Part two of The Golden Trio.
Harry survives the Battle of Hogwarts but finds himself changed. His power is growing in strength and he's not so sure he likes it. He turns to Hermione and the Malfoy family to help get himself sorted out. With a new Prophecy recorded at the ministry he finds that he's still the savior of the wizarding world.

Notes
See the end of the work for notes
Harry sat in the living room of the Burrow feeling exhausted and slightly annoyed. Ginny was cuddled up at his side waiting for Arthur and Hermione’s return. After the battle had been won and things were settled slightly he had returned to the Burrow per Molly and Arthur’s request. He had really wanted to just find a bed somewhere and sleep for as long as possible but after everything they had done and lost in order for him to complete his mission he didn’t feel right refusing their hospitality.

When they first arrived Molly had busied herself in the kitchen trying to distract herself with cooking for everyone. However, once everyone was fed and more relaxed she had started in on the fact that Hermione still wasn’t with them. Her and Ron began badgering Arthur to do something about how she was obviously being held captive at Malfoy Manor, and now that Voldemort was dead, surely they would be torturing her for her involvement in his defeat. Harry tried to argue that he didn’t think that she looked as though she was really being held against her will, sighting the kiss that they had shared after the diadem was destroyed by Draco himself.

Ron argued that she must have been imperious cursed because she had gone and knelt before the Dark Lord right before his men turned on him. The Malfoys had whisked her away and surely even now she was being tortured. Arthur finally relented and contacted Kingsley Shacklebolt regarding the matter. Shacklebolt agree that he would like to have some questions answered. He wasn’t at all convinced that the Malfoy’s had some nefarious plan but the way they had disappeared even before Voldemort was dead seemed odd to him. Arthur had left over an hour ago and now they were playing the waiting game.

The floo flared to life and Arthur stepped through looking tired and angry. They stood and watched the floo expectantly waiting for Hermione to follow him through. When she didn’t appear Molly turned to Arthur. “Where is she?” She demanded to know as Arthur poured himself a large shot of fire whiskey.

Arthur swallowed back the drink before pouring himself another and turning to his family. “She’s not coming.” He stated firmly.

“Dad, what do you mean she’s not coming?” Ron asked sounding really annoyed and rather childish.

“She’s not coming.” He yelled at his family. “They’ve got her brainwashed into think she’s their slave and that she’s happy there.”

Molly gasped and covered her mouth in horror. “We have to do something. Why didn’t you just carry her out of there?”

Arthur groaned and threw himself into a chair. “I tried, don’t you think I would have tried that. She’s got this werewolf defending her. When I tried to force her into the floo he nearly hexed my head off.” He buried his face in his hands. “She didn’t even seem the slightest bit phased by it. She was as calm as a slytherin as she politely dismissed us.”

“What that can’t be. She would never join with the Malfoy’s, she hates them and everything they stand for.” Ron argued.

Arthur grunted. “Not anymore. And after trying to bring her home by forcing her to the floo Kingsley has forbidden that I try to talk to her again.” He sluged back the second serving of
whiskey in one gulp. Savoring the burning feeling as it ran threw his body. “He called me impulsive and tactless. Lord Malfoy had made it quite clear she that could go willingly but that her bodyguards were to stop any attempt at force.”

Ginny smiled. “Harry can talk to her surely the Malfoy’s won’t deny the savior of the wizarding world access to her.”

Harry frowned. “Ginny I wouldn’t know what to say. I have talked to her and she claims that they are taking good care of her.”

“Well, Harry all you have to do is remind her that her and I planned a double wedding once this was all over. The four of us were supposed to get married on the same day with all of our friends watching. I’m sure once you remind her that she was looking forward to her wedding night she’ll want to come home.”

Everyone was looking at him waiting for him to agree to speak with her. He sighed. “Maybe you’re right. I’ll contact the Malfoys first thing in the morning and find out what’s going on over there. I need some sleep though and so does everyone else.”

He started up the stairs with Ginny hot on his tail. “Wait up Harry and I’ll join you.” Ginny said as she followed him to one of the spare rooms.

“Ginny, I’m really tired.”

She smiled. “I don’t mind you can lay back and I’ll do all the work.” Harry groaned. He hadn’t seen her and nearly a year and he felt kind of bad that he hadn’t missed her at all. He was going to have to tell her that he wasn’t interested in her anymore but telling her now, after everything they had been through, seemed like just one more thing to deal with. He’d have to find a way to break it to her gently just not tonight. He really was feeling exhausted. He entered the room with her behind him. She closed and locked the door and then cast a silencing charm around the room. Harry sighed as he lay down on the bed. It was softer then he remembered or maybe it was just because he’d been sleeping in the tent the past few months. Even the mattresses at shell cottage weren’t as soft as this felt. Ginny began tugging at his pants. He was still wearing the same clothes he had done battle in last night and this morning. Had it really only been less the 24 hours ago that he had died and come back to life? Ginny pulled his shoes off and then his pants the rest of the way. She smiled at him and said “hmmm, what do muggles call it again when you don’t wear under ware?”

Harry looked up at her progress. He had completely forgotten that he didn’t have his boxers on and now that she mentioned it he felt a lot exposed. “They call it ‘going commando’.” He stated as he pulled the blanket over his body. “We’ve been kind of busy with the Gringotts job and then preparing for the battle. I haven’t had any time to wash any of my clothes.”

She laughed and tugged the blanket away. “I’ll take care of them for you in the morning. That’s what a good wife does isn’t it?” Harry groaned, there she goes again with the marriage thing. They had never really talked about it before. It’s not like he had asked her to marry him or anything just that he wanted to live long enough to settle down with someone. Ginny smiled coyly at him as she began to stroke his thighs. “You know I’m not a prude like Hermione is. I don’t want to wait till I’m married.”

Harry tensed. He did know. Her promiscuousness had been a topic of conversation with him and Ron when Ron was pressuring Hermione to have sex with him. The Weasley’s didn’t have any problems at all with the muggle free love movement during the late sixties. Unlike other pureblood families it didn’t matter to them if you weren’t a virgin when you married. However, it did matter to them that you were monogamous once you were married. Of course for them there was always the option of divorce. He had heard that other pure blood families like the Malfoys weren’t so concerned
with fidelity after the initial union took place and heirs were born, they felt free to explore other outlets. Divorce for them was shameful and frowned upon. To him it felt as though their standards made more sense.

Ginny was stroking his cock trying to coax him to hardness. She had her mouth wrapped around the head of his cock and was sucking it gently. It probably would have felt pretty good except it was her doing it. He didn’t really want to have sex with her. She had probably fucked half the school while he was out risking his life to save their asses. Harry groaned. “Ginny, please I’m exhausted. Just let me get a few hours’ sleep then I’m sure I’ll be good to go.”

Ginny whined to him. “But I haven’t seen you all year, I missed you and the other boys just aren’t the same.”

“Ginny.” He said firmly. “Leave me be.”

She huffed as she began putting her clothes back on. “Fine, but don’t be surprised if I become all prudish like Hermione when you decide that you want to get laid.” Harry watched her half asleep and wondered to himself ‘when did she get naked?’ He was glad when she was gone and chuckled to himself about the fact that she thought she could ever hold to Hermione’s standards when it came to courting.

Harry wasn’t sure how long he had slept for when he finally woke up; the sun still hadn’t risen in the sky so it must have been pretty early still. He listened to the quiet creaking noises that the Burrow always made. They were comforting for a moment but then they became disturbing. It felt different here and he couldn’t figure out why. He thought about the coming confrontation with the Malfoy family and decided that he didn’t need Molly and Arthur preaching to him further about how badly they must be treating his friend. Maybe it felt different because of the fact the Hermione wasn’t with him and Ron or maybe it was because he knew in his heart that she would never be with them again. When she was left behind they had grieved for her thinking that surely they would kill her. Luna had offered to help them anyway she could and comfortably slipped into Hermione’s place but it wasn’t the same. It was several weeks later that they had heard from one of the former order members that she had been seen in wizarding villages. At first they were elated but then when they heard that story they once again became concerned for her wellbeing. She was being loosely escorted by death eaters like they were dangling a piece of meat just waiting for the order to show up and try a rescue attempt. The only good thing they had reported about her outings was that she looked well and happy. Then a few weeks later they heard that she had avoided answering questions after making a trip to a jewelers shop. When Harry heard this he doubted that she was really happy. She must have been under some kind of spell for her to completely avoid answering whether or not she was friends with him. She wouldn’t deny knowing him. He knew she was loyal to the core.

He sat up and pulled his dirty pants on from yesterday. He really need a change of clothes but had no idea where he could get one at this time of the morning. It didn’t matter; he had to be out of this place before anyone else could rise. Taking the unfamiliar elder wand out of his pocket he cast silencing charms on himself and made his way out of the Burrow to a safe disapparation point, a plan for the day forming in his head.

He arrived in the courtyard of Hogwarts. Several Auror’s jumped to attention wands drawn but once they realized who he was they relaxed. Harry smiled at them before proceeding to the area where he had defeated Voldemort just yesterday morning. The sun still hadn’t begun to rise yet but he didn’t have any trouble at all finding the place he was looking for. Harry stood in the same spot from yesterday and looked around. Voldemort’s body had been removed he had no idea where they would take it but that didn’t really matter. He concentrated on the first part of his plan for today. Holding his hand out he shouted “Accio wand.” He Elder wand warmed in his holster but didn’t
budge. Harry was starting to think that maybe the spell wasn’t going to work when he heard a swishing noise from behind him. He glanced over his shoulder in time to see a wand flying towards him. He shot his hand up plucking the wand from the air and smiled as he once again gripped Draco Malfoy’s wand in his hand.

Yesterday, after the battle had ended and everyone was done congratulating and thanking him for saving the wizarding world, he had put the wand down somewhere. He didn’t really remember ever leaving it behind as he had the Elder wand gripped in his hand so tight he thought he might just break it. The elder wand hummed in his holster again. He pulled it out and replaced it with the Draco wand and then walked down the bridge to the ravine where he broke the wand into three parts. The first snap of the wand he felt an incredible burst of energy rush through him. He didn’t know what to make of it but he figured enough crazy things had happened to him that he wasn’t really concerned about it now. The second snap and he heard it moan and cry out like he had hurt something then the wand lay still and inert in his hand. He took the tip of the wand and cast it as far over the ledge as he could and pocketed the middle of the wand. Rooting through his pockets he found the resurrection stone. He gently placed the stone on the ground and picked up a large rock and smashed the stone into tiny bits. He felt another surge of power but again it didn’t hurt him and it passed quickly. The dust from the crushed stone blew away in the wind. Harry frowned he would have liked to have collected some of the dust but there was no way to stop it from blowing away.

He took the long walk out to Dumbledore’s grave where he placed the handle of the wand back in Dumbledore’s hand then used the Malfoy wand to repair the grave. He cast a protective charm over it but knew that it would need something stronger to keep grave robbers from looking for bits of the former headmaster. By now the sun was just peeking over the horizon, so he disapparated back to Hogwarts to speak with Professor McGonagall surprising the aurors again.

“Mr. Potter, good morning.” She said to him her shock evident on her face. She pulled her dressing gown closer around her body. Her hair was clearly disheveled and he knew that he had probably woken her from some much needed sleep.

He frowned. “It’s been a long time since I heard you call me that. I’m sorry to have woken you. I need some help and I wondered if you could help me.”

“Of course!” Her concerns becoming more evident as she threw open her doors and ushered him inside. “What can I do for you?”

Harry sighed. “I need a change of clothes and use of the floo so I can contact the Malfoy’s”

“The Malfoy’s?” She asked alarmed. “Why ever would you need to contact them?”

“Hermione decided last night after talking with Arthur that she wanted to stay with them. I want to talk to her further and see what she is thinking.”

McGonagall nodded. “I only had a chance to speak to them briefly before the second conflict started. She was with Draco Malfoy. When Voldemort called her to him she reiterated that not everything was as it seemed.” She paused when the house elf appeared. “Please bring Mr. Potter a change of clothes and some toiletries.” The elf bowed and disappeared. “I watched my cub walk to that madman and bow as though he was a benevolent Lord.” She sobbed and said “at first I couldn’t believe my eyes as Lord Malfoy touched her cheek tenderly then lady Malfoy took her hand and guided her family away from the group of death eaters. It was shortly after that that his followers turned on him.”

Harry nodded. “I took that as my cue to start fighting again. I’m sorry I had to play dead like that but there was still one more horcrux that needed to be destroyed. I was trying to wait for Nagini to be a
little closer to me but that never happened. Thankfully Neville is a true Gryffindor and the sword came to him.” McGongall nodded. “After that it was easy to goad Voldemort into casting the killing curse which back fired because he didn’t control the Elder wand. All I can say is that I’m glad it’s over.” The house elf reappeared with his things. He thanked it before standing. “Is there a bathroom I could use here that hasn’t been destroyed?”

The house elf took Harry’s hand and before it had a chance to take him away she said “I believe that Snape had a floo connection to the Manor but only the Headmaster was keyed to go through it. I don’t really understand how Hogwarts knew who to let through but it wouldn’t let him bring the Death eaters through. He confided in me that Voldemort was frustrated with him because of it.”

Harry nodded. “I’ll go to the headmaster’s office and use his connection. Thank you for your help.”
The headmasters office had been turned over. The pensive and all the memory vials that Dumbledore and Snape had stored were gone along with several books and artifacts. Harry could only hope that they had been taken by someone from the ministry but that really wasn’t any of his concern. He was done fighting. He had dreamed that maybe someday he would join the auror department but now that he had fought and seen more people die, than anyone should in his opinion, he knew that he wouldn’t be doing that. No, he really didn’t know what he’d be doing but it definitely wouldn’t be that. The clock on the mantle said that it was just before 7am. He wondered if anybody would be wake at Malfoy Manor. He decided it didn’t matter and took a handful of floo powder and threw it into the fire calling out Draco Malfoy’s name. Then he sat in the headmaster’s chair and waited.

Fifteen minutes went by before the floo flared to life again. “Harry Potter, is that really you?”

Standing in front of the floo he smiled when he saw the pureblood aristocrat looking through the fire at him. He was as handsome as ever and didn’t look a bit put out to be getting called on so early. “Yeah, it’s me. I wondered if I could talk with you for a few minutes?”

Draco smirked. “I’ll open the floo you can come through.” Harry was surprised that he was invited into his home so easily. He had expected twenty questions about why he wanted to talk to him. He stepped out of the floo and shook Draco’s offered hand. “I hadn’t expected you to show up here so soon. I thought you’d still be celebrating with the Weasley’s.” Draco said as he watched Harry brush himself off.

Harry frowned. “They aren’t really in a celebrating mood. Did you know that Fred died yesterday?”

Draco nodded. Harry went on and said “and now they feel as though their adopted daughter has been kidnapped and brain washed.”

Draco grimaced and said “and you’ve come to her rescue, her knight in shining armor.” He took in his appearance “or should I say her knight in ratty old blue jeans and an ugly sweater.”

Harry looked at his clothes “McGonagall asked an elf to find some clothes for me. I didn’t expect it to find me my actual clothing. They cleaned the outfit and brought it to me which was good but I would have preferred something nicer for this meeting. I didn’t have time or the means to get it. I still have no idea how they do that stuff. This outfit was in a bag where we were staying last.”
Draco grunted and said “It will have to do for now. It’s kind of the bad boy look isn’t it?” He cocked his head to the side considering him for a moment. “I knew that you’d come I just didn’t expect you so early. Kingsley and Arthur came last night with two aurors in tow. We thought they’d wait a few more days before they tried again so now you’re here sooner than expected. I’m afraid that my father and Hermione are still in bed so you’ll have to wait to see her. That is if my father allows it after Mr. Weasley trying to force her through the floo last night.”

Harry grimaced and said “he came back to the Burrow and told us that Kingsley forbid him from talking to your father or Hermione again until further notice. That he was tactless for trying to force her through the floo.” He waved his hand in the air and said “Draco, I don’t need to see her right away. Can we talk for a bit?”

Draco smiled at him a smile which Harry thought seemed fake. “Fine,” Draco said. “What would you like to talk about?”

Harry frowned. This conversation wasn’t going as well as he had hoped. He glanced around the room and noticed a seating area. “Can we sit down for a minute while I gather my thoughts?”

Draco motioned towards the sitting area. “Please have a seat.” He said very formally making Harry feel as though he had lost the friend on friend advantage.

