I hope to hear from you soon, no flames please, and I swear that I will have the next chapter up far faster than this one!

Good night my dear lovelies!

*Schatten Alley is Shadow Alley in German according to Google Translate.*
Authors Note: Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays you guys! I am extremely sorry that I have not updated in a year! I cannot begin to tell you how truly horrified I am with myself! There are no excuses but I will attempt to explain myself anyway. Between life, my job, college, and a few attempts at a romantic life I had lost my spark or been too busy or tired to write. However, thanks to my darling Pika I have been reminded to (and kept on track of) writing a new chapter. This chapter. Enjoy my loves!

Warning: Crude language! Also, some non-con. Not very much but still.

Disclaimer: I do not own Harry Potter. Only my horror at myself for making you all wait so long.

Chapter 34: Dobby’s New Home

Dumbledore apparated back to the gates of Gellert’s manor, allowing the glamours to fall away as he gave the four ropes in his hand a tug and causing three of his new elves to fall to their knees. Only one remained standing, bent ever so slightly from where the rope had tugged at his neck, looking up at him with those all too familiar green eyes…

Oh what those eyes did to him! If only they were two shades darker with that inner glow that only seemed to exist in his boys’ eyes.

Dobby hid a wince as he felt the rough rope digging into his neck from where his new master had tugged at it. Vaguely re registered the fact that his three fellow elves were currently kneeling in the dirt.

Dobby refused to kneel. He could see great evil and hunger inside of his new masters’ eyes. It was enough to make him shiver and his very being to dim from being near. Dobby would rather receive a hundred punishments than to willingly subjugate himself.

Yes, Dobby was nothing more than a house elf, but he was proud to say that he had a mind of his own.

Of course, it did help that his will was also being fueled by the fact that his new master had knowingly, willingly, and even joyfully separated him from his beloved family.

His precious mate and two darling girls. How he would miss them…

Albus smirked to himself as he took in the faces of his new elves.

Oh how he loved their faces as they took in his masterpiece. The blood, bone, and viscera that littered the previously pristine lawns of Grindelwald manor. The emerald grass was dyed the gruesome black of dried blood, the remains of the last five staff members for the manor spread
throughout the lawn.

From grass blades to the leaves of the closest tree his masterpiece reigned supreme. Oh how he wished that he could preserve this scene forever. But, that just would not work for his next plans. He may have been driven out for now, but he would be back. It was for the greater good after all…

“You will all clean this mess by hand. There will be no magic used outside of what I expressly allow. You may conjure a bucket and water, however that is all. You will not be permitted a sponge nor a shovel. What you cannot merely wipe away you will dig a hole and bury it. Once that it done you will spray yourselves down and walk to the manor. Wait for me on your knees before the main doors. I will get you when I have need of you further.”

With that Albus turned and strode away, the looks of horror that the elves had worn when he had given his instructions playing through his mind and putting a slight spring into his step.

Dobby ground his teeth together in anger as he watched their master punishing Opal. The poor girl who he had separated from her life mate as he had done to him.

This man was cruel. He enjoyed to see them suffer and now it became clear that he enjoyed to humiliate them as well.

For the whole day their master had refused to allow them to use their magic. It had taken them an hour to clean up the remains of the elder elves. The whole time they were completing their tasks Dobby could feel their magic slowly leaching back into the wards of the manor. Why had their master done this to the old ones? From what he could feel they had dedicatedly served their master and cared for the manor despite the lack of fresh magic being given to them.

Somehow their master had taken control of this manor and the elves without the wards fighting him…

After they had finished the appalling task of cleaning the old ones’ remains with only their hands they had knelt before the manors entrance for an additional hour before their master came and ordered them to prepare his dinner and clean the main rooms of the manor. This was to be done without magic as well.

Opal had been the one who was setting the table when their master had suddenly shot a streak of red light, which Dobby knew from experience would give a terrible sting, at her. Opal had dropped the plate in her hands due to her sudden shock at the action and had kept it from braking with her magic. Of course, that meant that Opal had broken their masters’ rules and was to be punished.

That punishment did not have to be this though! They were all prepared for the punishments that they received from mister Boris at the store.

Scalding water, physical punishments, curses, hexes, lashes and deprivation. They could handle those, but this?

A ragged sob from in front of him drew Dobby’s attention back to where his master was punishing Opal who had tears rolling down her cheeks.

Their master had summoned Opal to him after she had used her magic on reflex. From there he had pulled her to him so that her back was against his chest before thrusting one of his large hands between her legs while the other held onto her chest.
“You are mine,” Their master had said, “If I decide that I want to fuck you then I will. Do you think that anyone would care? No. You are nothing more than I allow you to be. Do you understand that bitch!?"

Opal was openly sobbing as she shook within their masters’ arms. When she failed to reply their master did something with his hands that made opal scream as a dribble of blood slowly began to run down her thing.

“Yes! Yes, yes, yes, yes. Yes, master!” She managed to squeak out before he shoved her away so that she fell into a shivering heap on the floor before him.

Dobby jumped in shock when their masters’ gaze met his before a slow smirk spread across his face.

“That goes for you as well, for all of you really, but especially for you. If you fail to do what I want of you, or if I just feel in the mood, your punishment will be much, much worse…”

“Is you all right Opal?” Dobby asked his fellow elf as they made up a small nest for the four of them to sleep in for the night.

“Yes Dobby,” Opal whispered softly as she meticulously smoothed out the wrinkles from the makeshift bedding.

“What did he do’s to you? Dobby can guess, but humans aren’t supposed to mate with elves’. And he didn’t mate with you’s, it was close, but he didn’t.”

“He…” A shiver tore through Opals small frame as she seemed to curl in on herself further. “Master put his hand over…. Then he… It hurted Dobby.”

A weight settled over Dobby’s heart at the verification of what he had thought happened. Why would their master do that? He had violated a life mate bond! Their master had also made it clear that he was more than willing to do so again as well.

“If you fail to do what I want of you, or if I just feel in the mood, your punishment will be much, much worse.”

A shiver ran down dobby’s spine as he remembered the words that his master had directed towards him.

What did he mean? He couldn’t possibly mean that he would mate him! Humans did not mate with elves. Unless…

A flash of his masters’ eyes from when they had first come to the manor, when Dobby had refused to kneel as the others had. The hunger and greed within his gaze… It was directed at someone else though, not at Dobby. His gaze had focused on Dobby’s eyes. So somehow Dobby reminded his master of someone with green eyes? That poor soul whoever they may be…

“Daddy!” Dobby jerked as he heard his precious Thimble’s voice sound from beside him. Turning Dobby soaked in the sight of his darling girl. How he had missed her!

“Daddy!” Twinkle, his gorgeous little Twinkle, called from his other side.
“Dobby,” His mates voice called, seeming to shake with happiness as he once again turned so that he could face her. Her big brown eyes and adorable nose just as he remembered them.

“My girls,” Dobby sobbed as he went to reach for them only to find his arms restrained to his side with the same rough rope that he had tied around his throat earlier that day. “What?”

“Daddy!” His girls screamed in terror as he watched them be drug off by some invisible force into cages.

“No!” Dobby yelled out as he struggled against the ropes which bound him until he could feel them digging into his skin painfully.

“Dobby!” The fearful shout of his precious mate screamed as a cruel chuckle sounded through the noise and straight to his very soul.

Turning Dobby’s heart sank as he saw his life mate in the same position as Opal had been earlier, his masters’ eyes trained on him as he violated his mate. Slowly his master raised his wand and his darling mate fell to the floor in a flash of green light.

“Winky!”

Authors Note: Okay you guys, I wish that I could write more for you but it is currently four in the morning on Christmas and I need to get at least a little sleep! Though before I go I will say this, I will do my absolute best to update at LEAST once a month! Pika will make sure of that. She’s been very good at trying to get me back on task despite my rebellious mind. I love you all! I apologize! Now I must sleep. Before I pass out. Enjoy the chapter!
Coming Together Again

Little Dragon

Authors Note: Happy late Valentines day my darlings! Sorry that this chapter is short but I really wanted to get it posted for you all to enjoy!

Disclaimer: I do not own Harry Potter, I own only the soda and peppermint bark that I'm using to keep myself awake.

Chapter 35: Coming Together Again

Molly sighed despondently as she once again looked at the clock above the mantle. Dinner time had come and gone and yet Arthur was still not home. He had floo called to let her know that he may be home late since there had been yet another case of a toilet spraying boiling water at any muggle who had the misfortune to use it. Of course she did not eat dinner alone.