Harry sat and thought for a minute before he said “Listen, I’m not really here on the Weasleys behalf. I’m here because my best friend, who I thought I lost, is acting strangely. I can’t tell you how thrilled I was to hear she was alive but she’s not acting right and I’m concerned for her.”

Draco listened to Harry’s thoughts but didn’t say anything. Harry hadn’t really said anything that he could respond to so he just waited for Harry to get to the point of what he was trying to say.

Harry groaned. “I guess I just want to know, why?”

“Why? Why what Harry?”

Frustrated Harry stood and began pacing. He stopped and looked at Draco and said “Why everything. I want to know how all of this came to be. Why would people follow that mad man? Why didn’t he kill Hermione and why is everybody acting so strange? Why?”

Draco smirked. “You’re going to need more than a few minutes of my time to answer all those questions.”

“Well, start wherever you want. I just need answers. Why are you being so nice now? When for years you behaved like you hated muggleborns, halfbloods and blood traitors.”

Draco pursed his lips thinking about how he could respond to that question. “Before I answer your question can you tell me why you hated purebloods? Did you ever really ask yourself why you felt like we were so bad?”

Harry thought about it for a moment and said “I thought you were bad because Purebloods wanted to eradicate those that weren’t purebloods.”

Draco nodded “but why do we hate them so much?”

Harry shook his head “I really don’t know.”

Draco frowned. “Muggle-borns and half-bloods are blurring the veil. They are bringing their dirty traditions into the wizarding world and exposing the muggle world to the magic. It’s starting to affect
our way of life. There’s a reason why the veil was created back in the dark ages. It was to keep the muggle filth from us. Now they are breaking the veil down by exposing us to the muggle world. If it keeps up witch and wizard hunts will start again they will drag us off to some lab somewhere and dissect us trying to find what makes us magical and how they can clone it for themselves. Honestly, Harry didn’t you listen at all in history class. Blood traitors are supporting that cause. They think that we are being paranoid but even if we are it’s our right to be. We have certain traditions that we want to uphold and them bringing that filth in doesn’t allow us to practice our way of life.”

Harry listened to everything he was saying. They were right he had read stories about people being treated differently because they had strange things happen to them. Kids that supposedly had telekinesis gifts locked away for research and the parents never knowing what happened to them. He wasn’t sure if all the stories were true but even if only one of them was true then he didn’t want to risk it. “I never really thought about what would happen if Muggles found out about magic.”

“Mr. Weasley and the other Blood traitors think that we can coexist with muggles and not suffer any consequences. That’s just not true. First off what would happen if little Harry Potter junior elevated a kid when he was angry and dropped him on his head? The muggle parents would rant about what an abomination little Harry was but in the wizarding world parents would be there to guide little Harry and the other kids would know that wasn’t how you treat one another not when it’s possible for the other children to retaliate with their own magic. They would see that we have healing capabilities and then we would be sought after and ridiculed for not helping everyone heal even little Johnie who got dropped on his head. A young person with magical blood could potentially survive that fall but a muggle would surely have brain damage. But little Johnies parents would only see that we didn’t save their baby. And muggles carry diseases most of which we are immune to but what if they develop another plague. It nearly wiped out most of Europe including the wizarding community. Where would we be then?”

Harry frowned. “I never thought of any of that. I just saw that you hated us and so I hated you in return. So why the change of heart?”

“Well, for one that mad man came back from the dead. But before that my family had been pushing for ministry reform for years. About two hundred and fifty years ago the muggles started encroaching into our world. They came in and told us that it was wrong to kill a wizard or witch that tried to leave it. The ministry bent to their demands to keep the peace. Things like binding were outlawed and our own witch and wizard hunts were stopped. If a witch or a wizard wanted to leave our world then they had a right too. Slowly things started to change. Suddenly witches were marrying muggles and thinning the blood lines. We had an increase in squib births in the pureblood lines which no one knows for sure but it seems awfully strange that they coincide with one another. So my family and others like it started campaigns against muggle-borns coming and going as they liked and started pressing for the hunts to begin again. The binding that was done on your friend probably would have been used on everyone in some form if Voldemort actually won.” Draco smiled at him and added with a wink “which I for one am glad he didn’t.”

He went on explaining much of how they got to this point “My father and Severus could probably tell you more about how charismatic Riddle was as he preached about the Purist lifestyle. At first he was just a really good public speaker but as his followers gained mass he started to get more extreme. Severus mentioned something about the splitting of his soul making him go crazy but no one really knows for sure. We never really expected him to come back. My father was still pushing some of his agendas and of course I was supporting his wishes by doing so in school but when my father first heard from Wormtail that he was coming back he didn’t believe him. It wasn’t until we heard a rumor that you had gone against him when he was trying to steal the philosopher stone than my father panicked.
He had this book that Voldemort gave to him to hold. He knew it was of value to Riddle and he wanted to be rid of it but he couldn’t exactly say ‘hey I got this book here’. So he slipped into Ginny’s book bag hoping that she would show it to her family. But she’s not that bright is she?” He wanted to see if Harry would still defend her. Harry shook his head no. Draco sighed. “Well at first my father thought it was some kind of joke that the book never made it to Dumbledore thinking that Dumbledore wouldn’t intentionally risk the lives of children. When he realized that Dumbledore would and had on multiple occasions my father started trying to push for his removal as headmaster.”

“He did put children at risk multiple times. He used them as targets and bait for all sorts of things that he claimed were for the better good. It wasn’t just me either. It was my parents, Severus, Hagrid and even moaning myrtle. He knew that the chamber of secrets opening was there and he gave her a key to use that bathroom so that she could hide from her bullies instead of stopping her bullies from bullying her.”

“Ah, I wondered about that.” Draco said.

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Hermione tried to sit up in bed when she felt someone pass through the floo but Lucius was holding her down spooning her from behind. “Master, did you feel that? Someone just came through the floo.”

He moaned into her hair and said “Nobody can come through unless one of us lets them. I’m sure Narcissa or Draco is down there to greet them.” He pulled her to him. “hmmm, now that we are up.” He began caressing her body and kissing her neck.

“Master, aren’t you curious to who it is?”

“Pet, stop worrying about it. We can talk to him later.” He stroked over her breast running his fingers gently over her nipple. She gasped out and pressed her breast into his hand. “I think I want to slip into something a little more comfortable.” He said pressing his hardening cock against her ass.

“I’m hungry and I think it might be Harry. Actually, I’m pretty sure it’s harry.”

Lucius grunted. “Forget about it slave” he said more firmly as he thrust forward slipping into her vagina.

Hermione moaned as she said “ah yes Master.”

He thrust into her again. “I don’t want you to think about Harry Potter coming here and taking you away from us” He said as he began pulling out and easing himself back in.

She cried out again as he slipped into her even deeper. “Please Master harder.”

He chuckled and said “you’re in the wrong bed for that request.” He eased out and thrust back into her almost painfully slow so that she could feel every glorious inch of his cock stretching her insides. He pulled out again and pushed forward slower than ever making her begin to cry for more of him.

She begged him “please Master I need to come please.” She tried to push back into him as he thrust forward but he held her hips still keeping up his slow and steady pace.

He grunted into her ear when he was sure she was on the edge “Yes, come for me. Milk my cock.” He said as he eased fully into her stretching her to her limits. Hermione groaned as her orgasm washed over her, her cunt pulsing and throbbing around his thick cock. Being stretched so fully and her muscles spasming made her belly ache and that feeling made her reach her second orgasm.
Lucius chuckled and said “you are being a little greedy this morning.” She nodded her head and gasped as he pulled from her body and rolled over on to his back. “Hmm, now I think I’d like to watch you ride me for a while.” Hermione straddled him and slid down on his cock. “That’s it Pet. Ride me.” Hermione increased the pace to bring her next orgasm on. As she reached her climax Lucius thrust his hips up into her and held her down to him. She arched her back and cried out again as he exploded into her. She bucked as another orgasm shot through her body. As it began to fade she collapsed down onto his chest sobbing as the last remnants for her orgasm left her. Lucius wrapped his arms around her as she sobbed into his chest. When she continued to cry he became more concerned and said “hey Hermione what’s wrong?”

She shook her head as tried to regain her composure. “I’m sorry.” She said as she tried to pull away from him.

“Don’t be sorry. Tell me what’s wrong.” He demanded of her becoming angry with her strange behavior. Hermione was still trying to pull away from him when he said more forcefully “Slave, tell me what is wrong now. Did I hurt you?”

Hermione froze when she heard him call her slave and question her so strongly. “I’m sorry Lucius” she said to him intentionally dropping the master part for what she needed to say. “I just can’t tell you how happy I’ve been here and what if you are right and Harry has come to take me away from you and Draco and Narcissa and Severus. I don’t want to go but if I don’t I’ll lose him and I’m sure I’ve already lost Ron and Ginny and all the Weasley’s and who else am I going to lose because I chose this life rather than the life they wanted me to have.” She cried out hysterically and began sobbing again.

Lucius suddenly felt bad for being greedy and wanting to keep her here with them. She did want to stay but if he was a better man he’d convince her that she should pursue her own life. He was sure she could live here happily for the rest of her days. Before she was abandoned by her friends she had a future in the wizarding world. Even if it were misguided as a mudblood supporting blood traitor causes. He sighed and said “we really want you to stay. I want you to stay. You can make new friends and those people weren’t really your friends anyway they only wanted to use you for your brains and to further their evil ways.”

She laughed and said “and I want to stay because I don’t agree with them anymore. I don’t want what they want.”

He smiled and said “so it wouldn’t matter even if Harry is here to take you away they still wouldn’t be your friends and if they were they’d try to understand your position in our lives.”

Hermione snuffled and said “I guess you are right. I’m sure Harry will understand but the others will think I’m betraying them. Harry will feel pressured to take me away from you though. I’d hate to put him in an awkward position.”

Lucius frowned. “Potter will have to come to terms with the pressure he’s going to have from all sorts of people and groups. If he doesn’t take a stand he’ll probably find himself still being used as a tool. I think he should be done being used like that don’t you?”

Hermione nodded and said “I thought I’d be at his side helping him with that but instead I’ll be at yours’, Draco and Severus and to some extent Narcissa’s.”

“And we are lucky to have you. I want you to stop worrying about it. It may come to nothing and you are worrying yourself needlessly. Now, I know that it was Potter that came through a little while ago, would you like to invite him to breakfast with our family.”
Hermione smiled and said “could we? He could see how happy I am at your side and then he wouldn’t be so worried about me.”

“Yes Pet, that is an excellent plan. Let him see how pampered you are here.”

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A house elf appeared “Master Draco, Master Lucius is saying that he wishes to have breakfast served in his chambers and that you are free to invite Mister Harry Potter.” The house elf bowed.

“Thank you Tecks. Have you had breakfast yet, Harry?”

“No, I snuck out of the Burrow before dawn and before anyone else was awake.”

“You had to sneak out?” Draco asked in shock. “Would you care to join us? And don’t even think of refusing on the behalf of you wouldn’t want to impose. My father would not have extended the invitation if you were imposing on us.”

Harry frowned and said “I would like to stay and I suppose that it would give me a chance to see Hermione. She will be eating with you right?”

Draco smiled and said “yes, my father likes to hand feed her” as he gave Harry a little wink.

Harry thought that was a little strange but didn’t say anything. The house popped away. Harry looked down at his clothing and said “I’m not dressed right am I?”

Draco shook his head. “You’re dressed like a muggle. My father will not say anything as this is an unanticipated visit. In the future it would be more respectful to dress like a wizard if you are coming for a planned visit.”

“I could try and change but I’m not really very good with appearance spells.”

“Don’t worry about it. Come, I’ll give you a mini tour.” He led the way to the entry hall and motioned. “That’s the front door. I think you were hooded the last time you came through it. In there is the family parlor. It’s still not repaired from your escape. Bella ruined the antique Persian carpet with Hermione’s blood. We can’t get the stain out. My mother has forbid anyone to enter the room.” He led the way down the hall a little bit. “This is the ballroom.” They stood looking into the room where the grotesque throne had reappeared.

Harry had seen it in Voldemort memories but in person it looked at lot uglier. “What’s with the throne?” He asked thinking it strange that it wasn’t the first thing they got rid of.

“We tried to remove it yesterday but it’s got some spell around it. The funny thing is it only appeared when he was here and wanted it too appear. When we left for Hogwarts two nights ago it wasn’t in the room, when we came back even before he was dead it was here. Severus and my father are going to look into it further.”

“I’d like to hear how that goes.” Harry was curious about the throne. He looked at it again thinking about how impressive Voldemort must have looked sitting upon it.

He led him to the flight of steps. “The first floor has things like a ballroom, a parlor, a grand entrance and the kitchen. Second floor is guest rooms with a social area. There’s also a music room and a small library. Third floor has family suites. It also hosts the family’s private library, a fully stocked potions lab and a full balcony that has a grand stair down to the garden.” My mother’s rooms look out over the garden, where my rooms look out over the front of the house. The gardens in the front
are beautiful but it’s the back garden that you really have to see.” He walked down corridor to the
door at the end of the hall. “This is the master suite. It’s my father’s rooms mainly but he has a large
sitting room with a dining area and a small office space that he has been using since Voldemort took
over most of our home.” A man stood guard outside of the door. Draco greeted him. “Good morning
Mr. Simmons. Are you on alone this morning?”

“Good morning Mr. Malfoy. Mr. Balinchk is only a call away if he is needed. We figured one of us
could rest for a bit as nobody was really up yet. I guess we missed you leaving your room.”

Draco waved his concern away. “I was up really early.” He motioned for Harry to follow him into
the room. “My father hired two of Severus’ men last night when Shacklebolt asked for an audience.
It’s a good thing he did too after what Mr. Weasley tried to pull.”

“I had heard that a werewolf had nearly hexed his head off and the Hermione wasn’t in the least bit
fazed by it.”

“Good morning, Master Draco.”

Draco turned and smiled happy to see Hermione up and dressed. As always she looked picture
perfect and ready to impress. “Good morning Hermione. I brought you a visitor.”

She curtsied to Harry “Good morning, Mr. Potter.” Harry stood looking baffled at her. She was so
different looking. Everything about her screamed pureblood and sophisticated and her manners were
perfect. She smiled at his shocked expression and asked “Harry, are you ok?”

Draco reached around him and tapped his lower jaw. “There are no flies in here to catch so you
might as well shut it.”

Harry stammered out “Hermione, you look so different.”

Lucius Malfoy laughed. “It’s alright girl, you can greet your friend and stop making him feel as
though he’s dreaming.”

Hermione ran into his arms throwing her arms around his neck kissing him thoroughly. “I was so
worried about you. And then we couldn’t stay till the end, not that we would have been much help
anyway, but still I was so worried. How are you? Are you well? Where did you sleep?” She pulled
back and looked into his eyes “It’s true. You are different now I can feel the real you and not the
horcrux that was buried inside of you. Do you feel different?”

“Hermione, enough with the questions, give him a chance to breathe.” Lucius said feeling a little bad
for Potter.

She turned and smiled at Lucius “Master, he’s alive now. I wish you knew him before and could see
the difference.”

Lucius stepped forward and extended his hand “I know everyone is probably saying this to you but
thank you.”

Harry took his hand and shook it. “I really have nothing to say to that it’s not like I really had a
choice.”

“Nonsense Harry, you could have run away and let the wizarding world fight it out for themselves.”
Hermione said chiding him on belittling his own sacrifices.

Lucius laughed. “Hermione, really I don’t think any Gryffindor would ever even consider such a
“Actually, Hermione and I talked about doing just that. Leaving the locket in the forest and just escaping.”

Lucius frowned. “That would have been disastrous. What made you change your mind?”

“I followed Snape’s doe patronus to a pond and retrieved the sword of Gryffindor.”

“Ah, Severus, just in a Knick of time. His timing is impeccable as always.” Lucius stated proudly.

“Ron convinced us to stay after that.” Harry said frowning. “He said that the universe wanted us to win.”

Hermione sighed. “How is Ron? Did he take it ok last night? I would have rather spoken to him in person but after last night I don’t think I should.”

“He’s not handling it well. They are convinced that you have been brainwashed.”

Lucius frowned and said “You’re not here on a social call then?”

Harry could see that his demeanor had changed. He held up his hands. “I am not here on their behalf but my own. I wanted to see Hermione. If she’s happy here then I’m happy for her. I’m not here to convince her otherwise.”

Lucius nodded in approval. Hermione gushed. “Harry, I’ve learned so much just in the few months that I’ve been here. I’ve learned things that Hogwarts stopped teaching when Dumbledore took over. Did you know about the veil?”

“Actually, I’ve just been given a brief history lesson. I didn’t know about it till just a few minutes ago. What I don’t understand is why no one ever talks about it?”

“They stopped talking about it hundreds of years ago. After it was created it was taken for granted and then the plague hit. After that people started thinking that it was a myth or maybe it wasn’t as strong as it used to be as muggle-borns were being allowed to come and go as they pleased. Wizards started hunting them down again once we had recovered from the devastating loses. Those that couldn’t be enslaved were murdered.” Lucius stated. “Voldemort wanted to take us back to those times. If you ask me it was too far back and actually he has killed like a plague without any real regard to numbers or class. He has killed more mudbloods then purebloods but the numbers are still staggering.”

Narcissa entered the room not noticing that they had a guest. “Lucius, Severus has fallen ill. I think that the venom may still be in his system. I would like to take the escorts to St. Mungo’s and see if they have any information regarding snake bites in their library.”

“Of course my dear. Did you see that we have a guest?” Lucius said motioning to Harry who stood just a few feet away from her.

She turned in surprise and smiled at Harry. “How rude of me, Good Morning Mr. Potter.”

Harry stood when she entered the room and was a bit taken back by how casually she was dressed. She wore a long green silk dressing robe and slippers. Her hair was down and messy and looking very slept in.

Harry found his voice after looking at her in surprise for a minute. “Ah, good Morning Lady
Malfoy.” He managed to stammer out.

“I’m sorry I didn’t expect anyone to be up here so early. I’ll just go and change. Lucius, Severus will not be joining us for breakfast. Can you have Tecks see to it that he is served in his room?”

“Of course my dear.”

Harry glanced at the dining table just in time to see one of the place settings disappear and the table to be reorganized. Now only four places were set and he wondered who else would not be joining them. “I still don’t know how they do that?” He said motioning to the table.

Hermione laughed. “Tecks has been a house elf here since the Manor was built nearly five hundred years ago. He’s keyed into the wards and the rest of the building. When one of the family says something or even concentrates hard enough he can make it happen. So can many of the other elves but Tecks is the main elf here he delegates to the others.”

“How many house elves live here?”

Hermione frowned. “There are eleven house elves now. Voldemort killed eight of them when you escaped.” She told him sadly.

“That’s awful. I’m sorry to hear that.” Harry said before adding. “Bellatrix’s knife hit it’s mark and killed Dobby.”

Hermione nodded. “I know we heard. I’m sorry Harry, that must have been awful for you.”

“Yeah, it was pretty awful and then we thought you were dead. I was ready to abandon the whole search so that we could storm the Manor and rescue you.”

“I’m glad you didn’t but what stopped you?”

“Ron said we’d be too late anyway and that it was pointless.”

“Wow, he gave me up for dead pretty easily.”

Harry nodded. “Yeah, I was thinking the same thing but I never said anything about it. Then when we heard that you were still alive and being paraded around wizarding villages we were happy but then he said that rescuing you still had to wait till the war was over. We even got a tip that you were going to be alone in Dowery. Was that true? I wanted to go and check it out but again Ron thought that surely it was a trap.”

“And now that it’s over he wants to pretend that it never happened.” Draco said shaking his head. “Too many things have happened for all of us to just pick up where we left off.”

“Pretty much. They all seem to be forgetting that we’ve all changed during the war. Even Ginny was acting like nothing was different. She actually thinks that me, just reminding you that you and her wanted to have a joint wedding will change your mind about staying with the Malfoys and you’ll come running home to Ron’s arms and that we’ll get married together.”

Draco frowned and said “I didn’t even know that you were engaged to her.” He scrunched his nose up in disgust.

Harry laughed. “I’m not. I never even asked her to marry me. I think she just thinks that that’s how it’s supposed to be. That’s her happy ending but it’s not mine.”
Narcissa entered again giving a much more formal appearance. This time everyone stood when she entered the room. Hermione curtsied to her and said “Good morning, Mistress.”

Again Harry thought that was a little strange but kept his mouth shut as he listened to Draco and Lucius greet her also.

“Good Morning, Mother.”

“Good morning, love.” He motioned to the table. “Shall we eat? Hermione was starving this morning and begging to get up so we could eat. Now it has been nearly an hour since. I’m sure she’ll drop dead soon from hunger.”

“Master please, I wasn’t begging I was just anxious. Especially after I learned Harry would be joining us.”

“Of course Pet, you weren’t begging for that it was something completely different.” He said winking at her. Harry watched the exchange with fascination. Hermione was actually blushing at some inside joke he wasn’t sure what it was but the way he was talking to her was not like he’d expect a Pureblood Supremist to speak to a muggleborn witch. “Harry, please have a seat.” Lucius said motioning for Harry to take the seat to his left. He was already seated with Hermione standing to his right and Draco taking the seat on his right with Narcissa at the other end of the table.

Harry eased down into the seat wondering if Hermione, who was apparently starving, was going to be eating with them. He watched, as everyone was settled, Lucius motion for her to kneel by his side. He gave her a puzzled look. She intern smiled and gave him a little wink.

Plates laden with food appeared in front of each of them. Harry’s stomach grumbled he hadn’t realized how hungry he was till that very moment. “Lucius, my dear would you please start us off?” Lucius picked up his fork and knife and cut into the steak that was on his plate. Once he had taken a bite Narcissa took a sip of her drink and the family began eating.

Harry didn’t quite know the proper etiquette but he did know enough to know that you waited for the head of the house to start the meal. Now he felt a little self-conscious eating when Hermione wasn’t. He watched in amazement when Lucius offered her food from his plate and Hermione happily took it.

“Harry, is everything ok with your meal.” Draco asked suspecting what was going on in his mind.

Harry looked down at his plate. “Yes, it’s fine. I just didn’t expect…..” he tapered off trying to think of the word he wanted to use and not insult the family or embarrass Hermione further if she even was embarrassed. She didn’t seem all that upset about what was happening. He remembered Draco saying that his father liked to hand feed her and was guessing that this was what he meant. The whole thing seemed to be getting more and more bizarre. “This…arrangement?” He supplied after a pause to put his thoughts together.

“Ah, I see. Well as you can see Hermione isn’t being treated badly. She actually quite comfortable and pampered here,” Draco said then motioned to his plate. “Just eat and we can explain everything.”

They watched as Harry took his first bite of food. The steak was delicious. It was tender and juicy. He wasn’t sure he had ever tasted anything like it before. He hummed in approval. “This is really good.” Hermione smiled at him as he dug into his plate. Lucius went back to eating and feeding her while Draco and Narcissa did the same.
Lucius, I think this is as good a time as any to bring this topic up.” Narcissa started to say.

He held up his hand “Narcissa, I can guess what the topic is and I think I agree. Now that the war is over you’d like to start entertaining again. Am I right?”

She smiled coyly at him. “You know me well, love.”

“I think that if we start doing that again, meals like this with our pet kneeling at our side would be inappropriate and detrimental to our cause. She should have a position at our table again.”

“Those were my thoughts exactly. I also think that now that the war is over we can trust her to not refuse to eat. There shouldn’t be anything that should upset her so where we would be forced to force feed her again.”

Lucius pursed his lips as he thought. “Yes, I think you are right.” He looked down at Hermione and asked “would you like that girl?”

Hermione blushed. “Master, if that would please you but I’m sure some of your guests won’t be comfortable with me at your table not even kneeling.”

Lucius stroked her head. “It’s our table if they are not comfortable with it then they don’t have to join us. I do enjoy feeding you but I think you should have a place at some of our meals. When we are in private with just close friends then you can kneel and I’ll feed you, ok?”

“Yes Master.” Hermione said to him happily. He held his fork down to her with another piece of steak on the end of it. She happily opened her mouth and allowed him to place it in.

“That’s settled then. I’d like to invite the Greengrasses over once the ministry sorts us out.”

Draco groaned. “Mother, everything has changed now. We don’t even know if they survived the battle yesterday.”

“Well my son, if they did survive we have to start considering your courtship of Astoria and a wedding date.”

“I’m not even sure I want to marry her.”

Narcissa put her fork down and looked at him. Harry thought for a minute that Draco was going to get a motherly reprimand but Narcissa smiled and said “We’ll talk about this later. The Malfoy family will need an heir and the Greengrass family is the best match. Maybe you would prefer Daphne.”

Harry snickered at little at that. “I don’t think Draco would prefer Daphne.”

Hermione was having trouble keeping a straight face but finally broke out laughing “Draco definitely wouldn’t prefer Daphne.”

Draco cleared his throat. “I’ll think about it mother. But they are right Daphne is not someone that we are interested in as a suitable match. She’s had sex with just about everyone guy and even some of the girls. I think her and Ginny Weasley even had a little competition going to see who could bed a boy first.”

Narcissa frowned. “But she’s from a pureblood family surely she knew to wait.”

Draco shook his head. “I don’t think that was important to the girls in my house as it was to some other girls we know.” He reached down and stroked Hermione’s head. Hermione grimaced as she
Lucius frowned. “It was unavoidable for her” he said motioning to Hermione. “But the Greengrasses knew that we would expect their daughter to be a virgin when she married Draco. If they haven’t kept her pure then I say the deals off.”

“But Lucius, who will he marry then?” Narcissa asked with genuine concern. “The Family needs an heir. It may be alright for Severus to mate with the slave as he’s a halfblood anyway but you can’t expect that to be the case with you own son.”

Hermione suddenly felt very awkward talking about this with Harry here. She could tell that he wasn’t comfortable with the topic either. She desperately wanted to change the subject. “Mistress, will I be going to St. Mungo’s with you to research the snake bite cures.” She asked knowing that it wasn’t appropriate.

“Slave,” Lucius reprimanded harshly. “That was not appropriate for you to change the subject like that.”

Hermione bowed her head. “I’m sorry, Master.”

“Narcissa, we should discuss this further when we are in a more private company. I’d also like to find out what they have been doing. Greengrass came to most of the death eater revels but I don’t recall him really doing anything.”

Draco grunted. “He was with us on the Reese mission. His team cleaned out the neighbors houses.”

Lucius grimaced and asked “his team was responsible for killing everyone?”

Draco nodded. “Well, under Voldemort’s direction, his team took care of that task. I’m sure he wasn’t imperioused though.”

“I’m glad all we had to do was destroy their houses. I never want to do anything like that again.”

“What was the Reese mission?” Harry asked curious as to how the conversation had taken a morbid turn.

“It was something I would rather not talk about anymore.” Lucius said firmly. “I’m sure it will come up if we go to trial but it’s not something that I’m terribly proud of.”

Harry nodded. “Well maybe you could tell me what’s wrong with Snape?” He looked at Narcissa. “I overheard that you need to go to St. Mungo’s and research snake bites?”

Narcissa nodded. “Nagini bit Severus and we thought Hermione did a good job of pulling the venom from his body but it seems as though he’s still having problems with it.”

“I never really learned about snake bite venom so I used spells for removing plant venom. Last night he said he was feeling pretty good but I guess this morning he woke up feeling sick?” Hermione asked Narcissa.

“Hermione, don’t fret it’s not your fault. He woke up very early saying that his joints hurt. I helped him to the bathroom to soak in the tub and gave him a potion for the pain but he needs something more. I’m sure it’ll be a simple fix we just need to find it.”

“I don’t understand why you don’t just take him to St. Mungo’s.” Harry asked with concern.
Lucius laughed. “Right now most of the people in the wizarding world think he was Voldemort’s right hand man. Until the ministry sorts us out we won’t really be able to show ourselves in public without ridicule.”

Harry grunted and didn’t say anything as he sat deep in thought for a moment before he said “I had planned on just lying low until I was needed to testify but it seems that might not be possible. I need to get myself sorted out don’t I?” He sat just staring into space long enough that Lucius cleared his throat trying to bring him back to the present.

“Harry, what are you thinking about?” Hermione asked knowing him well enough that she could tell something was on his mind.

“I need to get myself sorted out.” He stated again with more confidence, having formed a plan in his head. “I’m going to go to Grimmauld place to clean the house out so I have some place to live but first I need to go to Gringotts and get some money out of my vault.”

“Gringotts will still be closed. You’ll have to wait a few more days for that.” Lucius stated.

“Closed? I didn’t know that the bank ever closed.”

“Well it does when Voldemort orders Lucius to destroy it.” Narcissa said scowling.

“My father is very good at build things and then destroying them.”

“He’s an architect and ward specialist.” Hermione said as though she was proud of him.

Harry narrowed his eyes at him. “Ward specialist? Kingsley said he didn’t know how to reset the wards at Hogwarts. Voldemort used a spell to disable them. Right now the castle and the surrounding grounds is visible to muggles and anyone can get in.”

Lucius nodded. “I know he did. It will be easy to reset them. There should be a ward stone or a corner stone that just has to be reactivated.”

“Can you help them with that?” Harry asked.

“I doubt they will want my as I’m the one who gave him the spell to disable them in the first place but if they do I’ll be happy too.”

Harry nodded and said thinking out loud. “So I can’t go to the bank today so that means no new clothes. I really don’t have anything that fits and what does looks like this.” He said motioning to his outfit.

“That’s not necessarily true.” Narcissa interjected. “I’ve a clothing maker who does most of our clothes. If I send her your measurements she could probably have at least one new outfit ready by this afternoon.” Narcissa said smiling.

Harry shook his head saying “I don’t think I want to impose like that.”

“It’s no imposition, Mr. Potter. It will take all of five minutes to take care of it. Point my wand, write your measurements down, send the owl and then wait. The package will arrive in no time.”

Harry was considering her offer when Draco said “and as for Grimmauld place I’d be happy to help you with it if you want help. But in the meantime there’s always room if you want to stay here.”

Narcissa nodded in agreement and said “I wouldn’t mind helping with that either. It would give me a
chance to recover some family heirlooms from my aunt’s home.”

“Could he really stay here, Master?” Hermione said getting excited about spending more time with her friend.

“There is plenty of room.” Lucius said glowering thinking about having the savor of the wizarding world staying at the Manor. “I think you should consider your alliance though. Staying here could suggest to people that you are in support of the Purist agenda now.”

“I’m not really sure what to think anymore.” He looked around the room. “I’ve never really considered who’s agenda I supported. All I really knew was that the Purist agenda seemed to be against most of my friends and I needed to fight Voldemort.”

“That’s what your friends represented as their agenda. What they want all of wizarding England and the world to be open to everyone and its’ not what we want.” Lucius stated starting to feel tense talking about a subject he felt passion about.

Harry nodded. “I would like to know more about the Purist, not that I want to be a politician or anything but it would be nice to know what I just spent the last seven years fighting for.”

Draco smiled. “Well you came to the right place and I think you could be a great politician.”

Harry paused and stared into space again for a moment before saying “Thank you, but that’s not something I want to consider right now. I guess if all that’s sorted out then I’ll go with Lady Malfoy to St. Mungo’s and see about getting a healer to come here and see to Snape.” He looked around the table at their shocked faces. “If that’s okay with all of you that is.”

Narcissa smiled. “My dear boy, if you can get St. Mungo’s to come to us and help Severus you are more than welcome to come along.”

Harry nodded. “Lord Malfoy, would you be willing to go to Hogwarts and offer to help with the wards?”

“Of course, but like I said I doubt they will want my help. I’m not sure where the stone would be but it shouldn’t be hard to reset once I find it.”

“They will accept it if I tell them too. After I speak to St. Mungo’s and we see to Snape, I’ll peak to Shacklebolt and make the arrangements for you to go to Hogwarts.” He said firmly. “I think I have an idea where it is. Something that Dumbledore said to me once about how one stone can affect the whole school. I think I know where that one stone is.”

Hermione smiled. “You have changed. You are much more confident now then you used to be.”

He smiled. “I have a life ahead of me now that I want to live. Before I doubted that I would survive this war but now that I have I’m going to make the best of it.” He looked around the table smiling at everyone. “I’d like to get started as soon as I can. Hermione, I can see that you are indeed happy here and I did miss you. I’d be happy to spend a few days here with you if Lord Malfoy doesn’t mind me being here.”

“Of course I don’t mind. We would be happy to have you and you can have a few days living as a Pureblood and see what we are really fighting for.”