She had instead played host to the two newest members of her family, Sirius Black and Remus Lupin. Oh how excited Harry was going to be when he found out that Sirius had been granted a clean bill of health!

Molly could not wait for summer vacation to come. Oh how she missed having her darling children at home, she missed cooking a large spread of delicious food for the family; usually Harry would assist her, something that warmed her heart; attempting to hide her amusement at one of Fred and Georges pranks, missed Ron sneaking into the kitchen for food and Percy asking to be taken to the muggle library; his new favorite place to spend his time, so like his father; even Ginny was rarely around during the school year instead preferring to spend time at the Lovegood residence.

"Molly? Are you alright?" Remus' gentle tone broke her out of her musings.

"I'm fine Remus," Molly said with a sad smile as she took another sip of her tea. "I am just thinking of how quiet it is here this school year. Ginny has always liked going over to the Lovegoods but Ronnie always preferred it here. I must admit... I miss the chaos."

"That's understandable Molly," Sirius said with a grin as he sat forward from his reclined position on the couch. "Euthemia used to say the same thing when we got off of the Express. Said it was too quiet."

"That it is," Molly agreed as her eyes once again drifted towards the clock on the mantle only to freeze in horror as, once again, Harry's hand was stationed firmly on 'Mortal Peril.'

"Oh Merlin no," Molly managed to get out as her body began to tremble as her fear threatened to consume her. Not Harry. Not my Harry.

"Molly?" Remus asked in concern as the matrons face lost all color that it had previously help, her form trembling in the chair that she had seated herself on. "What is it? What's wrong?"

"Do we need to call a healer?" Sirius asked as he began to stand so that he could reach the Floo faster.

Their answer came in the form of a single shaking hand raising and pointing just above the fireplaces mantle where the shining silver spoon which was adorned with Harry's grinning face
pointed straight down to where the words 'Mortal Peril' were etched in deceivingly cheery font.

"We have to go," Molly whispered as she stood, eyes still glued to Harry's hand on the clock, not noticing how Charlie's had moved to show that he was 'Travelling'. "We need to get to Hogwarts now! Quickly, out past the front gate, we'll apparate to the edge of the wards."

"Molly wait! We can't apparate there," Remus said trying and failing to keep the panic from his voice. "Dumbledore controls the wards. if we apparate there he'll know and who knows what he'll do to Harry to cover this up? We need to be smart about this. Perhaps the Night Bus?"

"That would take too long!" Molly said fretfully as she began to pace, "Oh I knew that I should have picked up some more floo powder!"

"Floo wouldn't work either anyways Molly," Remus reminded as he too began to pace around the small living room.

"Honeydukes."

"What?" Remus asked turning to face Sirius with a confused look on his face. "Sirius, this is no time to be thinking of candy! Harry is in danger!"

"I know that!" Sirius growled back at the irate werewolf, "I meant that if we go to Honeydukes we can use the 'One Eyed Witch Passageway.' It's not warded."

This brought Remus to a full stop as he looked at his lover in surprise.

"That's... Genius Sirius," Remus said stunned before turning to face a confused Molly, "That's why the secret passages are prone to collapsing, they don't have any wards like the rest of the castle does. Dumbledore won't know that we're there until it's too late."

Harry felt as though he had been burnt to a crisp. His skin felt stiff and every movement, even something as simple as breathing, left him in agony as lightning crackled across his skin.

What had happened?

Something... Something big.

Something that made him feel as though there was a gaping hole in his chest... He wanted Charlie.

Charlie!

Oh god, Charlie was there, he had felt him! Even though his blood had been boiling Charlie's presence had still calmed his very being.

Was Charlie okay!? He had to be, Harry couldn't lose Charlie he just couldn't.

Opening his eyes Harry quickly shut them again to shield himself from the bright white light that surrounded him. He was dead wasn't he? But... If he were dead why was he still in pain?

Death was supposed to take all of his pain away wasn't it? And if he were dead then he'd never get to see Charlie again. Unless Charlie was dead too...

No! Charlie couldn't be dead!

Forcing his eyes open once again and forcing them to remain so despite the burn Harry took in his
surroundings and felt himself relax.

The hospital wing.

He was in the hospital wing.

But... Where was Charlie?

Sitting up Harry bit back a scream of pain as a flash of agony coursed through him. Leaning back on his arms Harry attempted to catch his breath only to discover that his arms were trembling uncontrollably and could not hold his meager weight.

Leaning forward instead so that his nose almost touched his knee Harry took several greedy gulps of air before throwing his legs over the side of the bed.

He could do this, he thought while eyeing the privacy curtain that was hung up across from his bed. All he had to do was stand and take a couple of steps.

"It is good to see you awake Mr. Potter, though I suggest that you don't stand up quite yet."

Harry looked up in shock only to meet the amused and concerned gaze of Poppy Pomfrey.

"Ma'am," Harry said, his throat dry and his voice hoarse causing him to pause so that he could swallow. "I was just-

"About to get an examination," She cut him off with a smirk as she moved forward and gently pushed him back onto the pillows, her touch causing a hiss of pain to escape his throat as though he was burnt. "I know that you must be in severe pain, you were under that dreadful curse for a rather long time. Now, take this potion to ease the residual effects and we will do a test to determine your mental status."

Harry took the sickly yellow looking potion from the matron and gulped it down before asking the question that was now circling around his mind like a shark.

"My mental status?"

"Yes dear," Madame Pomfrey sighed as she sat on the edge of his bed and gently ran her fingers through his hair, "The Crucius curse causes unimaginable pain, too long under it's effects can cause permanent effects. The tremors that are running through your body are one. They should go away with that last dose of pain. A compromised mental status is another. The curse has been known to drive people mad with no hope to improve. Now, I of course know that you are not mad, however, it has also been known to damage memory among other things. I just want to make sure that you don't have any lasting damage alright?"

"Okay," Harry said with a deep breath as he silently sent up a prayer that he was okay. He was already a freak with a past that had left him damaged, he didn't want yet another thing to add to the list.

"Alright dear, what is your full name?"

"Harry James Potter."

"When were you born?"

"July 31st, 1980."
On the questions went until finally, "Where are you now?"

"I'm in the hospital wing at Hogwarts."

"Well done Mr. Potter," Poppy said with a grin as she stood up. "Now, it seems that all of your mental facilities are intact. You have a very anxious mate who has been waiting to see you. I shall get him and bring him in here to you."

"Charlie's here?" Harry asked as a smile bloomed across his face and he sat up. "Thank you Madam Pomfrey!"

"You are quite welcome dear," Poppy said with a smile as she walked back out of the curtains that surrounded Harry's bed.

Mere moments after the medi witch had left an excited shout and giggling reached Harry's ears causing him to smile fondly before his gaze focused in on where the sound of footsteps could be heard rapidly drawing nearer.

The curtain was thrown open to show a grinning Charlie who's hair was dripping wet, a small trail of water running down his neck and soaking into the collar of his white t-shirt.

"Harry," He breathed, sounding so relieved that it caused Harry's heart to swell with love for the man across from him.

"Charlie," Harry said with a grin as he held his hand out for his mate, "I knew you'd save me."

"Always," Charlie swore as he took Harry's small hand into his much larger callused one. "I will always save you."

"Good," Harry breathed out as he tugged gently on Charlies on causing him to move over to the bed, seating himself on the edge beside Harry. "Because you're stuck with me. Forever."

"Forever," Charlie agreed as he bent down and caught Harry's lips with his own.

The kiss was soft and gentle, no more than a simple press of the lips, and yet it was precisely what the two of them needed as their very souls seemed to sing in triumph at being reunited.

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**Authors Note:** So, two new college courses, a boss that is just like Delores Umbridge and a Center Director who is her Cornelius Fudge... It has not been a fun time for me my dears. However, thank you to my amazing muse master Pica who has been keeping me on track of my writing like Hermione does for Ron Weasley when it comes to Homework.

Yes, this was pretty much a filler chapter with some POV’s from different characters. The next chapter will be more plot centered, promise!

Happy reading my dears!
"You boys used to do this for fun?" Molly panted out as she stumbled over yet another obtrusive rock on the already uneven path. "You must have lost your minds!"

"I'm starting to believe that myself Molly," Remus huffed from where he stood hunched over in the corridor to prevent his head from hitting against the low ceiling.