“I suppose I should be thanking you for keeping her alive. Although, I would like to hear more about how that came to be, I think it can wait for another time as there is a lot to get done today.” He pushed his chair out and stood up. Lucius followed suit. Hermione jumped to her feet excited to get
the day started.
Harry arrived at an apparation point just outside of St. Mungo’s with Lady Malfoy and the two body guards right behind him. A crowd had gathered outside of the entry doors. People were being turned away by two security guards standing at the entrance.

“They must be people looking for injured friends or relatives. I can’t imagining they are turning the sick and injured away.” Simmons said as they approached the group. “That’s probably why the floo system was shut down.”

People that were standing at the entrance started to take notice as the four of them approached. Whispers of ‘that’s Harry Potter’ and ‘why’s he with Lady Malfoy’ could be heard as they approached. Balinchk and Simmons stepped forward and started to block the people from approaching. Before Harry knew it the crowd had gathered around them and started trying to shake his hand, pressing him for information and trying to take pictures with him. Others were hurling negative comments at Lady Malfoy. The two body guards struggled to lead them through the throng. Cameras were flashing and blinding them making the procession even more difficult. Harry kept pressing forward politely ignoring the crowds being all too familiar with this kind attention. As they reached the entrance the two security guards stopped them.

“I’m sorry Mr. Potter but we have strict orders to not let anyone enter the lobby.”

One of the people that was trying to get Harry’s attention yelled “but he not just anybody here’s the savior of the wizarding, Harry Potter.”

Harry rolled his eyes at that. “I’m here seeking medical attention. Surely you are not turning sick and injured away.”

The guard looked him up and down. “You look fine to me.”

Harry was taken aback at first not believing that this man would stop them from entering considering the throng of people that were hounding him. Straightening himself he let his magic slip out as he said to the man “it doesn’t matter how I look to you, you are going to let me and my escorts in so that we can speak to a magical healer.” The air around Harry crackled as he spoke sternly to the man. The people that were standing behind him noticed the change and took a step back. Narcissa couldn’t believe the power that she could feel emanating off of Harry. She stood next to him as he spoke to the guard trying to not react to the surge of power that had surrounded her. The guard gulped and looked to his partner for guidance. His partner opened the door for them motioning them inside.

Inside the lobby they could see why they were trying to keep people out. It was almost as crowd as the street had been. There were people inside who were morning the loss of loved ones gathered in small groups about the room talking quietly and comforting each other. The whispers began again as people recognized him. Harry rolled his eyes and shook it off as he spied the reception desk. He faltered for a moment when he recognized Rita skeeter. He stopped and turned towards Narcissa and the body guards “see that blond woman by the receptionist. I don’t want to talk to her. Her and I don’t get along. If she tries to speak to either me or Lady Malfoy you are to shut her down and move her on.”

Narcissa frowned and said “Mr. Potter, that is Rita Skeeter. You can’t not talk to her, she’s a
Harry looked at her angrily and said “We will not be speaking to her. Is that clear?” Narcissa started to argue but when she saw the piercing look that he was giving her she decided that she would keep her argument to herself. She certainly wasn’t used to taking orders from a child that was younger than her own son even if it was by only a few months but after the confrontation with the door security she figured she better just let it go.

Rita watched as they approached a sickly sweet smile on her face. “Harry, how good it is to see you.” She opened her arms as if to give him an embrace but the body guards were quick to intervene.

Balinchk growled at her and said “Ms. Skeeter if you would kindly step away, Mr. Potter has business with the receptionist.” He positioned himself at her side blocking Harry from her view.

Rita looked shocked but recovered quickly. “Lady Malfoy. Do you have a statement that you’d like to make now that the Dark Lord has been defeated by the Great Harry Potter?” Narcissa’s aristocratic training was struggling to surface and make a statement for the paper. Harry shot her an angry look which she saw but didn’t react to. She kept her eyes focused forward as they stepped up to the receptionist.

Mr. Simmons stepped up to her other side taking her elbow and guiding her away from the reception desk. “Ms. Skeeter if you wouldn’t mind coming with us for a moment.”

Rita immediately began arguing with the men, saying that she was a reporter and that they couldn’t keep her from reporting the news. The other occupants watched as she made a scene crying loudly that it was unjust. Mr. Simmons calmly nodded and offered to show her the door as there would be many stories out in front of the building. Balinchk opened the door for Mr. Simmons so that he could push her out into the street.

Harry stood at the reception desk waiting for the woman who was working the desk to finish gawking at the body guards as they escorted Rita to the street. She looked at Harry and stammered out. “Mr. Potter, How can I help you?”

“I am in need of a healer who can treat snake bites or venom poisoning from magical creatures.”

The receptionist looked at him wide eyed. “Ah all of the healers are busy treating the injured from the battle yesterday. A lot of people were injured and they’re really busy.”

Harry smiled at her and said sweetly “yes, I know I was there. I saw the injured people. I even injured a few of them myself.” He leaned into the desk and said in a conspiratorially way “I even killed a man.” He said to her.

She her eyes shot wide open and she began again trying to find words to what he had just said to her. “I ah… I ah… I’ll find someone to help you give me a moment.”

Harry nodded and smiled at her saying “You do that.” She rushed through the swinging doors behind her desk and disappeared into the back.

The body guards rejoined them as they waited for a few minutes. Narcissa was starting to think that maybe the library might have just been a better idea. She was starting to doubt that they would get any service. She opened her mouth to say something just as the door swung open and an older healer entered the waiting room. He looked at the four of them angrily and said “Mr. Potter, I do not appreciate you coming in here and threatening the staff. We are very busy treating wounded from yesterday’s battle.”
Harry didn’t react at all to the healers reprimand. Ignoring his tirade he held out his hand and said “Healer….” He waited for the man to supply his name before he continued.

The man looked momentarily flustered but gave his name “Healer Redman. I’m the head of the magical creature injury department. We are very busy treating spider bites from yesterday’s battle. I do not have time for interruptions.”

Harry continued again ignoring his complaint about his lack of time. “Healer Redman, I am in need of a healer that can treat snake bites. It won’t take but a few minutes of your time. Could we speak in private?”

The healer looked at him like he was crazy. “Mr. Potter, maybe you didn’t hear me. I am very busy.”

Harry nodded and said “yes, I heard you; you’re treating people that were injured during the battle yesterday. Well, I have a friend that was injured yesterday and he is in need of a healer that can treat snake bites. Are you sure you wouldn’t want to speak in a more private setting.” Harry looked around the lobby at the people watching their exchange.

The healer cleared his throat noticing the audience. “Certainly, follow me.” He led them down a corridor to a small office. Simmon and Balinchk took positions outside of the door as Narcissa and Harry entered. Healer Redman eyed Narcissa warily. “What can I do for you Mr. Potter and why hasn’t your friend come to the hospital?”

“Heave you spoken to Madam Pomfrey at Hogwarts? She kept a supply of acromantula anti-venom in the infirmary.”

Healer Redman looked at him in surprise. “I haven’t but why would she keep that at a school?”

Harry shrugged and said “it’s a long story but there is a colony of them in the forbidden forest. She kept it just in case the students accidently ran into the colony.”

“Nonsense, Headmaster Dumbledore would never allow such a thing and a colony would take more than a ten years to grow as big as some of these spiders were.”

“I suggest you take my word for it and contact her. She may have gone through it herself if that many people have been bitten but it’s worth a try.” Harry waited for the healer to make a move.

The Healer looked from him to Narcissa, who was keeping a straight I have no emotions face in place. Finally he got up and left the office.

Narcissa groaned and said “this is going nowhere Mr. Potter and mean while I have to find a cure for Severus.”

Harry smiled at her and said “trust me; he’ll be back in a few minutes.” He folded his hands in his lap and stared into space while he waited for the healers return. Narcissa was bristling with impatience. She had never spent any time with the boy before but she felt that Harry was acting very strangely and she wasn’t sure she was entirely comfortable with it. The healer finally returned and Harry refocused his attention on the healer as he took his seat. Harry didn’t bother asking about the anti-venom. “I’m sure you have heard that Voldemort had a pet snake. It looked to be some kind of boa constrictor. However, it seems that he somehow made it into a venomous snake. During the battle it bit a friend of mine.” Harry motioned to Narcissa and said “as you may or may not know, Lady Malfoy is a very competent healer. However, she has never been trained to manage snake bites. She has treated the patient to the best of her ability but the patient is regressing. I would very much like for you to pay a visit to my friend and instruct her on how to continue his treatment so that he can
make a full recovery.”

The Healer gulped. He had never met Mr. Potter before but this man sitting in front of him didn’t seem at all like he would have expected a 17 or 18 year old boy to behave. He wasn’t sure how he knew about the spider bite potions that Pomfrey had but she had enough to treat everyone that was under his care. Mr. Potter didn’t even question if his theory was right. Did he just assume that he was correct or does he not care to know? Healer Redman was not happy with how this meeting was going and he suspected that Potter was being vague because his friend was probably a death eater. “Why doesn’t your friend come to St. Mungo’s?” He asked suspiciously.

Harry took a deep breath trying to calm his nerves. “At the current time he is unable to travel in public.”

The healer figuring that he guessed right nodded and said “I gather that he’s is probably a death eater by the fact that Narcissa Malfoy is sitting beside you. I’m not sure what you have yourself involved in Mr. Potter but as I said I don’t have time for this nonsense.” The healer stood as though he was going to show them to the door.

Narcissa began to rise but Harry put his hand on hers staying her position. “Healer Redman, are you or are you not a healer that specializes in snake bites and other magical creature injuries?” Harry asked as calmly as possible.

The healer eased back into his chair not liking the turn that the conversation was taking. “I am but as I said I am very busy treating other patience.”

Harry nodded and said “I thought you were a healer but the way you are acting I thought that maybe you thought you were a judge and jury. Doesn’t the healer profession take some kind of oath to treat everyone fairly and with compassion?”

The healer spluttered out “Well yes but it wouldn’t be right to leave St. Mungo’s to treat a murderer when there’s good people that need to be treated here.”

“I see, so you are Judge and Jury?” The healer clenched his jaw as he tried to think of a response to his accusation. Harry gave him time before he stood and said firmly “enough of this, get your healer bag and bring an assistant along. You will evaluate the patient and give Lady Malfoy directions on how to proceed with his treatment.”

Healer Redman stood shocked at the firmness of his command; nodding his head in agreement he called for a medi-wizard to accompany him to the Manor. Ten minutes later the six of them were stepping from the floo into the receiving room at Malfoy Manor.

Narcissa and Harry returned from St. Mungo’s quicker than expected. Lucius was sitting with Severus in the bedroom of his suite discussing their new house guest. He felt Narcissa pass through the floo wards followed by five other people. A few minutes later they arrived in Severus’ room, Harry introduced the Healer and his assistant to Lord Malfoy and then left the family in the room. Draco and Hermione came into the room from a side door in the sitting room and joined the healer in Severus’ bedroom. Harry stood in the door way quietly watching the family as Narcissa explained to the healer what she and Hermione had done to heal him after the attack. The healer cast a few diagnostic spells then rattled off a list of potions that he would need to combat the venom poisoning. Hermione then led the assistant back down to the floo so that he could return to St. Mungo’s to retrieve enough potions for them to get started on his treatment. He gave a list to Narcissa of potions that needed to be brewed. Narcissa frowned at the list. Severus chuckled and took it from her. After
reading the list he spoke to Draco. Harry had never expected that this family would be so caring of each other. He always had the impression that they were cold hearted and emotionless but now seeing them like this he was starting to see the other side and why Hermione would want to stay.

Draco turned to him and smiled as he started from the room “Hey, thanks for getting them to come here.”

Harry shrugged. “I know he’s as much a hero as the rest of us. I wouldn’t want him to get this far and die.”

“Well, thank you. I have to brew some potions for him to take, want to help me.”

“I suck at potions Draco, you know that. Plus I have to talk to Shacklebolt.”

Hermione returned a few minutes later and squeezed past Harry into the room giving him a little hug as she did so. She was carrying a box of potions that the assistant had delivered before he returned to St Mungo’s. Harry watched as the healer showed her and Narcissa how to cast a drawing spell. Harry wasn’t able to hear all of the conversation but he gathered that the spell needed to be cast every hour. He sighed. It seemed to him that Snape was going to be laid up for a while. He really didn’t look well at all.

He turned and walked out into the hall waiting for someone to come out. Lucius was the first to emerge. “Mr. Potter, I can’t thank you enough for bringing the healer for Severus.”

Harry nodded and said “you are welcome. How is he?”

“The Healer thinks he will recover but there has been some damage to his joints he might have some arthritis pain but he’ll live which is more than we expected just a few months ago.”

“I’m glad. Now that I know more I’d like to get to know my guardian angel a little better. I never knew everything he did to help me.”

Lucius gripped his shoulder as he said “I believe Severus would have preferred to be anonymous forever but it just didn’t work out that way. Your package arrived while you were collecting the healer.” He motioned for him to follow him down the hall. “I know we spoke about you taking a guest room on the second floor but after speaking with the head house elf it was decided that one of the extra family suites would be better suited.” He pushed open the first door at the beginning of the corridor and motioned for Harry to enter. “One of the house elves collected your things. I’m not really sure from where but as you can see there is a trunk here and several bags.” He picked up a purse like bag and looked at it strangely.

Harry chuckled and said “I know what you are thinking but actually that bag belongs to Hermione. It was a gift to Remus Lupin from my mother and then Remus gave it Hermione when we were planning on going into hiding. She would probably like it back.” Lucius nodded and put the bag on the table. “I guess I’ll need to speak to the Weasley’s soon as that trunk was stored at the Burrow. They will be wondering where it went.”

Lucius shrugged. “We have very loyal house elves. There was one house elf that didn’t really understand what was happening and he became very meddlesome. I was very angry with you when you tricked me into releasing him but in retrospect it was good that you did. Dobby would not have done well here with the Dark Lord roaming about.”

“I didn’t really know enough about them to understand that he wasn’t a normal house elf and it seemed to me that he was being abused by you but he wasn’t was he?”
Lucius pursed his lips considering the question. “Dobby broke things and through temper tantrums, then when we became angry with him he would self-mutilate because he knew he was a bad elf. I would say that he was being abused by himself. We never forced him to iron his ears or drop a frying pan on his head. He did that stuff to himself. However, I was very angry with him that day in the headmaster’s office and I did intentionally kick him down the steps so I guess you could say that I did abuse him that day but no worse than he had done to himself.” Harry began pulling open the package looking at it quizzically. “Madam Morsely shrinks everything and puts a weightless spell on it so that her owl Herman can deliver it.” Lucius provided seeing that he was thinking the package was too small.

He nodded understanding. “I was wondering why it was so small.” Harry pulled out Draco’s former wand, placed the package on the floor and cast a finite spell over the package. It enlarged to box full of clothing. Satisfied Harry placed the wand on the table and began sorting through the box.

Lucius frowned when he saw Draco’s old wand lying on the table. “Mr. Potter, where is your wand.”

Harry looked up from what he was doing. “My wand that I purchased from Ollivanders before my first year at Hogwarts was broken during disapparation from the ministry job. You know when we escaped the death eater’s and stole the locket from Umbridge. In the confusion Hermione used it to disapparate us from the ministry. My wand cracked and Ron got splintched real bad. we were laid up for weeks trying to heal him.”

“What are you using my son’s wand?”

Harry smirked at him and said “after we escaped from here his wand changed it’s allegiance and obeys me now. It may even obey better than my own wand ever did. I think it might have something to do with the Elder wand. I’m not really sure.” He went back to the box of clothing.

“Mr. Potter, you are the commander of the Elder wand why wouldn’t you be using that wand.”

“Hmm, oh I broke it and dispersed the pieces.” He lifted out a black robe. Did Madam Morsely think I was going to be a death eater or something?”

“What, no. I think she probably thought you were going to be attending funerals. That would be suitable for funerals.”

“Oh! Of course.” He frowned he hadn’t considered the funerals yet. He pulled out another set that was a light blue color. It reminded him of something Dumbledore would have worn. “This isn’t really my color is it?”

Lucius frowned and asked “Mr. Potter, What do you mean you broke the Elder wand and dispersed the pieces?”

“Hmm,” Harry was distracted by the box of new clothes. It wasn’t often that he got new things and he was excited as he went through the box. There were several pairs of trousers, boxer style underwear, socks, shirts, and several robes. He pulled a dark green colored one from the bottom of the box. “I like the color of this one. Do you think it would be good for my meeting with Shacklebolt?”

Lucius was looking at him like he was crazy. “Mr. Potter, I asked you a question.”

Harry smiled and said “Oh yeah the Elder wand right. I broke it in three and got rid of two of the pieces. He stood up and fished the trophy piece that he kept out of his back pocket and handed it to
Lucius paled and sat down looking at the piece of elder wood sitting in the palm of his hand. “You intentionally broke it?” he was trying to wrap his head around the concept. Harry nodded. “But why?”

Harry shrugged. “I have a wand that works well for me. I didn’t need it.”

“You had possession of the most powerful wand ever known to wizarding kind.”

“Actually, it wasn’t all that powerful. All it was really good for was killing or getting people killed.”

Lucius was still staring at the piece of wood in his hand. “I can’t believe you would be so impulsive as to do such a thing.” He said absent mindedly.

Harry frowned. “It wasn’t impulsive. It was a well thought out plan. This morning when I woke up I made a plan and thought about the potential consequences formulated a course of action and completed the mission. What it I didn’t expect was the surge of power that it sent through me when I snapped it the first time. That was a tiny bit unnerving and I think I’ll always hear it’s cry of pain when I broke it the second time.”

“Surge of power? What do you mean? And who’s cry of pain?”

Harry shrugged again and said “When I broke the base off it sent a surge of power through me or into me or I don’t know if I’m describing it right but something happened. It didn’t hurt or anything. And then I broke the tip off and it actually cried like I had hurt it somehow then it went inert. Before I broke the tip off I think I could have still used it as a wand.” He looked at Lord Malfoy with concern. “Lord Malfoy, you seem pretty upset about this. That wand only brought death. The only person who has ever held it for any length of time was Dumbledore and he may not have used it to kill directly but he did use it to encourage others to die for his cause.”

Lucius looked up to Harry and said “so you decided that the most powerful wand ever created should be destroyed so that it wasn’t used to kill anyone else.”

Harry gave him a crooked smile and said “well yeah.” He looked at him puzzled and then said “you do realize that I am the bearer of all three Deathly Hallows right? They were mine to do with as I pleased. I destroyed them so that they wouldn’t ever fall into a person like Voldemort’s hands again.”

Lucius was still looking at Harry in amazement. “What did you do with the other two pieces?”

Harry smiled at him and said “I got rid of them so they can never be united again. I think that it wouldn’t be possible anyway not after I released its power and that strange cry. I’m sure it couldn’t be mended.” He went back to rifling through the box and said “I need to make a list of things to buy once Gringotts is open again. I want to buy a little decorative box to put the trophy piece in so that I can pull it out and show it to my kids. That is if I ever have any.” He picked up Draco’s wand and said “accio shoes.” A pair of leather boots flew up through the box and into his hand. He inspected them and said “wow, these are really nice. I bet they are comfortable too. Lord Malfoy, can I have that please. I need to get changed and I don’t want to misplace it.” He said motioning to the piece of wood. Lucius handed it to him still reeling from the boy’s casual disposal of such a powerful object. Harry held up the green robe again “So what do you think?”

Lucius gave him a crooked smiled. “That’s a nice color I think you should wear that one to meet with Shacklebolt.”
Harry wondered if he had heard him before when he asked about the robe. He gathered up his clothing and headed into the bedroom. Calling from the bedroom he said “Wow, this is a really nice room.” And then a few seconds later he called from the bathroom “I think this bathroom is bigger than any bathroom I’ve ever been in that was only meant for one person.”

Lucius sat in the arm chair waiting for him to come out in his new clothes. He couldn’t believe what he had just learned from the boy. He had thought that someone as young as him would be power hungry and that the wands power would corrupt him but apparently he was immune to that kind of corruption. He shook his head thinking ‘Severus will never believe this’.

Harry reemerged from the bedroom dressed in the green robe set. “I really like green. I always have. Maybe I should have let the hat put me in Slytherin.” He said with a faraway look then shaking his head “No, Gryffindor was the right place for me.” He smiled “So how do I look?”

Lucius smiled at him and said “like an up and coming politician.”

Harry frowned. “Maybe this is too much” he said and started for the box clothing.

“No. It’s perfect. You want to give him the impression that you are a mature wizard not some half-blood little boy. That set is perfect.” Lucius motioned for him to take a seat. “I wanted to ask you a favor.”

Harry perked up and said “a favor?” almost suspiciously.

Lucius frowned “It’s nothing big please don’t be concerned and if you’re not comfortable doing it then please just say so.” Harry nodded. “I wanted to ask you if you wouldn’t mind taking Hermione along with you to the ministry. She’s not been out for the last week or so and she’s been chomping at the bit to get things moving with the ministry.”

“Oh, do you think it will be safe for her? I doubt that there will be anyone who would want to attack her but what if someone decides to kidnap her?”

“I doubt anyone would try that with you around and I would want to send Simmons and Balinchk along.”

“They seem like good men. Are their records clean? I mean they aren’t going to be looking at a trial are they?”

Lucius shook his head no and said “Severus told me that he had quite a few people that he encouraged Voldemort to mark but that really didn’t meet the criteria for death eaters. There are a lot of men and women walking around with little junior death eater tattoos that didn’t do a single illegal thing. We are calling them S.A.’s”

Harry stared into space for a moment while he thought it through “Okay, I’ll bring her along with me. It will be good for Shacklebolt and everyone else to see her roaming about freely. What do you plan on her doing while she’s there?”

“Draco still has his record book that needs to be taken in as evidence. We have an artifact in our ballroom that we could probably remove ourselves but I think considering its return they should probably at least investigate it so that they can’t say that we were hiding it. Voldemort had a suite of rooms in this house that even before you came along and escaped he had it warded so that house elves couldn’t enter it. Severus and Draco told me that he has a lot of artifacts in his rooms and we want them cataloged. I don’t want them to claim we hid another horcrux in our house. I didn’t even know that’s what we had in the first place with his diary.”
Harry grimaced. “You’re expecting a lot from this visit. I was hoping for a quick meeting with Shacklebolt regarding Hogwarts and to get a feel for how things are going at the ministry. I want to know that Kingsley is the right person for the job. Not that I could really do anything about it right away but I want to know that our faith in him isn’t misplaced.”

“Really, all I was hoping she could do is put in a word with Shacklebolt that we are here waiting for them. Narcissa wants to go to Nymphadora’s funeral and speak to her sister and Severus was hoping to go to Remus’. They are going to be at the same time tomorrow. We don’t want them to make a scene and come to arrest one of us while we are there”

Harry thought on that for a minute. “I didn’t realize they’d be so soon. It was just yesterday that they died. How did they arrange the funerals so fast?”

Lucius smirked. “What’s there to arrange? They are being buried next to each other in the same cemetery. It’s just a matter of publishing when the funeral is and putting them in the ground.”

Harry shrugged. “I didn’t have a body to bury when Sirius died and McGonagall took care of Dumbledore. I never had to think about what would have to be done.” Shaking off the morbid mood he stood up and said “is Hermione ready to go? After is see Shacklebolt I’m going to the Burrow to see the Weasley family. I’ll have her escorts will bring her back here.”

“I’d appreciate that. I don’t want her to see them right away anyway not after what Arthur tried last night.”

“I won’t stop them from talking to her if we run into them but I won’t let them force her to do something she doesn’t want to do either.”
Severus hears about Harry and his strange behavior

Harry stood patiently in the entry hall with Lucius waiting for Hermione to come down. He was anxious to get to the ministry and get this conversation with Shacklebolt over with so that his afternoon would be clear and he could deal with things like the Weasleys and Grimmauld place. He could hear Narcissa’s voice on a floo call in the receiving room but he couldn’t make out what she was saying or who she was talking too but the conversation sounded intense. He looked up the steps and saw Hermione was finally coming down. They walked into the receiving room in time for them to overhear Narcissa saying that she had to go. She frowned at them when she realized what was going to happen. “Lucius, that was Andromeda, the funeral is tomorrow at 2:00 and she said we could come and pay our respects, all of us.” She gave Harry a weak smile and said “She told me that you were named godfather to Teddy, their son, and she’s worried you might want to take him from her. He is the most darling little boy, I’ve held him once he’s so bright and happy. All he did was smile at me.”

Harry frowned and said “Remus had told me that it was either me or he’d have to choose Severus. I thought that he was joking at first but remembered something he said to me when he was at Hogwarts that I thought was strange. He told me that Severus was a really good guy. I believed him until he killed Dumbledore and I thought that Remus must have been mistaken. That we were all fooled that he tricked us and he was slimy. Now I see he really did have us all fooled even Voldemort.”

Hermione smiled and said “Remus was the leek to the auror department, Harry. They’ve been feeding information to him about Voldemort’s missions all along but only Remus knew where the information was coming from. Draco and Severus have been brewing wolfsbane all along for him too.”

“I didn’t realize.” Harry looked into space for a moment thinking about his plans. Looking at Narcissa he said “Please tell Andromeda that I don’t think I’m qualified to care for Teddy right now. If I had too I would become qualified in a heartbeat but if she’s willing to raise him then I’m happy to be the uncle that spoils him.”

“You will be with us tomorrow won’t you, at the funeral?” Narcissa asked nervously.

“Yes, and I have to find out when Fred’s funeral will be. I should go to that too.” Hermione frowned and looked away feeling sad that she wouldn’t be able to go with him. Lucius and Narcissa both noticed but neither said anything. “We should get going” he said changing topics. I have a lot left to do today. After shacklebolt and the weasley’s I’m going to go by Grimmauld and get a feel for what I want to do with the place. I’m also going to talk to Kreacher and see if he wouldn’t be more comfortable here.”

Narcissa smiled and took Hermione’s hands saying to her “be careful and remember you’re a Malfoy now don’t let them see you flustered, you’re representing our family.” Hermione nodded and smiled at her. Narcissa patted her cheek and then pulled her into an open mouth kiss, her on the lips. Hermione’s eyes went wide for a second before she returned her kiss. Narcissa rarely ever showed Hermione any kind of physical attention so this for Hermione was a big deal. She always savorred any attention that the family matriarch showed her. Narcissa pulled away and said “be a good girl and make us proud.”

Hermione blushed and said “Yes Mistress, I will and thank you for the kiss of confidence.” Narcissa
smiled at her but didn’t release her hand.

Lucius cleared his throat and said “My Love, they will be fine. You’re making them nervous. Just let them go.”

Harry held out his hand for Hermione to take. The escorts stood not far from where they were standing waiting for them to go. Harry stepped into the floo and out into the ministry lobby still holding Hermione’s hand.

Once they were gone Narcissa turn to Lucius. “I am worried Lucius. If you had seen how the boy acted at the hospital you’d be more worried too. I wish we had had a chance to talk before you sent him off with our Hermione.”

Lucius frowned and asked “how did he act, Narcissa?”

“We should see to Severus and I’ll tell you what happened.”

Lucius followed her to Severus’ room and found him standing in the little sitting area in his personal quarters looking out the opened door to the balcony. “You are up I see. Does that mean you are feeling better already?”

Severus smiled at them and said chuckling “the healer told us that I needed to get up and move my joints. Your slave was in here after she changed threatening me with bodily harm if I didn’t get out of the bed.”

“Really? I told her that she needed to rush and not keep us waiting.”

“In her defense, she was rushing.” He said chuckling. He stood by the window looking out over the front gardens. “I guess I owe Potter for bringing the healer here for me.”

“I wanted to talk to you both about that strange visit to St. Mungo’s.”

Severus looked at her “was there something strange about the visit?” he asked his curiosity peeked.

Narcissa nodded and said “you could say that. He is a very strange boy isn’t he?”

Severus shrugged and said “he’s not had an easy life but I’m curious as to what he could have done to concern you.”

“Wait till I tell you what else he did today but Narcissa lets hear what he did with you first” Lucius added. “I’m sure you won’t believe my story.”

Narcissa sat down in the arm chair. “I’m starting to think that maybe there’s something odd about him. I might actually believe whatever it is that you tell us, Lucius.”

“Well, he is odd isn’t he, Narcissa? He’s been through a lot in the last seventeen years. His experiences have been very unusual. I think it’s to be expected” Severus supplied once again defending Lilly’s son.

Narcissa nodded and said “yes I suppose that is true. How he handled the people at the hospital was unnerving.”

“What did he do, draw his wand out and threaten to hex everyone?” Severus asked chuckling.

“Not quite that but close” Narcissa said. Severus grimaced when he heard that. “I think it might have come to that with the security guards standing guard at the door. The hospital isn’t letting anyone in
the lobby unless they are sick or injured. The guards stopped us and told us that we couldn’t enter.” She shook her head and said “actually it started as soon as we apparated at the hospital. There was a crowd of people standing around the entrance. We gathered that they were there looking for lost loved ones but as soon as they saw him they started to run towards us. Our men did their best blocking the crowd from us but the people were still touching him and me and trying to get his attention. He didn’t even act like he saw any of them he just looked straight ahead and kept walking. I tried to do the same but some of the people were cursing at me. It was hard to not look at them. Once we made it to the doors I expected the guards to just open the doors and let us in. It was Harry Potter after all. But they didn’t the one guard actually had the nerve to question us.” Narcissa said feeling flustered all over again. “It was terribly upsetting but it didn’t really even seem to upset him. The guard said they had orders to only let those sick or injured through. Mr. Potter very polite told him he was seeking a healer. The guards actually said to him ‘you look fine to me’.” Narcissa laughed nervously “I thought at first he was going to accept that from the guard and we’d have to find some other way to get into the building but then I noticed that crackly feeling when someone is about to perform a bout of accidental magic. You know the feeling. Well, I don’t think it would have been an accident with Mr. Potter. The crowd behind us took a few steps backwards. Mr. Potter very calmly stated to the men ‘it doesn’t matter how I look to you, you are going to let me and my escorts in so that we can speak to a magical healer’. The first guard looked at the other guard for support or direction but he other guard clearly didn’t want a confrontation and opened the door for us.” Narcissa sighed. “That crackly feeling went away once the other guard opened the door.”

Severus frowned and said “he hasn’t always had that great control over his emotions he probably is tired and still stressed. I’m sure his slip with his control wasn’t anything to worry about.”

“What about how he handle the crowd, like they didn’t even exist?” she asked still feeling like that was strange.

Severus chuckled and said “he’s been a celebrity since he was just over a year old. He’s been dealing with that kind of fame since he was eleven. He is very good at it by now.”

“Okay, I guess I can give you that. Even our Draco is good at handling that kind of popularity I guess I just didn’t expect it from this boy.”

Lucius nodded and said “I’m finding a lot of things about this boy that are unexpected. How did he get the healer to agree to come?”

“First let me tell you that he refused to talk to Rita Skeeter. She was in the lobby and clearly wanted an interview with us. He told the guards to not let her speak to us . I started to argue with him as not talking to her would probably cause more trouble than talking to her but he became angry and said to me that I was not allowed to speak with her and asked me if he made himself clear. As if he was my boss. I wanted to retaliate but remembered how he handled the guards. When Rita approached us she was making like she was old friends with him and going to give him a hug but Balinchk blocked her. Then she tried to speak to me asking for a statement, which I desperately wanted to give, Simmons took her by the elbow and escorted her to the door. She was crying that it was unjust and that they couldn’t keep the truth from the wizarding world. She was causing quiet a scene. Everyone in the lobby including the receptionist was watching her being escorted out. Potter stood face forward staring into space waiting for the receptionist to acknowledge him. I tried to do the same but I couldn’t help but look over my shoulder at the crowded lobby as they gawked at Rita.”

“Rita has a history of printing sensational lies about Potter and his friends. He was never interesting enough to tell the truth about what he was doing because most of it was innocent. So she would make up lies and half-truths.”
Shaking her head in disbelief she said “I read her article all the time. We have in the past been on very good terms. After today I’m pretty sure she’ll not be printing nice things about me.”

“Knowing her she’ll have your husband dead and you and Potter at St. Mungo’s getting blood work done for a marriage license.” Severus said.

Lucius frowned and said “I hope not that could be devastating to our image.”

Severus nodded. “I agree but speaking to her with Potter wouldn’t have been any better.”

“Once Rita was gone Potter got the receptionist’s attention and asked to see a healer. She told him that they were all busy treating injured people from the battle. He said he knew, he injured a few himself and even killed a man. He didn’t necessarily threaten the woman but it could have been taken that way. The poor lady couldn’t even talk after that. She ran into the back and got a healer. Healer Redman came out a few minutes later complaining that he didn’t appreciate Potter threatening his staff nor did he have time for interruptions. Mr. Potter didn’t even respond to the accusation he smiled and went on as though everything was fairly normal.”