Molly would admit to being happy that she wasn't very tall in this moment. Yes there was a point where Molly had to crawl through a particularly narrow portion of the corridor, however she was not the one that spent the whole trek doubled over as Sirius and Remus had.

"I remember this passage being taller," Sirius grunted out as he stubbed his toe on the same rock that Molly had just tripped over.

"Please tell me that we are almost there!" Molly groaned as she rubbed at a spot on her head that had just collided with a portion of the ceiling.

"It should be just around this curve," Remus said with a pleased groan as he was finally able to stand at his full height as the passageway grew to a decent height once again.

"Thank Merlin," Molly breathed as she stepped around the curve and looked at the stairs before her with a critical eye. "So these steps will take us into Hogwarts?"

"Yes, since the steps are already here we should only need to cast the spell at the top to get out."

"What do you mean since the stairs are out? Are they not always here?" Molly asked incredulously.

"Nope," Sirius chuckled as he clapped Molly on the shoulder, "When you go through the passage
towards Honeydukes you cast 'disscendium' and it becomes a slide, coming back you have to cast 'ascendunt' and the slide becomes stairs like these."

"And how exactly did you boys find this out?" Molly asked as she raised an amused eye towards Sirius.

"We didn't actually," Sirius said with a bittersweet smile as he lovingly caressed the corridors side. "James did. No idea what possessed him to try, but he did and it became one of the corridors that we used the most."

Molly allowed the two a moment for fond memory before the crushing reality of the situation once again set in.

"Alright," Remus said gruffly, "Wands out, we don't know what were walking into."

Molly grabbed her wand and held it tightly in her fist as she climbed the steps and tried not to imagine what her sweet little Harry was going through.

Once the three of them were at the top of the short staircase Remus cast the spell in a mere whisper and they all cringed at the loud grating sound that echoed through the empty corridor before them.

The ominous feeling of dread settled over them as they strained their ears to listen for sound only to find silence, even the ever present grating of the changing staircase was missing leaving only a crushing silence in its wake.

Trading a nervous look the three worried souls stepped out and into the corridor beyond. The grating sound of the passageway closing drew Molly's eye as she turned to watch the hump of Grunhilda of Gorsemoorin close once again.

Wands held tightly the trio began to creep along the corridor towards the still silent stairwell, hoping beyond hope that the stairwells had at least stopped in a way that they could still climb up towards the infirmary. If nothing else they would be able to use Poppy's floo to access the headmasters office, that would be much better that trying to sneak through the castle that was under Dumbledore's control.

Finally making it to the staircase the three looked around in confusion, all of the staircases were frozen in midair between platforms, none of them were accessible, not even the ones on the lower levels...

How were they going to get to the infirmary!? 

Just as this thought entered their minds the sound of rushed footsteps sounded from behind a tapestry just a short ways down the hall.

Molly looked at her companions in confusion as they quickly pulled her into a small recess in the wall.

"It's one of the hidden staircases," Sirius whispered as he aimed his wand towards the tapestry.

"Don't cast until we know who it is," Remus reminded him tensely as his nostrils flared, trying to pick up a scent.

Molly's frantic heartbeat was nearly enough to drown out the echoing flurry of footsteps as she aimed her wand towards the tapestry, a spell on her lips ready to be cast.
As the crescendo of footsteps reached its peak Molly's hands grew clammy forcing her to adjust her grip upon the smooth Ash wood.

The tapestry was suddenly flung aside as a familiar tartan clad witch rushed out of the hidden passageway.

"Minerva!" Molly gasped in relief as she staggered from the niche she had just hidden in.

"Molly," Minerva gasped with a start as her hand flew to her chest and she leaned against the rough wall beside her.

"Minerva where is Harry? What's happened to him?" Molly rushed through the question clinging to the elder witch desperately.

"Quirrell," Minerva breathed out looking older than Molly could remember her ever being before. "He wasn't who we thought he was. Harry's in the infirmary and Dumbledore has fled. Go through this tapestry and the passage will take you straight to the infirmary. I am heading to the Ministry now. Charlie will be able to tell you more I'm sure."

"Charlie's here!?" Molly asked wide eyed, honestly she should not be so surprised, those boy were soul mates after all.

____________________

Harry was trapped in a dream. He had to be.

There was no way that he could truly be back at the Dursley's residence. They were gone and out of his life for good, never to be seen again.

And yet here he was...

Huddled under the immaculately trimmed oak tree in the back yard of Number 4 Private Drive, clutching desperately to the small pup he had found abandoned in the park and attempted to smuggle into the backyard. A giant shadow looming behind him causing him to tremble in fear as his uncles voice boomed around him.

"Boy! What do you think you're doing bringing that filth into my house!?"

Harry flinched at the words directed towards him as he pulled the trembling pup closer to his chest.

A heavy boot kicked into his back flinging him forward, Harry rolled in an attempt to shelter the pup as his eyes searched frantically for an escape.

Thick fingers grasped at his hair, painfully tugging it away from his scalp as his head was painfully jerked backwards.

Vernon's malicious grin swam before his eyes as the small pup was tugged from his arms, a pained whimper escaping from its muzzle.

"This," Vernon hissed as he viciously shook the pup, "This is what I should have done the second you showed up on my doorstep."

With that Vernon Dursley threw the pup to the grass below and brought his foot down in a crushing blow, only the sound of the wind and the pups final yelp sounding through Harry's ears as the world faded to black.

____________________
Authors Note: I am typing this note after coming home from the hospital. Turns out that working with 19 children a day is actually pretty dangerous. For the last week I had pain in my shoulder that was just getting worse. Finally broke down and got checked. I have impingement tendentious which is an inflammation of my rotator cuff with the possibility of a tear. Lovely.

Sorry that this chapter is a little short! Right after making the above note I came down with a stomach flu and have spent the last day and a half getting sick.

Again, happy birthday Chelsea! Sorry I couldn't get everything that I wanted into the chapter. :( 
Assistance Arrives

Little Dragon

Authors Note: I am so sorry for the wait my darlings, between my body deciding to turn against me and forcing me to spend a week in the hospital, and taking care of a new baby I haven't had the time or energy to work on this story. To add to this mess, when I finally have found the time I discovered that this chapter has been deleted. Fear not! I, as always, have the main plot points memorized and am using them to recreate the chapter, though it seems that my characters have decided that they wish to change the original script. Very well, I am merely here to tell their tales after all. Nothing more. I find that if I fight them, they pout like little children and no one is happy. I spoil them, I know. Anywhozles~! Enjoy the new chapter my loves!

Disclaimer: I don't own anything but a wild and often flighty imagination which I have decided to unleash upon my innocent readers.

Chapter 37: Assistance Arrives

Charlie looked down at the precious bundle in his arms with a fond grin, the tremors and twitches that were caused by the Cruciatus curse damaging his nerves were almost completely gone thanks to the potion that Professor Snape had provided, now the effects were down to a twitch every twenty seconds or so. Closing his eyes he focused on the steady inhale and exhale of Harry's breathing, on the thrum of a healthy heart below his hand. Finally, Charlie could feel the tension and worry of the day finally begin to leave him as he was finally able to relax.

Sinking back into the bed Charlie mused at how it was even possible for his precious little mate to provide more excitement than even the most finicky of his beloved dragons. To think, he had chosen to work with dragons for the thrills and adventure; of course his love for creatures did help to make his choice much easier; little did he know that being on the wrong end of an angry dragons flame was not even close to the feeling of knowing that his mate could be in danger. An imminent threat to his life was nothing when compared to the mere thought that Harry was hurt and he could do nothing about it.

With a deep sigh Charlie finally allowed his tense muscles to loosen as he cuddled his precious bundle closer, drawing steadily closer to Morpheus' embrace.

"Charlie," Madame Pomfrey's voice drew his attention towards the privacy curtain that separated them from the rest of the world, stifling a groan Charlie carefully maneuvered himself so that Harry could lay more comfortably. A tense moment passed in which Charlie held his breath waiting for Harry to wake up from his slumber but apart from a small snuffle Harry did not wake, his face still smooth and untroubled in the blissful embrace of oblivion.

"Yes Madame Pomfrey?" Charlie asked as he slowly shifted off of the small bed, being careful to not cause the bed to dip and disturb Harry.