“He was just trying to keep everyone calm, Narcissa. I don’t think any of this sounds all that unusual for Potter.”

“Did you know that Madam Pomfrey keeps in stock a large amount of anti-spider venom in the infirmary?”

“Hagrid had a pet spider that he let escape into the woods years ago. He maintains the colony. He collects the venom and I make the anti-venom potions just in case students run into colony.”

“Why would they allow dangerous venomous spiders to roam the forest?”

Severus shrugged and only said “Dumbledore” as an explanation.

“Mr. Potter told Healer Redman that he should check with Pomfrey. The healer didn’t believe him either but when it was clear that the conversation wasn’t going any further so he left the room. I told him that I thought we were wasting our time that we should just go to the library but he told me I should just trust him. Then he did that weird staring thing like he was looking out a window and nobody else was in the room. It must have been ten minutes before the healer returned. Potter didn’t even ask if he was right about the anti-venom he just went right into explaining that we need a healer to come to the manor. The healer guessed that it was for a death eater as he was sitting with me. Potter questioned his ethics and whether or not he was judge and jury. I thought that the healer was going to dismiss us but Mr. Potter re-questioned his ethics and let the healer think on it for a moment before ordering him to get his medic bag and an assistant. He then stood and walked from the office and waited at the floo for Redman and his assistant to join us. It only took a few moments but for about a minute I thought that he wasn’t coming. Mr. Potter clearly never had a doubt.”

Severus narrowed his eyes and asked “did he say anything about why he thought that his plan was going to work?”

Narcissa shook her head. “No. He barely spoke to me at all. He just set out and went through the motions. He was very determined to complete his plan. I’m not even sure why I was along. I could have spoken to the healer and answered questions but Potter didn’t even give me a chance to talk. He told the healer that I was a very competent healer but that I didn’t have any experience with this type of injury.”

“I have worked with Redman before he’s very good at his job. I was lucky he was on duty. He still
thinks that I’m a bad guy. He even mentioned that the treatments should be continuing at the prison if possible and that he’d be happy to send along a note saying as much.”

Lucius frowned and said “I wonder how soon that is going to be settled.”

“Hermione told me she was going to the ministry in the hopes of moving that along.” Severus said wondering if that was the plan.

Narcissa sulked and said “I hope she’s ok with him. I don’t think she’d be able to stop him if he decided to take her by force and the two body guards won’t be any help if that happens.”

“Narcissa, I’m sure she will be fine with him. He isn’t easy to corrupt that’s for sure. I wanted to tell you Severus about the fate of the all-powerful Elder wand.”

Severus laughed and said “let me guess, he either returned it to Dumbledore’s grave or he’s been using it to pick his nose with it.”

Lucius scrunched his nose up at the thought. “Pick his nose, that’s gross.” Then he chuckled and said “actually either of those would be better then what he actually did with it.”

Severus was surprised. “I can’t guess, why don’t you just tell us.”

Lucius nodded. “I couldn’t believe it but I held it in my hand and it’s as true as anything. He broke the wand into three pieces.”

Severus’ eye shot wide open as he exclaimed “He What! That can’t be true not even he would be so foolish to destroy something with such power.”

“It’s true. He said that it was only good for one thing and that was bringing death to the bearer and those around them. So he broke it. He thinks that nobody, not even him, should have that kind of power at their disposal.”

“But the wand calls to the bearer and controls them. How is that the wand didn’t call to him and protect itself?” Narcissa asked just as surprised as Severus.

“I’m not really sure except to say that, as he pointed out to me, he controls all three Hallows maybe he could control that part too. He said that when he broke it he felt the power rush through him but it didn’t hurt or anything so he’s not worried about it. When he broke the tip off rendering it inert he said it cried to him as though he had hurt it.”

Severus stood by the window looking out over the sunset thinking about how strange it all seemed. “I can’t believe that he did that especially after working so hard to get it. I wonder what he did with the resurrection stone and the invisibility cape.”

Lucius shrugged. “We didn’t discuss them except he said that he destroyed *them*. I’m guessing that he destroyed all three.”
Harry and Hermione emerged from the floo into the lobby of the ministry. Several auror’s stood guard around the lobby wands at the ready. The place was a mess still and it looked as though a few wand battles had been fought that morning. Broken tiles lay strewn about on the floors and several floo’s had been clasped in on themselves with scorch marks running up the walls. Harry pulled Hermione to the side with the body guards and said “I wonder what happened here.” Hermione and both guards shrugged. “It doesn’t matter. What was with that kiss? I’ve never would have thought a Malfoy would kiss a muggle born in such a way.”

Hermione shrugged again and said “she doesn’t usually kiss me like that and never in such a public setting.” She glanced at the men. “It was really nice. I hope she does it again.” The body guards were both chuckling at her.

Harry smiled and said to her “it was pretty hot actually.”

Hermione blushed and said “when she is in Lucius’ bed and I’m with them she barely touches me. She’s not into women.” She laughed and said “I never thought I would be either but now I think I might be, at least I am with her.”

Harry scowled at her and asked “you’re sleeping with Lucius. I mean having sex with him?”

Both of the body guards tensed and politely excused themselves to the side. Hermione glanced around the lobby to see if anyone was watching them. Nobody was really close enough to hear their conversation but people were watching. “Harry, I would really rather not discuss this with you here. It’s kind of private and I’m sure Master Lucius would prefer this not be discussed in such a public setting.”

Harry’s brows furrowed at her as he scowled. “You wanted to wait. I want to know how you came to be in his bed.” He said becoming angry and demanding an answer.

Hermione looked around again and pulled him closer. “I was bound to them as a slave; Voldemort forced them to keep me as such. I was theirs to do with as they pleased but not only that I wanted to.”

“So you’ve been sleeping with Lord Malfoy and his wife?” he asked shocked.

Hermione frowned “and Severus and Draco too” she added sheepishly.

Harry looked disgusted for a moment and thought back to breakfast. “That’s what Lord Malfoy was saying was unavoidable when Draco mentioned your standards.”

Hermione nodded and said “the binding spell they used on me required the blood of a virgin. I was that virgin.”

Harry pursed his lips as he thought about his friend’s dilemma. “I want to hear more later.” She nodded in agreement. He then asked “so you’ve slept with Draco? Does that mean he likes women?”

Hermione smirked at him and said “oh no he likes boys too. Trust me if you wanted to pursue that I’m sure he’s game.”

Harry gave her a crooked smile and said “cool.” He looked around the lobby again. “Let’s go to the reception desk and see about talking to Shacklebolt.”
As they approached the desk two aurors snapped to attention and stood on guard watching them closely. Harry observed their change in posture and resigned himself to the fact that this wasn’t going to be as easy as he had hope. He addressed the older man sitting behind the desk. “Good afternoon” He said trying to be polite even though he knew in a few minutes he would need to be more forceful. The man looked at him warily but didn’t say anything. He glanced to the side at Hermione and then over Harry’s shoulder at the two bodyguards that were nervously looking at the auror’s. Harry understood his apprehension and continued “I’d like to speak to Kingsley Skacklebolt. I understand that he is the interim minister of defense now.”

The man nodded and went back to work as he said “Mr. Shacklebolt is a very busy man you’ll have to come back another time.”

Harry nodded and said “of course’s he’s a busy man. Please inform him that I am here and seeking an audience with him.”

The man grunted and said “As I’ve told you he is busy. You could try sending an owl and wait for an appointment.”

Harry smiled sweetly as his power began to crackle around him. The auror’s drew out their wands readying to defend the receptionist. Thinking quickly Hermione said to the guards “Simmons, Balinchk stand down you do not need to intervene.” They looked at each other and then to Hermione before removing their hands from their wands and trying to relax as more aurors approached them. They listened to Mr. Potter give orders to the old man like he had to the guard at St. Mungo’s.

Harry was still letting his power slip into a bubble around him, Hermione and the two body guards as he said more firmly “You will inform Mr. Shacklebolt that we are here to see him. Now!” The man stood a look of fear coming over his face as Harry spoke to him. “I will not be turned away.” Harry added.

One of the aurors approached him and said “Mr. Shacklebolt is very busy. You’ll have to make an appointment, Mr. Potter.”

Hermione smiled seeing a way around the conflict. “Well then we’d like to make our appointment for right about now. So if you will please inform him or his assistant that we are here I’m sure this can all be settled in minutes.”

The older man spoke again taking an angry reprimanding tone. “Mr. Potter, you cannot come into the ministry and start ordering everyone around and expect them to jump at your command.”

Harry smirked and said “Oh but you don’t understand I can do just that. Now I wish to speak to Mr. Shacklebolt. You will contact him and tell him we are here seeking an audience.”

The man spluttered out indignantly that he would do no such thing. One of the aurors reached to pull him away from the desk and before his hand even touched the bubble Harry had his wand drawn and pointed at the auror. “Do not touch me.” He stated firmly. The air began to crackle again as the bubble expanded. Hermione had seen this trick before but not to this magnitude. They had read about it in one of her books but none of them had been able to make a bubble this big or strong. She was very impressed with Harry’s control. The auror was pushed backwards as the bubble expanded. The older man behind the desk gulped and picked up a quill and quickly jotted down a message on a piece of paper that went flying off.

Hermione looked around the lobby it was quickly filling with aurors and most of the office workers had disappeared. She glanced back to Harry who was now staring out into space. She wondered
what he was seeing in his mind that he found more interesting than a lobby full of people that could potentially hurt them. A few minutes went by before the elevator pinged and Percy Weasley stepped off. He came quickly striding over to them ignoring the aurors that were standing with their wands at the ready position keeping an eye on Harry and his entourage.

“Harry, it’s good to see you.” Percy was saying as he approached them.

Harry allowed him to come through the bubble and hug him. “It’s good to see you too Percy. However, we are here to see Shacklebolt.”

“I know. He’s busy interrogating a prisoner and couldn’t be interrupted. I’m to escort you down to his office to wait for him. It shouldn’t be but a few more minutes.” He turned to Hermione and smiled at her. “I’m glad to see that you rescued her away from the Malfoy’s.”

Harry grimaced and said “She doesn’t need rescuing. She is here as their representative.”

Percy frowned at that and said “I thought you were going over this morning to get her away from them.”

Harry shrugged and said “I went to talk to her and in my opinion she is happy there. Aren’t you Hermione?”

Hermione beamed at him happy to have his support and approval. “He’s right Percy I am happy there.”

“I don’t understand how that can be possible.”

“I can try and explain it to you but I’d hate to linger here in the lobby and miss our time slot with Shacklebolt.”

He smiled and said “right. Come on I’ll show you the way.” The five of them pressed through the lobby filled with the aurors and made their way to the elevators. Once inside Harry allowed the bubble to pop. “That was some pretty impressive shielding Harry. Where did you learn that from?”

“Hermione taught it to me when we were camping. It has come in handy twice today.”

Hermione wondered when else he had to use that bubble trick but didn’t ask. “Percy, Can you tell us who he’s interrogating?” she figured he probably wouldn’t tell them but it was worth a try.

“He’s got Shirl Ludovic in with him now. She was caught trying to escape the country with one of the Wizengamot members.” The elevator lift opened and he escorted them down the hall. They could see several rooms with death eaters sitting at desks answering questions with people from the ministry. He motioned for them to enter Shackl bolt’s office. Once they were all neatly tucked inside he said “Mrs, Ludovic had a lot to say about the Malfoy’s.”

Hermione tensed afraid to ask what kind of information she could have shared about her new family. She steadied her nerves and said “what has she been saying?”

“I don’t know all of it but she’s claiming that her husband knew all along that the Malfoy’s weren’t exactly working for the Dark Lord. He was going to tell Voldemort about the Malfoy’s betrayal once everything was over but Voldemort killed him before he had a chance.”

Hermione sighed. “We are lucky he was as crazy as he was otherwise he would have been more difficult to defeat. He was always killing people that would further his cause.”
Harry frowned and said “I can’t imagine he could have been any more difficult to defeat then he already was. I don’t think it was an easy task at all.”

Hermione wrapped her arm around his shoulder and said “I know Harry but trust me I lived with him for several weeks and if he was saner we wouldn’t have won against him.”

Shacklebolt entered the room before they could continue with their conversation. “Mr. Weasley, thank you for retrieving them from the lobby.” Percy stood realizing that he was being dismissed from the room. “Mr. Potter you created quite a stir in the lobby. I hope you have a good reason for this impromptu visit.”

Harry nodded and said “I understand that you are busy. I did have good reason. As you know Hogwarts sustained heavy damage yesterday and the wards have been disabled.” Shacklebolt nodded. Harry went on to say “Lucius Malfoy has offered to reactivate them. I know that he’s still the head of the school board and has some rights regarding how things are done at the school but we both thought that we should clear it with the ministry first.”

“I do appreciate that but I think before we reactivate them we should figure out why they came down so easily in the first place.”

Harry looked at Hermione giving her the chance to speak regarding his involvement in that occurrence. “My Master was ordered to find a way to bring the wards down so that the lost diadem could be retrieved. Dumbledore had planned on the final confrontation being at the school since it would be familiar territory for Harry. Severus held back the warding information from Voldemort until we were sure that Harry would be at the school and could fight the final battle. We had all hoped that it would move along faster than it did so that less people would be injured but it just didn’t work out like that.”

“So Lucius Malfoy disabled the wards allowing Voldemort and his men to enter the school?”

Hermione frowned and said “not exactly. He gave Voldemort the spell to disable the wards. He didn’t do it himself.”

“And why should I allow him to reactivate them?” he asked not keeping the anger from his voice.

Hermione scoffed and said “because the school is currently unprotected and according to Harry it is falling down. Those wards were what the building used to repair itself without them the building will collapse.”

“And now he’s worried about it? I think that we will find someone else to take care of the problem.”

Hermione bristled and wanted to be angry with the man but Harry interrupted her before she could say anything. “You are being foolish. The building will surely fall down before you find someone as qualified as Lord Malfoy. He has graciously offered his help and you will accept it.” Harry stated firmly. He looked at Hermione. “Hermione would like to talk to you about sorting out some things at Malfoy Manor. Hermione.”

He once again gave her the stage. Hermione cleared her throat and said “Thank you Mr. Potter. As my Master told you last night they have some things that need to be handled through the ministry. They understand that you are busy with other things namely interrogating prisoners. I would like to remind you that they still have Mr. Malfoy’s diary in their possession. You will need that information to properly interrogate them.”

Mr. Shacklebolt held up his hand stopping her. “Ms. Granger, I don’t think we will need a diary that
has been kept by one of Voldemort’s inner circle members.”

Hermione sighed and said “First off its just Hermione now, I obliivated that name and gave it up entirely when I allowed myself to be enslaved. Second off the Malfoys were falsely trusted by Lord Voldemort. He thought they were too afraid of him to do anything against him. He trusted that they were loyal to him and therefore never looked there way when things were leaked or something went wrong. They have been feeding information to the ministry about Voldemort’s missions almost since the day he returned. Draco Malfoy has been keeping records on everything and if you are too blind to see that then you are a fool and not fit to run the ministry.” Hermione stated confidently.

Shacklebolt spluttered. “Ms. Granger I will not sit here and listen to this nonsense. I don’t have time for it.” He stated firmly and began to stand.

Harry laughed and said “You will sit here and listen because you know what she is saying is true.” He motioned for Hermione to continue.

“This is of a less than urgent matter but they would still like it addressed. Voldemort occupied a room at the Manor that has several magical artifacts in it. They feel as though it would be best if the auror department came and cataloged it before they started going through it. There is also the matter of his throne that only appeared when he was present and has now appeared and remained. They want to be rid of it but that can wait for the ministry to get together and decide on it. And I saved this last bit for last because it’s almost as important as Draco’s diary. They would like to be sorted out as soon as possible. They want to be on with their lives as I’m sure the rest of the wizarding world does.”

Shacklebolt laughed and said “like I’m sure you would like to be. I gave the spell to a woman who specializes in breaking blood bonds.”

Hermione glared at him. “I believe this conversation should be held with my Master present. Mr. Potter does not need to be involved in the details of my enslavement.”

Shacklebolt grunted and said “Mr. Potter, did your friend tell you about how she came to be a slave?”

Harry shook his head that she didn’t but sensed that he didn’t really want to discuss it with him. “Hermione is probably right that it’s not something that should be discussed with me. It was probably something that was very private.”

“Actually, it wasn’t. Voldemort paraded her around the room showing off the Gryffindor princess and gloated about how she had given his loyal servant Lucius Malfoy sensitive information about your where abouts.”

Hermione glared at him and said “I wasn’t paraded around and the information wasn’t really all that sensitive.”

He waved her off and said “Mr. Potter, I wonder if you know who you are aligning yourself with. Showing up at St. Mungo’s with Lady Malfoy and now supporting their decision to enslave your friend. I think you’d be interested to know that her “voluntary enslavement” was done by raping her in a room full of Voldemort’s loyal supporters.”

Hermione clenched her jaw making her anger evident and said to Harry keeping as calm as possible. “Mr. Potter, It’s true I was raped during the enslavement process. It was planned that I would enter into the meeting and act like I was being taken by force. However, I lost my nerve when the werewolf came to get me.” She looked over her shoulder to Balinchk who was standing with them in the room. He had enough sense to grimace at her when heard what she said. “I didn’t know he was
part of the S.A.s at the time I didn’t even really understand what Severus was doing just that he seemed to really not want me dead and the Malfoys seemed to be deferring to him a lot. He was still fighting Voldemort even though the order had become disorganized. So I panicked and really fought but if the Malfoys and Severus changed any part of their plan Voldemort would have realized that something was up and he probably would have killed us all right there. We really wanted to live through this war. So Master Lucius went on as planned and raped me so that the binding spell could be performed by Voldemort himself. The spell was written so that it would end when the caster dies. We figure it must have something to do with wand mechanics as Voldemort used Lucius’ wand. We expected that when Voldemort died the spell would be ended but it didn’t work that way.”

Harry nodded and asked “and you wanted it too?”

Hermione nodded and said “I would still stay with them but we are all concerned that the spell will have other effects that we don’t know about. My biggest concern is that something will happen to Master Lucius and it might happen to me too.”

Shacklebolt laughed and said “yeah like the Kiss.”

Hermione shot him an evil look. “He’s not done anything to warrant the kiss.” Hermione said in his defense.

Harry frowned and said “I’d like to see the spell myself, Hermione.”

“I can show it to you later when you return to the Manor but right now we need to work on getting this worked out.” She said motioning to Shacklebolt.

Harry nodded and said “I think your message has been delivered. Mr. Shacklebolt when can we expect one of your men at the Manor to collect Draco’s diary?”

“Are you serious?”

Harry nodded and said “right now you are the head of the ministry and I don’t think you are a fool. I have always thought that you would be a good Minster of Magic. This is your chance to prove to the wizarding world that you can do the job and part of doing it is taking all sides into consideration. The Malfoy’s are one of those sides. They will need to be sorted fairly and honestly.”

Shacklebolt leaned back in his chair thinking about everything that he had just been told. Potter seemed to have matured overnight. True he hadn’t seen the boy since he went into hiding with the rest of the trio but he hadn’t expected him to present himself as a wizard that held some power over the ministry. He thought about how Lucius had surely coached him on how to behave as well as how Hermione should behave. Now he wondered what the Malfoy family was up to that suddenly they were aligning themselves with a muggleborn and a halfblood blood traitor. He needed to find out before things got too far out of hand. “I will send someone tomorrow to take statements from them and collect the diary. As for the room and the throne, please ask them to leave it be till we can get someone there to look at it.”

Harry stood and held out his hand “Thank you Mr. Shacklebolt. I’ll be escorting Lord Malfoy myself first thing in the morning to activate the ward stone.” Shacklebolt stood and took his hand.

Hermione stood with them and said “tomorrow will be great. They are attending the funeral of Remus and Nymphadora Lupin tomorrow at two. Do you think you could have them come before or after?”

Shacklebolt frowned and said “I don’t think they will be welcome at their funerals.”
“My Mistress spoke with her sister just before we left and Andromeda assured her that they would be welcome.”

Shacklebolt frowned and said “I didn’t know that they were on speaking terms.”

Hermione shrugged and said “I’m sure there is a lot that you don’t know. When can we expect your men?”

Harry held the door open for her. Shacklebolt sighed and said “I’ll see that someone comes in the morning.”

She walked into the hall and said “Thank you Mr. Shacklebolt.”

Percy met them in the hall and escorted them back to the lobby. “Harry I wanted to tell you that Fred’s funeral will be in the morning at 11.”

“Thank you for letting me know. I’m headed to the Burrow now to speak to your family.”

Percy smiled and said “That’s great. I’m sure they will be thrilled to see Hermione.”

“I’m not going with him Percy. I can’t trust Arthur after what he tried last night.” Hermione said sadly.

Percy frowned and said “I’m sure he wouldn’t do something like that again. Besides you’re free of them there’s nothing forcing you to stay there or go back.”

Hermione smiled and said “you are right nothing is forcing me to stay or go back to them. I want to though. I really like it there and now that I know them better I like them and want to stay with them. I wish I could believe that he wouldn’t try something that foolish again but I really can’t risk it.”

“Plus her Master told her that she was too come right back to the Manor once we were done here and she doesn’t want to disobey him. Do you Hermione?”

Hermione smiled and said “not really. I’d hate to disappoint him.”

“What would happen if you did?” Percy asked concerned.

“I’d be mad at myself but he wouldn’t do anything but be disappointed and I don’t want that. I like making him happy.”

Percy shook his head and said “I don’t think I understand.”

“I understand, Percy. Your family will just need to trust me when I say she’s fine with the Malfoy family. She’s happy and they are happy with her. I think we all could learn something from her family.” They stepped off the elevator and into the lobby which was bustling with people again like nothing had happened just an hour ago to cause concern. The walls were even being repair already.

“What happened in here?”

Percy frowned and said “we brought in the Crabbe family in this morning and their idiot son tried to take a wand and create a fiendfyre. The aurors had to send out a few curses and in the end they killed Vincent. His father was still spouting out their pureblood nonsense about how we were all blood traitors and how lifting the veil will destroy us all. He didn’t even seem upset that his son was dead.”

Hermione frowned and said “they appeared to be totally on board with Voldemort’s plan to take over the world. I ran into Vincent a few times at the revels, and let’s just say that he wasn’t very nice to
me. Draco and Lucius had to come to my rescue from several different class mates a few times.” She said shaking her head.

“You went to revels?” Percy asked a bit shocked.

Hermione nodded and said “Voldemort ordered Master Lucius to bring me. I had to sit and watch people get tortured. He even called me out and made me watch as he tortured a muggleborn witch because she refused to kneel as I did. He offered her to one of the Wizengamot members said if he could break her as I had been broken he’d give her to him as a reward. Later I saw her body lying in the bushes. I never did hear her name, now I wonder if she was ever identified.”

Percy frowned and said “that must have been awful for you.”

“I’m alive. I’m happy to be one of those that lived through this madness.”

Percy frowned and said “You still want to stay with them knowing what they supported?”

“Percy they want to protect their way of life. Riddle started off wanting what they wanted but became an extremist. Even back then they were starting to go against his will. They never expected him to come back from the dead and when he did, they found they were still bound to him. They’ve been fighting from the inside as best they could without getting themselves killed.” They had reached the floo.

“Hermione can you just go through or do you have to wait for it to be opened by one of the family?” Harry asked.

“I am part of the family. I can just go through.” She hugged Harry and gave him a kiss in the cheek. “Should I tell them to expect you for dinner?”

“I don’t think so.”

Hermione nodded distantly. “I wish I could tell you to say hello for me but I don’t think they will appreciate that.”

“They’d rather hear it from you directly. Will you be at Fred’s funeral tomorrow?” She shook her head no. “I have to ask you Hermione is that your choice or is it by their order?”

“I haven’t even asked if I could go. They haven’t told me no but I think that your parents are going to be pretty mad at me after Harry speaks to them today. I’m not sure I’d be invited.”

“My parents will have to learn to get over themselves. I swear they are as bad as some of the purebloods I work with. I think George would want you to come and Ron and Ginny too. I know I’d be happy to see you there.”

“If you want me to Hermione I’ll asked Molly and Arthur if you can come with one of your family?”

“I guess I’d like that. I want to see them but not if they don’t want to see the new me.” Harry motioned to the floo. She took the powder out and tossed it in calling out “Malfoy Manor.” The two body guards followed her through.

Tecks appeared as the floo closed behind her and the men. “Slave Hermione, Master Draco requires your assistance in the potions lab. He asked me to come for you as soon as you returned.”

She turned to the men and motioned for them to follow her. “Thanks for coming with me to the ministry. I guess you have some time off for a bit.”
Balinck cleared his throat to say something as they climbed the stairs. “Slave Hermione,” He started and then cleared his throat again. “I just don’t know what to say. I’m sorry that my presence upset you that night.”

“Really, you shouldn’t apologize for that. I know that werewolves aren’t all bad I just didn’t know you well enough to make an educated decision on it. My mind went into overdrive thinking about Greyback.”

He nodded and said “well I never even thought anything more about that night except that we were there to see it happen.”

She frowned and said “I’m really not upset about it. I don’t want you to be either.” She reached the door to the lab as it swung open for her. “See you later.”

Percy watched her leave and said to Harry “is she really ok with them? They don’t have her brainwashed or blackmailed do they?”

“I don’t think they do. They offered me to stay with them until I get Grimmauld place cleaned out so that I can move in there. I took them up on it because I want to see how they live. Hermione has had a change of heart regarding the purist agenda and I want to see what that is about too.”

“I know what it’s about and I don’t disagree with it. I do disagree with how they are going about achieving it.”

“I think the Malfoys might be of that same frame of mind. I want to learn more.” Harry took a hand full of floo powder and stepped into the floo. “Hopefully I’ll see you later.” He tossed the powder down and called out “The Burrow.” The green flames flared around him for a moment but nothing else happened. He stepped from the floo and said to Percy “I guess I’ve been locked out already.”

“That’s weird.” Percy looked perplexed “Why would they do that?”

Harry shrugged and said “there’s a whole list of reasons that I can think of.” Percy looked curiously at him. “Well, for one I left without saying good bye then at some point a Malfoy house elf came for my things. I took Lady Narcissa Malfoy to St. Mungos to retrieve a healer for Severus Snape. I’m sure they heard through the grape vine about that at some point already. Shacklebolt knew so they probably do too.”

“Let me go and tell them I’m leaving for a bit and I’ll take you there myself.”

“I would appreciate that. I’ll wait here for you.” Harry stood in the lobby where the aurors were still standing guard. Some of them were watching him suspiciously as though they were waiting for him to do something again. Harry chuckled thinking if this was the best they had to offer it’s no wonder Voldemort was doing so well.

Percy finally returned and said “I’m taking a late lunch so I’ve only got an hour. Let’s go.” Once they arrived at the Burrow they were surprised to find that nobody was there. “I wonder where everyone has gone.” Percy asked looking around.

“I bet they are at Hogwarts. The place is a mess. I’m going over in the morning with Lord Malfoy to reset the wards.”

“Really, Malfoy offered to do that? I wouldn’t have expected that of him. Is he charging the school for his service?”
Harry scoffed and said “he better not try and charge them. I asked if he could and he said that if they wanted him to he would.” He looked around the Burrow. “It feels different here now you know. It use to feel like home but now, I don’t know it feels different.”

“It feels different to me too. It has ever since I learned about things that we weren’t allowed to talk about.”

“Not allowed to talk about?”

“Yeah my parents didn’t want to talk about things like the veil and the increase in squibs and why the purebloods felt they were better than muggleborns and halfbloods. I still don’t really understand why they didn’t want to talk about it. And if you asked most of the teachers at school they would probably tell you that it was a myth and things like that didn’t really exist.”

Harry laughed “like the Deathly Hallows didn’t exist.”

Percy frowned and asked “You mean from the children’s story of the three brothers.”

Harry nodded and said “yes those are the ones.”

Percy laughed. “Maybe not quite those as I think the veil really does exist.”

“I was until early this morning the bearer of all three Deathly Hallows. They really did exist and Voldemort planned on using the wand to achieve his goals. Fortunately for us he didn’t understand how the wand passed from one person to another.”

“Are you telling me that Children’s story was true?” Harry nodded. “Wow, I can’t believe that. That’s crazy. I mean how does someone even go about tricking death?”

Harry shrugged. He knew how someone goes about tricking death but figured Percy didn’t need to know that. “I should really leave your family a note just in case they aren’t at Hogwarts.”

“You, good idea.”

A few minutes later they disapparated to the same location that Harry had arrived at in the morning. Again there were two Aurors standing guard. “Percy, where were all these aurors yesterday when children were fighting death eaters?” He asked as they started walking into the building.

Percy grimaced and said “I’m not really sure. We got the information that Voldemort was at Hogwarts and everyone that I know came but a lot of other people didn’t or they came and fought on the wrong side. That’s one of the things we are working on today. Finding out where the communication went wrong.”

“Do you know who came and cleaned out the headmasters office?”

“I did late last night after I heard from Shacklebolt that there was sensitive information in here and that the wards were down. He sent me over right away to get the pensive and some books. I read some of Snape’s note and they are very detailed. With his book alone we should have enough evidence to make arrests.”

“If Shacklbold believes it. He’s still thinking that Snape is a traitor and I guess he’s right. He was a traitor to Voldemort.”

Percy nodded. “If Remus had survived it would have been better for him.”
“Remus kept telling me to trust Severus that he was good and could be trusted. I wish I had seen what he saw.” He looked around the main hall. “I wonder where everyone is.”

“Maybe they are upstairs in the infirmary?” He suggested. “I heard you say that you went to Mungo’s to retrieve a healer, was he injured during the battle?”

“Nagini bit him. I think that Hermione tried to heal him using plant venom extracting spells but they didn’t work and he was getting worse. The healer sorted him out easily enough and now they are managing him. He should make a full recovery. Lord Malfoy said something about arthritis in his joints but I don’t know exactly what that will mean for him.”

“I didn’t realize that Nagini was venomous.”

They reached the hospital wing and looked around. There were still an awful lot of people there lying in hospital beds but no sign of anyone in the Weasley family. Harry stopped a person he didn’t recognize. “Excuse me can you tell me where Professor McGonagal is?”

“I think she’s at Hagrid's house. Her and a few aurors went down to talk to him about the spider bites.”

“Thank you.” Harry and Percy started for the door.

“Mr. Potter.” Harry turned to see Professor Trelawney lying in a hospital bed. Harry scowled at her but still went to her beside. “I told you that difficult times were ahead of you.”

“I remember Professor Trelawney. Have you been injured?” He asked concerned for her.

She gripped his arm and looked into his eyes. Her glasses sat on the side table and Harry realized that she was probably having another one of her crazy visions. She gasped and said to him “you will be the new Dark Lord. You will rule the wizarding world.”

Harry pried her hand off his arm and said “I think I’ve had enough of your predictions to last a life time.”

He started to walk away from her but stopped when she said “even though you broke the wand, Mr. Potter, you still have command over death. Death will not tolerate that long especially if you abuse it.”

Harry turned back to her and said angrily “if you ever have another vision that I am in or that concerns me and blab it to anyone, I will introduce you personally to death and you can discuss his tolerance for abusing power.” His power was blowing around him, his expression grew dark as he expressed his anger at her.

Professor Trelawney gasped and began shaking her head at him saying “no I won’t ever say anything I swear it.”

Harry nodded his head to her and turned to leave. It was then that he realized that he had another audience. He looked pointedly about the room making eye contact with a few of the people he recognized. “Let’s go Percy I’ve got to find your family and McGonagall.” Percy followed him out of the infirmary. “I really couldn’t introduce her to death you know that right?” he said as he stalked away for the infirmary.

“I figured as much but did you realize that you threatened a teacher and even put some power behind the threat. It was pretty scary to watch.”
“I had to get my point across. Could you imagine if that prediction got around about me being a new Dark Lord?”

“Yeah, that would be really bad.” Percy was questioning whether or not that was a real possibility considering what he had seen so far today.

From the top of the hill they could see Hagrid and the Weasley family standing around his hut speaking to ministry officials. When they were close enough to recognize Hagrid called to Harry. “Harry Potter will speak for me he knows all about the colony don’t you Harry?”

Harry approached the group and asked “What’s going on here?”

McGonagall spoke first and said “Mr. Potter, they are here to arrest Hagrid for maintaining the acrumentula colony in the forest.”

“Harry, tell them that Dumbledore allowed it.” Hagrid pleaded.