Madame Pomfrey gestured her chin towards the bottle of lavender potion nestled in the crook of her arm. "I thought the poor dear could use a dreamless night after today, but lets let the poor dear sleep. He seems to be doing just fine on his own." With a fond smile Poppy smoothed the unruly locks of raven hair back only to stifle a laugh when the stubborn locks merely bounced back into
their previous positions.

"Minerva has gone to fetch the DMLE, I thought it would be best if we were all aware of what happened. The last thing that we need is to leave a whole for Albus to slither through.

With a weary sigh Charlie scrubbed his hands against his face before bending and placing a loving kiss on Harry's forehead hoping that he wouldn't wake before he returned.

"This is such a mess," Charlie breathed out, looking at Poppy with weary eyes that had seen far to much in his short life. It broke Poppy's heart to think that the look in his eyes was not likely to go away anytime soon.

Molly had forgotten just how much energy it took to climb all of the stairs that one must when traversing through Hogwarts. Not even half way up the stairwell Molly could feel her heart rate sky rocketing, her breathing becoming slightly harder, the air burning its way through her system as her muscles protested the abuse they were currently undergoing. However, judging from the huffing, puffing and cursing that was happening behind her the boys were doing no better than she was.

What seemed like hours later the top of the staircase was finally visible much to her relief, she could hardly feel anything outside of the ache of her muscles and the panic in her heart.

Just a little farther Molly!

Just a bit more!

Twenty more stairs until the top!

Fifteen!

Ten!

Almost there!

Finally!

Not slowing her speed in the least Molly sprinted across the platform, shoving the portrait on the other end out of the way and dashing down the corridor towards the infirmary, her wand drawn and a curse on her tongue for anyone foolish enough to get in her way.

"So what exactly happened?" Charlie asked the second the privacy curtain was closed behind him, looking around at those who were gathered, searching desperately for an answer. "He wasn't being left alone, not for a moment. He said that Neville's even taken to waiting for him outside of the loo!"

Pomona's head was bowed as she stared blankly at the steaming cup of tea that she had clutched in her hand. "They were ambushed. Neville and Harry were walking to the common rooms when they were attacked from behind, Neville was rendered unconscious in the attack. When he was found the school went on lock down but it still took us time to do that. Merlin only knows what could have happened had this been a weekend or had they left that library earlier than they did, who knows how long it would have taken us to find him."

A shiver of dread forced its way down Charlie's spine as the picture that Professor Sprout was
painting worked its way through his mind like black ink seeping into the snow. Shaking his head in a desperate attempt to rid himself of the image Charlie spoke again, his voice rough with emotion.

"Isn't there something that keeps you aware of situations like these? Hogwarts is shrouded in wards!"

"There is," Severus drawled from where he was seated in the chair facing the entrance to the infirmary, ever aware and vigilant of possible danger. "It is located in the Headmasters office. When it went off Albus locked down his office and fled like the coward he apparently is."

Charlie let out a groan as he lifted his arm to rub and squeeze at the base of his skull where he could already feel a ball of tension forming.

"Alright. So, Quirrell, Vol-, Volde-, You-Know-Who, whoever that was! Took Harry and knocked out Neville, Dumbledore ran away, then what? All I know is what we went through."

"You don't know much less than we do I'm afraid," Filius said gently as he absentmindedly stirred his rapidly cooling tea thoughts far away in a time he had hoped to forget. "Two of us went to find and detain Albus while the rest went to get mister Potter. We left Hagrid with the Cerberus while we continued on ahead to start dismantling our defenses. You caught up with us in the potions room. You know everything after that."

Before Charlie could think of an appropriate response the sound of rapid footsteps met his ears. Drawing his wand and directing it towards the entrance to the infirmary Charlie waited. Friend or foe he would be ready.

As the doors burst open, a curse at the tip of his tongue, the first thing he saw was red. Weasley Red.

'Mother.'

"Mom," Charlie called causing the Weasley matriarch to stop which then caused a man with black hair and one with tawny brown to run into her. "Sirius, Remus? Why? How?"

"Is Harry alright Charlie!?" Molly cut in over his confused questions. "We were sitting down for tea when I saw his hand-.

"Harry is alright mum," Charlie cut in, heart aching at the site of his mothers watery brown eyes. "He's here and he's safe."

"Oh thank Merlin," Molly said wearily as her body began to sag, Sirius and Remus moving forward to help steady her as Filius quickly conjured a plush ottoman for the witch to sink down on. "What happened?"

"Precisely what I would like to know," a stern voice said from the direction of the hearth. Spinning quickly Charlie was greeted by the austere countenance of one Amelia Bones dancing within the now emerald flames.

"Oh Madame Bones!" Madame Pomfrey said in surprise as she quickly made her way towards the fireplace, "Let me help you through, how many are coming?"

"Myself, Minerva, and a group of about twenty Aurors to sweep the grounds and castle." Amelia said before turning away, the indiscernible cadence of a conversation hidden in the slight crackle and popping of the flames.
As Poppy moved to tap her wand to the fireplace in order to allow them access to the infirmary Charlie straightened.

Tilting his head to the side he could faintly make out the sound of sobs, echoing and distant as though he were standing at the mouth of a very large cave.

"Harry."

With that Charlie spun on his heel and made his way towards the privacy curtain pulling it aside just in time for the gathered audience to hear the sounds of terror from within...

As Charlie worked to calm Harry from his nightmare and the other occupants of the room watched the scene in worry, Amelia had quickly dispatched the Auror's in teams of two and three to each of the common rooms, the headmasters office, out onto the grounds, and down to where everything had taken place that night. After all of the teams had left to their posts only one Auror had remained behind with her to ensure that the memories that she was to collect were untampered. It was going to be a long night...

Authors Note: Now that this chapter is complete I would like to take a moment to thank everyone for their well wishes! Turns out that if it isn't one thing with me it's another. Most recently this thing being a nasty bout of Pancreatitis that had me in the hospital for a week and out of work for two. Believe me my dears, the lack of updates irritates me as well. When I first began this story I was a high school student who used the lulls in class and homeroom to my advantage to write the chapters. To be honest I miss that time, everything was simpler. Now I am a grown woman who works and takes care of two five year old's and a newborn. By the time they are put to bed I have no energy left to tell my tales. I will try to do better though my darlings, I swear it.

Also, thank you all for letting me know what countries you are in! It is fascinating to know. And fear not, I have heard your opinions of google translate. I will not use it, I will simply have to entrust my child to someone else so that they may translate it.
Little Dragon

Authors Note: Happy New Year! Thank you all for your lovely reviews last chapter, it seems however, that only one of you lovelies caught onto what will happen this chapter! :) Another wonderful thank you to my muse master Pica for helping to keep me on track. I honestly believe that she would like to strangle me sometimes, well, either me or my muse. Now, this chapter is short for which I cannot apologize enough, but I really want to get a chapter up tonight and am on the verge of falling asleep. Please see the end authors note for my reasoning. Now, while short I sincerely hope that you enjoy it regardless!

Disclaimer: I would really hope that the fact that I don't own Harry Potter would be obvious by now, I can't afford to buy Harry Potter, I can't even afford these hospital bills. They won't accept my knuts, sickles, and galleons, they seem to want muggle money, of which I have very little. How odd.

Chapter 38: Into the Den

Nymphadora Tonks was many things, clumsy, goofy, wild, an amazing Auror if she could get just a little more practice, but most of all she was a proud Hufflepuff. As such Tonks knew of every rule and routine that the Hufflepuff house had. After the events of tonight? There was no doubt in her mind that the Den had been put on lock down.

Why wouldn't Amelia listen to her when she said that it was a bad idea to go ahead and do a sweep of the common rooms?

Oh, right. because she had only just graduated from the academy and become a patrolling Auror. Wet behind the ears and all that rubbish.

Squaring her shoulders Tonks tries one last time to warn Dawlish of what they were about to face, if he did not listen to her now then that was that and at least she could enjoy the shock on his face when he came face to face with the inhabitants of the Den.

"Dawlish, when we get there please don't-.

"Tonks, no more. I won't hear anymore of this ambush rubbish. These are children still, and we are trained Aurors, even if they managed to attack us there would be no harm done." Dawlish all but snarled, his shoulders tight with aggravation. The Ravenclaw was a good Auror, but he tended to have a rather one track mind when it came to how to handle a situation properly.

With a mental shrug and a shake of her head Tonks continued on. Hopefully some of the older students would recognize her and simply bind her. As they approached the hidden entrance to the common room Tonks quickly sent a Patronus not to Amelia but rather Pomona Sprout. She would be the only one able to calm the badgers after what was about to happen...
The entrance to the Common Room glew a bright green color causing the students closest to the doorway to move back.

"Someone is trying to override the password," Austin Kirsty said as he drew his wand and leveled it at the door. "Aim to incapacitate only. Jinxes and Hexes. Older students to the front, first years to the back."

With the orders given the students fell into position quickly, the seventh years at the front, followed by the sixth years until the entirety of Hufflepuff house surrounded the doorway with their wands raised and a spell on their lips...

The silvery whisps of magic came together to form the shape of a jack rabbit, the message which has been bestowed upon it to deliver echoing continuously within its mind as it made its way through the halls of Hogwarts searching for its destined recipient.

Pomona Sprout, 49 years old, will be 50 on May 15th, Aura is green with yellow swirls, magic is light based, last know location according to caster is the school infirmary...

There.

Now, just to deliver the message so that I may fade.

The silvery figure dove through the thick walls that separated the infirmary from the corridor and quickly came to a stop in front of the appropriate recipient, sparing no thought to the others within the room.

The jaw of the rabbit dropped and the message which made up its being was finally delivered, a little more of the rabbits magic fading with each word spoken.

'Professor Sprout, we are just outside of the Den, Dawlish is attempting to bring down the locking charms. We need assistance immediately. '

With a bright flash of green the charms used to keep the Dens entrance locked came down. A moment of hesitancy passed through the Badgers in the room as they waited for the portal to open, one last breath so that they could cast their spells, some students adjusting their holds on their wands.

They were ready, they had been given their orders and they were prepared for whatever was about to come...

There! The sound of movement behind the portal refocused their attention as they heard the faint sound of a woman's voice hissing words which were indiscernible as the doorway was pushed open and a tall figure dawned in a plain grey trench coat, a wand held loosely at his side. As the figures light blue eyes took in the Hufflepuff students and their many wands pointed at him there was only time for one shocked breath before the spells began to fly and all that was visible became bright flashes of color accompanied by the ringing cries of various spells.
Tonks watched the catastrophe in amusement from the safety of her shield charm, pride for her fellow Hufflepuffs swelling within her.

Ever since her first year at Hogwarts Professor Sprout had emphasized the need for teamwork, cooperation, and unity. Of course they had never had a true need to show it at such a level when she had still been in school but they had been ready. She herself had felt great pride in being voted as one of the Houses delegates.

The delegates were those whom everyone in the Den had decided would be best to take charge and make the appropriate decisions for the other members of their house. Though not many could usually tell there was indeed a chain of command within Hufflepuff.

No, it wasn't as flashy or obvious as it was with the other houses. They didn't have a prince and princess like Slytherin, or the 'rowdiest of them all' as seemed to be Gryffindors leaders, nor did they exude the obvious superiority as Ravenclaws had. No, Hufflepuff as a whole ran rather smoothly, all disagreements being handled quickly and privately so that it did not appear as though Hufflepuff had any conflict at all. The only time that the delegates were really needed was when there was a larger problem that could not be handled individually or if there was some other necessary emergency.

Looking at the collapsed form of Dawlish, Tonks carefully put her wand on the floor allowing the shield to fade as she raised her arms above her head.

"Take my wand and bind me, Professor Sprout is on her way down. You have all done well protecting the Den, I'm proud," Tonks said, a large smile stretching her cheeks.

As thick bands of magical ropes wrapped tightly around her chest Tonks let her gaze drift once again towards Dawlish's downed form and tried desperately to stifle a giggle.

The mans skin was now various shades of purple, grey, and orange; his signature trench coat either singed or transformed into various objects such as needles or torn and braided thanks to several beauty charms; his own bogeys flapping around his head and attacking, and finally to top off the image the man was also covered in glitter.

Needless to say Tonks lost the battle against her laughter.

**Authors Note:** Okay, so hopefully this turned out well, I've been trying to finish this chapter all day. As my luck would have it every time I go to save my internet kicks me off and I have to redo all that I have written. I will not lie to you my darlings, I am a little buzzed at the moment, it's New Years Eve and I'm celebrating with a couple members of my family (who are not making finishing this chapter any easier). So... Again, hopefully this came out decently. If not I will fix it later.

**P.s.** Please do not take Tonks' views on the head students in the other houses as my own. Tonks' views are her own, I am just the one that she chooses to express them through. My own thoughts on this matter will be tucked into this story as well, though I doubt it will be stated outright.

**Happy reading my lovelies! May 2018 treat you better than 2017 has!**
The Calvary Arrives

Little Dragon

Authors Note: Hello my lovelies! I hope that you are all doing well and reasonably happy despite my rather inopportune disappearance yet again. My life could probably be a soap opera at this point. So! Update time on just why I've been missing... I have quit my job with Umbitch and Fudge, I am now working somewhere much better and am quite a bit happier for it! :D I have moved to a much smaller but much more affordable home, have acquired a gorgeous boy by the name of Didgets who has seven toes on each paw! I was also involved in a car crash which injured my leg so I had to take some time off for that to heal. However! I am much better now! The sun is shining, the skies are bright, I have a plethora of new animals, my leg is healing, and my new job is amazing. Happy author equals more fluff in the future! ;)

Disclaimer: I own naught but my own giddy happiness at all currently within my life! Also, I do not own the rights to the happy birthday song!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO MY AMAZING MUSE MASTER PIKA! WE SHOULD ALL BOW BEFORE HER FOR WITHOUT HER THIS CHAPTER WOULD STILL BE A FEW WEEKS OFF. OR NO UPDATE WOULD BE IN THE WORKS AT ALL YET BECAUSE SOMETIMES I'M A HORRIBLE HUMAN BEING... AM I STILL TALKING IN CAPS? HELP!

Chapter 39: The Calvary Arrives

Dobby paused in his task and grit his teeth in anger as the sounds from the chamber down the hall once again assaulted his ears.

How he wished that he could help the poor soul that his master was currently abusing.

Casting his gaze over to where Opal was scrubbing at the floor Dobby could not contain the wave of pity that welled up within him. With each sound emitted from the chamber Opal would wince and shake harder than before.

Opal hadn't been the same since being punished by their mean master, if she wasn't doing her chores she would be curled up in the nest sobbing.

Thankfully, their master had been too busy to punish them again.

Master had spent a lot of time down in the chambers making cells of some sort. Whenever Dobby was able to he would sneak down and listen to Master mumbling to himself. Such cruel things Master would say too...

A cage of silver for a wolf man, a cage directly across for his mate to witness the horrors that awaited the wolf man.

Even worse than that, however, was the... Room, that Master had made for Emerald Boy.

Dobby wasn't sure who this Emerald was, just that Master sometimes called him, 'his Boy'. Dobby hoped that Emerald Boy never wound up in Masters care...
Charlie leaned back on the bed exhausted, he wouldn't give Harry up for anything but sometimes his little could be quite a handful.

The poor boy had just been woken up by a rather horrible nightmare about his past. Charlie had nothing against muggles, nor could he be considered a violent man. However, his perfect little mates despicable relatives were certainly an exception to that.

At least this time Charlie had made sure that Harry had taken a dreamless sleep potion so that he wouldn't have to worry about any nightmares happening this time around.

With another sigh Charlie began the rather laborous task of extracting himself from Harry's hold on him, grinning when Harry instead clutched a pillow to himself with a contented sigh.

After pressing a quick kiss to his mates' cheek Charlie made his way back out to the others.

"I still don't understand!" Molly said with an exhausted sigh. "I thought that the goblins put protections on him? How was this able to happen when they had a plan?"

"It must have been an oversight Molly," Remus soothed from his position on the newly transfigured couch.

"When everything was being set up we were all so focused on Dumbledore that we didn't put much worry in anyone else being a major threat," Sirius sighed tiredly as he absentmindedly patted Molly's thigh in comfort. "We should have learned after what happened at Yule...

"Sirius, do not beat yourself up over that again," Remus said, leaning his lanky frame over Molly's to better reach his mate.

"And what exactly happened during Yule?" Amelia asked curiously, her arms crossed as she looked at the assembled group.

"On the way home for the winter halls," Sirius began with an exhausted sigh, leaning to rest his head against Molly's shoulder in an effort to seek comfort. "The twins had decided to pull a prank and it backfired spectacularly. Harry wound up magically trapped under some mistletoe and everyone on the train took that as an excuse to fucking molest him."

"Why wasn't I informed of this!?" Amelia said, eyes wide as she began to turn to her colleague and tell him to begin drawing up the necessary paperwork.

"Because Harry is far too good for his own good," Remus sighed leaning over to poke Sirius' cheek. "He refused to file complaints and when we tried to insist he went near catatonic. We eventually just dropped it so that Harry would be even more upset. The goblins charged each of the families involved a rather hefty fine though... Harry tried to get them to let it go too but they claimed that the protections they gave him would do something to punish them if they didn't."

"What did they fine the families?" Amelia asked as she stood up from her seat and moved to lean on the wall.

"Around two hundred galleons each, I believe that they charged the one who started it all about five hundred." Sirius said simply as he once again sat up, bringing a hand up to tiredly rub at his face.

"What kind of protections did you procure from the goblins exactly?" Madame Bones asked from her new position against the wall, scanning the grounds from one of the large windows lining the infirmary walls. "Their protections are not always ethical, nor are they cheap."
"The goblins layered monitoring charms over Harry, they also tied something capable of breaking through wards," Remus explained with a tired sigh as he sank into the couch further. "The monitoring charms are continuously going but the alarm was only set to go off if Dumbledore or his magic was involved in anything harmful or distressing."

"That is quite the magic, and what precisely did this cost you all?" Amelia asked, her eyebrow raised and a stern set to her lips as she gazed at them all. Surely they wouldn't be able to afford the price that the goblins would charge. The Weasleys were just beginning to gain back some of their family money and Sirius... Well actually he probably could afford it.

"No cost at all," A new voice growled from the direction of the hearth. All figures within the room spun, wands drawn and pointed at the smoldering ashes shaped into the face of Griphook. "Now, if you would, myself, a healer, and several guards require access to the school. I felt that given the situation, requesting entry would be the better option as opposed to simply showing up. Now, if you will?"

 Silence greeted this request for several seconds before Poppy bustled into activity moving forward to allow entry to the contingent of goblins. As the flames roared to life a group of twenty goblins passed through. At the front there was Griphook, attired in a rather dashing suit and tie, a pinched look of aggravation over this situation upon his face. Next came a goblin who was most likely female, had longer hair which was pushed away from her face and braided down her back, she stood slightly shorter than Griphook had and was dressed in dark green robes. Behind the two there stood a rather large group of goblins who were taller and burlier than the previous two. These goblins stood a few inches taller and held far more muscle, they were dressed in dragon hide robes and carried a plethora of weapons ranging from a medieval mace and swords to bows and arrows, daggers, and even what appeared to be a whip.

"Now then," Griphook said simply as he calmly brushed a bit of ash from his lapel. "Time to get to work."

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**Authors Note:** Once again I wish a very happy birthday to my darling girl Pika! I love you my dear!

Now, I know that this chapter is far shorter than I had planned, however, I am far too excited to finally post this update and I know that Pika is very excited for this chapter to be posted! Happy birthday Pika!

~*!Happy Reading!*~
The Goblins First Move

Little Dragon

Authors Note: Thank you all for remaining so patient with me and my rather strenuous update schedule. My new job is going well, I am now in a leadership position and heading up a pilot program, I have gotten a little travel trailer that I'm trying to fix up into a mini apartment, and my kids are getting older and demanding more of my time. But always remember, I love you all and will NEVER abandon you or my story.

...That and Pika would probably come here and kill me if I do!

Anywhozles~ onto the story!

Disclaimer: I only own my anger at Rory from season 9 of Survivor. Seriously dude? Come on!

Chapter 40: The Goblins First Move

"And just what do you mean by 'not a thing'?'" Amelia asked suspiciously as she stood to address the strange goblin before her. She personally only truly interacted with two goblins, the goblin at the front desk, and the goblin in charge of her families account.

"Madame Bones," Griphook said diplomatically as he took in the impressive visage of the witch before him. Madame Bones was well respected within the goblin community, both for her own deeds and morals as well as that of her family. "Heir Potters fees for any and all services have been waived as he is a Friend of the Nation through recent deeds which he has accomplished."

"Recent deeds? And just what has it been that mister Potter has accomplished? I have heard of no mighty deeds that Potter has done to earn such a rank?" Proudfoot growled in aggravation from his position beside Madame Bones.

"Mighty Deeds do not make the wizard Donald Proudfoot," Griphook said simply as he turned away from the pair and looked towards the group on the sofa to assess their well being. "Mister Potter has shown the nation more humility and respect in a single moment than anyone else has in a very long time."

"And why exactly is it that Mister Potter has been made a friend of the Nation? It is not like no one else has shown goblins respect, I myself bow to the tellers and thank them each time that I visit Gringotts." Amelia asked curiously, her head tilted slightly to the side.

"That is true Madame Bones," Griphook stated simply as he continued to stare at Auror Proudfoot, withstanding the urge to smirk as the Auror began to shift awkwardly. "However, why is it that you do so? Honor? Compassion? Dignity? Respect? Because you were taught to do so?"

"All of those reasons I suppose," Amelia answered slowly as she thought over her response.

"Precicely." Griphook said simply as he moved forward once more, the large warriors flanking his sides without a moments hesitation. "Now I may be overstepping my bounds, but I have brought multiple of the Nations highest level warriors. They will assist in securing the grounds and castle. I have also brought along several ward masters, they will assist in breaking Dumbledore's hold on the ward schematics and insure that no malevolent or... Inventive wards remain behind after his departure." Griphook announced and took great pleasure in the looks of slack jawed shock now adorning the humans faces.

"Now," He directed his attention towards Madame Bones once again, "Do not misunderstand me, Madame. The Nation is indeed being selfish in showing part of our hand as we are. For far too long the witches and wizards have looked down upon the Goblin Nation as being lesser. We hope to end it. Some day the populace will need us, be it another dark lord or merely when you come to your
senses that we do indeed control your wealth. We intend to make it clear that we are more than willing and capable of working with you. Should you accept of course.”

And with that final statement hanging thickly in the air of the infirmary Griphook extended his hand to the stately witch before him, his long and spindly fingers a sharp contrast to the witches thin and narrow ones.

As palms met and fingers wrapped together Griphook gave a truly pleased smile.

Healer Fowlfinger exited through the small privacy curtain silently and with the grace and fluidity of one who was used to doing so on a daily basis. This was a skill that was not only practical to gain in her line of work but also necessary. With so many warrior goblins under her care you had to take care to not startle them lest you become a patient yourself.

Young heir Potter was indeed doing well, though there was some lasting spell residue he’d have to be cleansed of, but with rest and the help of his mate he would be just fine.

Withstanding the urge to frown Fowlfinger moved forward to confer between the resident mediwitch and the commander of the evening. Truly Griphook had come into his own since young Heir Potter had arrived back into the wizarding world. Where he and his line had been disgraced, he making a small wave in gaining back the lines dignity by doing the grunt work of the lower goblin with a dedication and dignity few had seen.

Now, accompanied by his rapid rise in status Griphook was becoming a mighty fine goblin, many of the higher ranking lines were scowering to get into his good graces, even going so far as to ask his uncle for a contract. Griphook had even gone so far as to challenge Rotgut the Demented to an honor duel in which he had removed not only several of his uncles fingers but also his ear and a good portion of his side before he had continued.

To add insult to injury Griphook had proceeded to enact his first familial change just two seconds after taking up the mantle. He had proceeded to cut all previous ties and proclaimed that new proposals would be accepted as well as the previous ones for he himself to decide whether or not it would be beneficial to tie his line to their own.

Of course directly after his statement Ragnok had put in a verbal offer to tie his line and Griphook’s status as the new Head of his line was catapulted from 'gaining respect' to 'highly respected' in an instant.

Yes Griphook was indeed going places and she had plans to be there to witness it all...

Draco Malfoy was currently ensconced in a small corner of the nearly packed common room, his back to the thick chamber wall and a straight shot to the passageway leading towards the dormitories. Purely a safety tactic no matter how needless considering the fact that there was currently a trained auror and a goblin warrior standing guard at the entrance to the room.

True, the difference in stature between the two was considerable different between the two, however their auras were the same. Of course if he were being completely truthful with himself, which he would never be, he would have to admit that the warrior goblin who stood there larger than Draco thought goblins could become and laden down with a variety of knives and other deadly looking weapons was far more intimidating...

Casting a seemingly uninterested gaze around the current inhabitants of the common room Draco began to evaluate the situation further.
In the far left corner a group of seventh year girls sat whispering to each other while staring at a Witch Weekly magazine. In the corner nearest the door the prefects were gathered and, more than likely, coming up with a game plan on how to maintain order and keep the others within the room from going stir crazy. Everyone else bar one were in various states of false bravado or inane attempts of pretending that everything was fine. The only one that wasn't happened to be the Italian seated to his left.

Casting an amused gaze at his friend Draco took comfort in the fact that only Blaise, and perhaps Hermione though she was never so serene about it what with how quickly and intensely she was drawn into every book and consumed them the way a dehydrated man consumed water, could sit there and calmly read a read by the castle was in turmoil around him.

As the Italian turned page after page Draco could find himself slowly relaxing, the slow shift of page against page and the deep steady breathing of his friend soothing him.

At least until the false bravado turned into a pseudo form of swaggering bluster as someone finally cracked under the pressure and did the only thing that they could think of...

Make it worse.

Terence Higgs, someone who's only form of standing came from his position as Seeker and his uncle Bertie's relationship with Tiberius McLaggen and Rufus Scrimgeor. Bertie Higgs was also the one who bred and maintained a pack of pure albino hounds for the pest sub-division in the ministry, hounds which he also uses to go Nogtail hunting quite often as Terence is prone to boast about.

Other than his uncles influential ties in the ministry and his current position on the Quidditch team, however, he was rather insignificant.

Terence was currently looking at the entrance to the common room in disgust, speaking in a pseudo low tone that Draco was certain he knew was carrying throughout the room.

"Look at this filth, a goblin standing next to a wizard as though he's worthy. How dare he pollute our space?"

Draco wished that he could say otherwise, just picturing Harry and Hermione's reactions fueling him with indignation, but it appeared as though his house mates were agreeing to the sentiment.

Standing quickly Draco cast a disgusted sneer at those in the room as their eyes fell to look at him. Opening his mouth to enlighten the plebeians that he apparently shared a space with Draco was shocked when it was a voice other than his that next filled the air.

"Oh yes, mock and scorn the ones who are protecting you at this very moment. That won't backfire on you considerably," Blaise's smooth drawl sounded throughout the common room as he closed his book with a gentle yet resounding thud. "Not to mention risking your families fortune like that Higgs, mighty brave of you."

"What the hell are you talking about Zabini?" Terence hissed as he stood up to his full height, towering above the first year and still managing to look no bigger.

"Who controls your gold? You? The ministry? No. Gringotts does. And who controls Gringotts, hmm? You? The ministry? No. The goblins do. They're a sovereign nation you twat. If they choose they could take every last knut you own and charge you for their trouble. Now, I suggest you sit down and shut up before I hex you myself."
Authors Note: Again you guys, I'm sorry for how long this has taken, I'm trying to do better!
The Sorting Hats Tale (PART 1)

Little Dragon

Authors Note: Okay you guys, I really hate to do this. I do. But if I want to give you a chapter it's going to have to be a micro-chapter. I've rewritten this chapter four times and it still will not come out right! So... Sorry you guys, but it was this or nothing. I hope you enjoy it anyway! Thanks to my amazing Muse Master Pika you guys at least get this. Something is better than nothing.

Disclaimer: I own nothing, nothing I tell you! I don't even own this story at this point, it owns me!

Chapter 41: The Sorting Hats Tale (PART 1)

Amelia Bones was not a happy witch.

No that was an understatement. She was well past the realm of unhappy. She was livid.

It had been a very long time since she was last a schoolgirl. Why then did her past professor see fit to tear into her as though she were an errant first year caught using a weeding charm on the professors precious flowerbeds instead of doing it the manual and loving way?

In the years since her graduation from Hogwarts, Amelia had gained a rather friendly and mutually respectful relationship with her past professors. Had gained a better understanding of them and their mannerisms. What buttons should and should not be pushed.

This however? This behavior from the herbology professor was so far out of what Amelia had come to expect from her.

Never in all of the years that Amelia Bones had known Pomona Sprout had she once heard her yell in anger.

To have that angry screaming directed at her?

When she was doing her job?!

"JUST WHAT WERE YOU THINKING MISS BONES? YOU KNOW NOTHING OF THE DEFENSES EMPLOYED WITHIN THE COMMON ROOMS OUTSIDE OF YOURS NOR, I'M SURE, WERE YOU WILLING TO LISTEN AS I'M POSITIVE MISS TONKS WOULD HAVE INFORMED YOU OF WHAT AN UTTERLY STUPID MISTAKE YOU HAVE MADE! ON TOP OF AN ALREADY NO DOUBT TRAUMATIZING NIGHT YOU DECIDE TO SCARE THE LIVING DAYLIGHTS OUT OF MY BADGERS BY SENDING A STRANGER TO BURST IN!" Pomona stood huffing as she stared at the head of the DMLE, contempt radiating from her every pore before with one very deep breath she visibly gathered herself and continued on in a deadly calm and scarily pleasant tone of voice, "Now, I suggest that you come with me to the common room and collect your Auror's so that you can see just what not listening has caused to happen."

With that the kindly professor turned and began to make her way out of the infirmary, leaving the head Auror no other option than to follow after her all while attempting to make it look as though she had not just been chastised by the least likely person on the planet.
Two of Gringotts finest Warrior Goblins approached the large statue of a griffin which guarded the entrance to the headmasters office of Hogwarts. Lodbrok and Ivar, both of the Ironside clan, stared grimly at the large eagle statue which was eternally tasked with the protection of the Head of Hogwarts domain. Behind these warriors marched three of Gringotts Wardmasters, each of them weighed down with their own weapons of choice as well as a plethora of warding artifacts.

The statue itself had been a gift from the Nation to Hogwarts itself. The founders four had gained much respect from the Nation, each of them being a Friend of the Nation in their own rights. As such the Nation had taken a great and active interest in Hogwarts and her welfare.

Assisting yet another Friend of the Nation while doing so was merely a bonus really.

All goblins took a great amount of pride in their work and the reasoning's behind it. Their people and their culture were steeped richly in history. Not just their own either. The Goblin Nation took the lessons that all have learned over the years to make their people better. Wand users, muggles, creatures. They cared not.

Knowledge was power. Money was power. And to the humans, power was everything.

Few outside of the Nation knew of its true depths. The massive libraries containing at least one copy of almost every piece of literature ever made from a muggle child's book containing nothing but pictures to the lost tomes and scrolls that were once held within Atlantis.

Hell, not even most Goblins knew of their true depths outside of the theoretical.

Wardmasters however? Goblin Wardmasters knew almost everything.

A goblins natural affinities were shown early and cultivated from a young age. A basis in all disciplines and then expanding upon their affinities at a rapid pace. No natural talents were considered wasteful or looked upon with disdain. All were precious.

As such, those with certain affinities gained access to more knowledge faster.

It was only natural.

Why impede someones learning and natural strengths when they would eventually become yours as well?

Why the humans never seemed to grasp this concept the Nation would never know.

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Authors Note: Sorry for how long it's taken me to update! Things got all sorts of screwed up and completely out of hand. I would apologize further but I doubt you all wish to hear of my troubles. Hopefully you enjoyed this chapter despite its shortness!
The Sorting Hats Tale (PART 2)

Little Dragon

Authors Note: Okay you guys, so after such a very very short chapter last time I will do my best to make a nice long one for you guys this time! Just a note, I have NOT and WILL NOT be abandoning this story! Ever! This is my baby and has been for years. Yes, sometimes it takes me quite a while to update but know that I would never abandon this story.

*Please note, in this story Amelia Bones was a Ravenclaw student. Not Hufflepuff, though it was a close call. (Because I forgot and it's too late to change it now!)

Disclaimer: I do not own Harry Potter, I don't even own this wine that I'm drinking. I was just told to drink it if I wanted. Does anyone else occasionally have problems with the corks? This last one completely shred apart on me. I mean really!

The Sorting Hats Tale (PART 2)

Amelia tried her hardest to keep her breathing even as she sprinted after the Head of Hufflepuff house. Had it really been so long since she was last in school that she had a difficult time with the amount of stairs in the castle? Perhaps she should up the training schedule for the Aurors, this was ridiculous really!

Once outside of the entrance to the common room Amelia could feel the hairs on the back of her neck stand on end. The amount of residual magic in the small hallway was unnerving to say the least. What had happened here? Were the students safe. Drawing her wand Amelia cautiously followed along behind Sprout as she walked confidently down the hallway with a powerful shielding charm cast before her.

"What are you-" Amelia was interrupted as a barrage of spell work hit the shield causing large cracks and chunks to tear from the shield despite the fact that each of the spells used were rather harmless. "What in Merlin's name!?"

"Good job my Badgers!" Pomona said with pride as she ignored the spluttering head of the DMLE. "You have protected the Den well! Ten points to each of you!"

Amelia stood flabbergasted, her eyes roving to take in the sight of the entirety of Hufflepuff house standing tall and in formation while two of her Aurors lay restrained before them. What in Merlin's knickers was going on!? Was this amount of house unity why there were so many prestigious Aurors from Hufflepuff on the force?

As her eyes met Nymphadora Tonks' and she saw the amusement on her face, Amelia made a mental note to speak to her at more length regarding tonight's revelations.

Upon entering the office at the top of the moving staircase Lodbrok and Ivar quickly moved across the room to stand between wizards and the Phoenix who is currently attempting to sink his talons into a chained chest against the wall.

"Stand down, with how upset the Phoenix seems he's more likely to rip you to shreds than to calm," Ivar warned as he pulled a pulsing blue gem from one of his many pockets. "Calm now, Little One, let us help you with your task."

As the gem continued to pulse, its light a steady and gentle glow that fell softly upon the Phoenix's crimson feathers, Fawks began to calm, his furious wing beats slowing and allowing him to settle upon the chest, his talons now tugging insistently at the chains instead of reaching forward to drag the wizards closer. With a sad trill Fawks looked at the goblins and attempted to tell them with his eyes just what was happening.

"Whatever is wrong with him has to do with that chest." Lodbrok murmured as he slowly moved...
closer and began to examine the Phoenix for any injuries, aside from some very ruffled feathers and injuries on his talons he seemed to be well. At least, from what he could see and what had not been effected by the Phoenix's last burning day.

Giving an affectionate pat to the Phoenix's head Lodbrok held out an arm for him to stand on as one of the ward breakers they had been accompanying, Briser, came forward to begin examining the chest.

Lodbrok turned now to study the rest of the room and privately admitted to himself that he was pleasantly surprised. Perhaps there was hope for this venture after all. Throughout the room there were Aurors and Goblins working side by side. There were no snide comments, nor sideways stairs, no belittling countenance whatsoever. Here in this moment, in this room, all were equal. For the first time in quite a long time, Lodbrok felt hope for the future of his people.

For months he had sat here. Cut off from the world. From his magic. From Hogwarts Herself. He had quickly given up on trying to get assistance, every movement and word using up his magic. Magic that, once gone, could never be gained again.

He had a very interesting state of being you see, while he was indeed sentient, he was not free. Neither was She of course but neither of them had truly ever cared before.

They were free enough to do as they pleased and ancient rules were put in place for their protection for this exact purpose.

With him would die Secrets, both horrendous and 'good', you see, knowledge can never be destroyed, merely contained. This was found quite a long while ago you see, with the fall of Atlantis, the community who destroyed themselves in their pursuit of power. All that knowledge that was believed to be lost forever seemed to show up one day out of the blue. Again with the burning of the Library of Alexandria.

Within him are Secrets, horrible curses and potions that make those housed in the Forbidden Section of the library and even quite a few that the Unspeakables are working on at the ministry look like a first year spell. Things created to help that only managed to hurt the world further, crowning achievements buried and forgotten about for the sake of humanity.

Should he go, these secrets would be free once again, their knowledge no longer contained by a 'being'. This he could not allow to happen.

So he quickly drew into himself, becoming a tiny speck of what he had once been, feeling the magic within him slowly fading piece by piece. He could hear faintly the sounds of Fawkes attempting to break the chains, tiny thumps akin to footsteps on the other side of a wall, faint and barely there.

He sincerely hoped that his dear friend would be successful, his spark was almost gone.

Fawkes watched closely as the Ward Master worked upon the chest, instrument after instrument being used only to be set to the side as it had no effect.

To be completely truthful, Fawkes was unsure what had truly been done to this chest and it's chain. That man had taken advantage of his burning day to do it so that Fawkes would not have the chance to counter it.

How clever that man was, Fawkes is only glad that he had not had a chance to indulge in his perversions with the children since he had become a teacher here. He and the other Guardians had ensured that. Unfortunately they could not stop his thoughts, nor what activities he participated in outside of the grounds.

Once his wrongs have been set to right Fawkes with have a truly magnificent burning day, his flames will wash away the last of the inky shadow that had been coating the halls of Hogwarts for far too long.

A cry of accomplishment drew Fawkes out of his thoughts, looking up he could see the thick chain falling to the floor with a loud clatter.
Light!
How long had it been since he had last seen the light?
A familiar trill sounded above him and he tried to move, how heavy he now was. It had almost been too late, he was down to the last few stitches before his magic ran out.
Gentle hands lifted him from the confines of his cell and it was as though he could breathe for the very first time again.
Magic flowed into him and around him, welcoming him back, welcoming him home. Fawkes and Hogwarts rejoicing with him in his freedom. Oh how free he felt now that his connections were back!
Opening his eyes he was gifted with the sight of Fawkes upon the shoulder of a Goblin, Goblins and Wizards around the room, some watching the exchange and others working on dismantling some of the damage that Albus had wrought upon Hogwarts.
Before those in the room could ask any questions, as he knew they were bound to do, he spoke. "We haven't much time. The confidentiality magic that has been forced upon me is broken for the time being. We must work quickly lest others step in to cause more damage," The Sorting Hat glanced around the room once and, upon seeing the surprised looks on the occupants faces he smirked before continuing. "As the Headmaster has left before his term was finished and has not left indication for his successor, the laws of the Founders apply. Lady Hogwarts, One of Three, choose the successor!"
The Sorting Hat watched as Lady Hogwarts rejoiced, allowing her magic to flow and swirl around the room before she left, a laugh echoing through the magic as she started her search. "Now pay attention, I must say this now before my energy fades. Whatever Albus did to that chest has done a great deal of damage to me, I will have to rest very soon. Albus has laid out many plans for the future, plans that we cannot change. You must find them and put additional protections into place. You must find a way, if you do not I fear for the safety of all who have ever called Hogwarts home. I do not know many of these plans, he refused to bond with me as was expected of him with his Role, I can only assume that his purpose in doing so was a safety plan in case an incident like this one were to happen, that as well as the fact that I have been in that wretched chest for the majority of the year which cut me off from everything.
"The only thing that I know for certain is that he has already hired a teacher for next year, one which he was very excited for. Whoever this person is, do not trust them!")

Lady Hogwarts sped through her halls on the search for the one she would be willing to take the position as Protector. She needed someone who would be willing to listen to the old ways for guidance, one who cared about the many and not just their own self interest. One who would not allow their traditions to die for convenience sake.
So many excellent possibilities to choose from! She had not had such an excellent group of candidates in quite a long time indeed!
Lets see, this one is far too young still, he will need to grow.
This one as well.
Ah, this one is the right age though I sense that they are needed elsewhere.
This ones passions do not lie with teaching.
Ah! Yes, here are two excellent candidates, but which to choose?
Yes, this one has grown but there is still some growing to do, hurts and regrets they must overcome.
Ah! This one is perfect, they are the best choice for the next Protector of Hogwarts, the next Head of the school!
Authors Note: DUN DUN DUUUN! Who do you think it is!? I can't believe that I have finally finished this chapter! I have been trying since I uploaded the last one, nothing seemed to flow. :( But! I finally finished it! Yay! Hopefully the next will flow a bit easier! Also, this part didn't come out exactly how I wanted it but I'm still happy with it! :) Also, I may or may not have gotten addicted to Death Stranding, it is just so fascinating! And the sound animations and music? The scenery? Kojima really knows how to make a fantastic game. ...Don't kill me if I make a one shot! Just don't okay? I finished it earlier today and something about the ending just got me blasting through the rest of this chapter. I love it. And no, it's not just because of Norman Reedus.
P.S. I am listening to the games soundtrack instead of my usual writing playlist. So if anything seems different that may be why.
P.P.S. No, I do not change my authors notes when I write. The first one I do before starting a chapter and the last I do at the end. It may be weird but it's my process.
Anywhozles~! I hope you enjoyed! Happy reading my lovelies!

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!