Harry shook hands with Auror Heston “It’s nice to meet you. I’m not sure exactly what I can tell you about the colony that would persuade you to not arrest my friend. Dumbledore did indeed know and support the fact the Hagrid maintained a colony in the forbidden forest. Dumbledore did a lot of things that weren’t safe for the students and that was one of them.”

The auror shook his head “that’s just not true. I attended Hogwarts and there was never anything like giant spiders running around.”

“Did you ever question why the forbidden forest was forbidden? or why Hagrid was always taking small groups of kids on tours of the forest?”

Auror Heston scowled “you want me to believe that the greatest Headmaster this school has ever had allowed the children to do dangerous things?”

“I killed a man yesterday. I spent all of my days at Hogwarts training to do it. He put me and the whole school at risk for the final battle. It was his plan to have me confront Voldemort here as I was familiar with the grounds.” He paused letting that information sink in and then said “Voldemort probably had his men drive the spiders into the battle. I don’t think the colony would have moved from their homes if they hadn’t been driven too.”

Hagrid sobbed and said “once Aragog died they were afraid to go anywhere. They’ve been dying of starvation in the forest.”

Harry grimaced at him and said “as you heard they wouldn’t have attacked without being provoked. Someone drove them from the forest. If they weren’t willing to leave for food then they would have had to have some other reason.”

“That still doesn’t excuse the fact that they were there by his doing.”

“No you’re right it doesn’t. But he’s only the grounds keeper and he did what Dumbledore told him too. You’re trying to arrest the wrong man and the man you need to arrest is long dead. What needs to be done now is the colony needs to be removed.”

“Harry, no please don’t say that.” Hagrid begged.

“I’m sorry, Hagrid but it is true. If this school is going to be safe again things like dangerous venomous creatures need to be removed from the school grounds. Who sent you here anyway don’t you have a prison full of death eaters and Voldemort supporters that need to be sorted?”
Auror Heston shrugged “one of the Wizengamot members was bitten during the battle he got wind of the fact that there was a colony here and wanted whoever was responsible arrested.”

“As I said Albus Dumbledore is responsible. He allowed Hagrid to keep the spiders. Hagrid was only doing what he was told to do.”

“Fine, I’m not saying that this won’t be revisited. I’m sure we’ll want to see some proof of him allowing it to happen.”

“The fact that he had Pomfrey keep anti-venom in stock should be proof enough that he allowed it and made provisions just in case the spiders did attack the school. I’d like you to look into that Wizengamot’s reasons for being here yesterday. Who were they fighting for? You might want to look at Snape’s book and see if they are listed.”

“Thank you for your time Mr. Potter.”

Harry watched as the aurors walked up the hill. Once they were out of ear shot he turned and said “I wonder who’s side they are on. It seems odd to me that they came all this way for Hagrid when there are so many others they should be looking for.”

Minvera stiffened and said “We’ve been down here for the past hour trying to tell him the same thing. You show up and suddenly its thank you for your time. What about our time?”

Harry shrugged and said “your time is important too. I’m glad to find you all together I need to talk to you.”

“Did everything go well with the Malfoy’s this morning?”

Harry pursed his lips and said “I think it went well. First off let me tell you that I’ll be back first thing in the morning with Lord Malfoy to activate the warding stone. He says he knows how to do it and I’m pretty sure I know where it is.”

“Why would he do that?” Molly asked concerned that it might have something to do with Hermione.

“He’ll do it because he wants to see the school returned to its former glory and because I asked him to.”

“What about Hermione? Did you ask him to release her?” Molly asked.

“No I didn’t. I had breakfast with them and I got a chance to speak with Hermione. She’s happy there she doesn’t want to leave and I can’t blame her. They invited me to stay with them for a few weeks. I plan on cleaning out Grimmauld place, Draco and his mother offered to help so until then I’m going to stay with them.”

“Why on earth would you want to do that, Harry? They are half-blood haters. They couldn’t possibly treat you better than we would. Why would you subject yourself to such hatred?”

“No I didn’t. I had breakfast with them and I got a chance to speak with Hermione. She’s happy there she doesn’t want to leave and I can’t blame her. They invited me to stay with them for a few weeks. I plan on cleaning out Grimmauld place, Draco and his mother offered to help so until then I’m going to stay with them.”

“Why on earth would you want to do that, Harry? They are half-blood haters. They couldn’t possibly treat you better than we would. Why would you subject yourself to such hatred?”

“For one I’ll get to see how they are truly treating Hermione and two I’ll get to see what all the hype is about pureblood families. I’m hoping to learn somethings from them. Immerse myself into their side of the wizarding world.”

Minerva sighed. “I don’t think that sounds like a great plan, Harry. Too many things could go wrong.”

“So is Hermione going to marry Draco?” Ginny asked perplexed about her shattering wedding plans.
“What? No I don’t think so. They were talking at breakfast that they have an arranged marriage agreement with another pureblood family. Hermione isn’t the marrying type anyway she wants a career as an activist.”

Ron scoffed and said “she’ll never have a career with those people at least with me she could have a family.”

“Ron this isn’t about you. It’s about Hermione and what she wants and that’s what the Malfoys are going to give her. It’s nothing against you.”

“I’m sorry that we won’t be having a joint wedding, Ron. That would have been so much fun.”

Harry sighed and said “Ginny, I really like you as a friend but I never asked you to marry me. I’m just not interested in you like that.”

“You didn’t seem to have any problems at all being interested in me like that last night.” Ginny snapped at him angrily.

“Actually, I did and that’s why I sent you away or did you forget.”

She stomped her foot and said “don’t you see Harry we were meant to be together. I’m perfect for you.”

“You are not perfect for me, Ginny.” He shouted back at her losing his cool. Taking a calming breath he said “you’re not perfect, Ginny. I want someone with something more in their pants if you know what I mean. I have for a while now.”

Ron laughed and said “I’ve got something more in my pants.”

Harry looked at him strange “I didn’t think you liked men, Ron all that time we were together you never once mentioned it.”

“If it would keep you from the Malfoys I would make the sacrifice.”

“I see. But you wouldn’t be happy and I’d be unhappy because you weren’t happy. I couldn’t do that to us.”

“But it’s ok to break our hearts and tell us that you’re moving in with the Malfoys. Next thing you will tell us is that you think they are right to hate muggles and muggleborns.”

“I’m sure they have their reasons. I want to know what they are.”

“They are a bunch of jerks is what they are.” Ron retorted angrily. “Are you just going to forget everything they’ve done to you and your loved ones?”

“No. I will never forget but I’d like to know why.”

Arthur groaned and said “they are going to fill your head with their nonsense and lies. They will brainwash you just like they did everyone else.”

“Who’s everyone else? To me it seems like an even mix of people. Do we even know the ratio of purist to muggle supporters? That’s the kind of thing I wish to learn while I’m staying with them.”

Molly shook her head and said “It doesn’t matter what the ratio is. They are wrong to treat people the way they do.”
“In our opinion they are wrong but what makes them think that they are right?”

George had been lying in the grass listening to the discussion. He sat up and said “Harry, has been talking to Percy. This is the kind of shit he talks about.”

“Language, George.” Molly reprimanded.

“I’m sorry mum but it’s true. Percy talks about this stuff all the time.”

“I did talk to Percy but it was after I made my decision.”

“Harry, what if they try to get control of the Elder wand? We worked so hard to gain control of it and now you’re going to chance living with those people. What if they disarm you and then take the wand?” Ron asked.

“No one will ever control the wand again, Ron. I broke it. It’s gone it’s been completely removed from play. Like a broken chess piece.”

Shocked faces stared at him in disbelief. Minerva was the first to speak “You.. you.. you broke the wand?” Harry nodded yes.

“But why we worked so hard for you to get it.” Ron asked feeling a bit frustrated about all his hard work going right down the drain.

Ginny laughed. “You are the dumbest wizard that there ever was and I for one am glad that I decided not to marry you.” Harry scowled at her but didn’t want to get into it with her.

“The Elder wand was the most powerful wand ever created.” Arthur said still reeling as though he might actually have a heart attack.

“It’s history suggest that it was only good for death to its bearer and those around him. I used it to perform a few spells and to tell you the truth it wasn’t really any better than my wand was or the Draco wand is now. So I figured we’d all be safer if it was destroyed. I know I’m safer because now that it’s gone, no crazy Dark Lord Wannabes will be coming after me. If I kept it I’d have to be constantly looking over my shoulder.”

Molly laughed and said “so you truly believe now that you are the savior of the wizarding world and that you can even save us from ourselves.”

“I wouldn’t say that.” This conversation was taking a very odd turn and he wasn’t sure he liked where it was going.

“Mr. Potter, once again you have shocked and amazed me. Just when I think I have you all figured out you make a complete U-turn and prove me wrong. Dumbledore once told me that he had arranged for you to be in possession of his wand. He thought that you would use it to open the wizarding world to the muggle world, making it so that we would no longer have to hide. We could finally live in freedom and not fear. Now you have taken our chance to do so safely from us.” McGonagall was furious with him for destroying Dumbledore’s plan for Harry and the rest of the wizarding world.

“That wand wouldn’t have done anything like that. It would have given me the ability to kill those that stood in my way but I don’t want to do that. If I wanted to I could speak to the muggles and make a treaty with them but they would still be muggles and they would still fear us. It would take a very long time for them to except us and in the mean time they would start the witch hunts again. Our numbers are few to begin with and since magical people have been crossing over into the
muggle world to live more people are giving birth to squibs. They are thinning the magic by spreading it out.”

George groaned. “He does sound just like Percy. In one day they have managed to convince him that they are right.”

Harry sighed realizing that he wasn’t going to get any further with this conversation. “I’m sorry to disappoint all of you. I’m done being a puppet for another man’s cause. I’m going to follow through with my plan and see what I can learn.” He looked at their disappointed faces. “I have one more matter to bring up and then I’ll leave you. Hermione would very much like to come to the funeral tomorrow morning. She still loves all of you even though she has decided that she wants to stay elsewhere. I told her I’d ask if she’d be welcome.”

Molly scoffed and said “of course she’s welcome. We miss her and really want to see her.”

Harry nodded. “Then if it’s ok with you I’ll bring her with me. She’ll probably have one of the body guards with her since we keep getting mobbed everywhere we go.”

“Where else did you go today that you got mobbed? We heard about St. Mungo’s.” Arthur asked.

“We went to the ministry to speak to Shacklebolt. We nearly had to fight the aurors in the lobby to get into see him. That’s how I came to be with Percy. He escorted us to Shacklebolts office. After that we went to the Burrow but no one was there, I left a note there for you. Then we came here.”

“We’ve been here most of the day cleaning up and I’m exhausted.” George said throwing himself back down onto the grass.

“I’m hoping that after my visit with Lord Malfoy tomorrow morning that the castle will start to repair itself. So, I guess I’ll see you all tomorrow at 11 right?”

“Yes and right afterwards we’re having a little luncheon you should join us.” Molly said inviting him along.

“I’m not sure we’ll be able to stay for that. Remus and Tonks funeral is at 2.”

“We are going to go to that too.” Arthur said sadly. “It doesn’t seem right that so many funerals are being held on the same day.”

“Arthur, Molly, I’d like to talk to you in private for a few minutes if you wouldn’t mind following me back to my office.” McGonagall stated seeing an opportunity to pull the older Weasley’s away from the discussion.

Harry watched the three of them walk back up the hill before he said “I haven’t had a chance to check but how many other funerals will there be tomorrow?”

“Lavender Brown’s funeral is tomorrow, I won’t be able to make it though.” Ron said regretfully. “Colin Creevey’s Funeral is tomorrow also but it’s in the muggle town that he lived in so we aren’t going.”

“I’m sorry Ron.”

“When we were thinking that Hermione was dead I had hoped that maybe I could rekindle my relationship with Lavender but Greyback took care of that.” He sighed and plopped down next to George. “And poor Colin never had a chance. I don’t even know why he was at the battle; all he was doing is taking pictures.”
“That’s awful.” Harry said feeling sorry for the boy. “I’m so glad it’s over. I’m happy to be moving on from this nightmare.”

“Do you know what the Malfoy’s are going to do with Bellatrix?” Ginny asked casually.

“As far as I know from the discussion this morning they haven’t seen her since they left the battle. I’m guessing that they think she has been captured.”

Ginny laughed and said “yeah, if you mean captured in stone.”

“What do you mean by that?”

“Oh, you have to see her, come on!” Ginny hopped up and pulled George and Ron up too. “Let’s show Harry how brilliant a witch our mother is.”

Harry followed the three of them up the hill into the castle. In the main hall stood a statue of Bellatrix LeStrange, frozen in place with her wand held at the ready position as though she were just about to cast another unforgivable curse. He looked at the grotesque sculpture of the crazy woman who had killed her cousin, his godfather, Sirius Black. She still had the same shifty eyes that he remembered from when she was holding Hermione back from escaping with them. To Harry her eyes seemed like they were still seeing, that maybe she had been frozen but could still see the world around her but not tell anyone that she was awake and alive in this frozen form. He circled her form looking at her body. It was as if the stone of the flooring had risen up to engulf her form. Cut into the stone were fresh cuts on her arms and face. They looked much like the ones that he had seen Voldemort inflict on Draco.

“Isn’t it cool?” Ron asked. He clearly thought the statue was the most impressive magic he had ever seen. “I didn’t even know mum had it in her.”

“Is she dead or just frozen in space? Can she hear us still?” Harry asked concern about cruel punishments.

“I don’t know. It doesn’t matter. She won’t be casting any more spells against anyone.”

Harry nodded in agreement. “I don’t think they know she’s here. We didn’t talk about her directly but they did mention that they only lost a few people during the battle Nymphodora being one of them. They will be at her funeral tomorrow also.”

“What they can’t go to their funeral. They are part of the reason Remus and Tonks are dead.” Ron said angrily.

Harry sighed knowing that he was never going to get it through their heads that other things happened that they didn’t know about. “All I can say is that Severus and Remus had reconciled after Sirius escaped and they’ve been working together fighting against Voldemort. Apparently Adromeda and Narcissa have been on speaking terms for quite a while too. I didn’t know this until this afternoon but Narcissa has actually held Teddy, my godson, whom I’ve never even met.”

“But they are death eaters they can’t come to a funeral. It’s just wrong.” Ron said sounding a little whiney.

“They are people too, Ron. And I think that now that Voldemort is gone they aren’t death eaters anymore.”

“Once a death eater always a death eater, that’s an oath you take for life. There’s no going back on that. You don’t just shut it off, Harry. They may be acting all nice and chummy to you now but that
won’t last. As soon as you start to disagree with what they preach they’ll turn on you.” Ron said bitterly.

“Ron, I really think you are over thinking this. They are glad that Voldemort is dead. They wanted to be rid of him as much as we did.”

Ron shook his head and said “No, Harry they didn’t. What about Malfoy slipping Ginny Riddle’s diary and all the other awful things he has done?”

Harry shrugged. “They thought that Ginny would turn it in but she didn’t she read it and opened the chamber for Riddle. I know now that Dumbledore knew along where the chamber was hidden and he let us go and find it so that I could confront Riddle. He knew Ron, don’t you see. He knew and put all of us at risk so that I could meet Riddle.”

“We’re not talking about Dumbledore right now Harry we are talking about Lucius Malfoy who attacked children at the ministry.”

Harry shook his head and said “he was given orders to kill all of us and he didn’t let his team do it. He took a punishment from Voldemort for it and then went to Azkaban too, all because he refused to kill children.”

Ron groaned. “He deserved that and more. Are you going to believe their lies? Harry, they are lies. You can’t believe them.” He said pleadingly to Harry.

“I guess I don’t know what to believe, Ron. Hermione is one of the smartest people I know and she seems to believe them.”

“Hermione had been cursed. My father told us that they used a mind control spell on her and that there is no way to reverse it.”

“Tomorrow when you see her you’ll see that she doesn’t seem cursed. She seems as smart as ever and happier than I’ve ever seen her.”

George smiled and said. “I can’t wait to see her.” He desperately wanted to change the topic. “Do think she’d be willing to do for me what she did for you?”

“I’m not sure what you mean, George.” Harry was happy to have a change of topic but wasn’t certain that this was a good turn to their conversation. This wasn’t going as planned and he was starting to feel a little flustered himself.

George sighed and said “I miss him so much it hurts. You Know. I can’t think of one thing without thinking about Fred. I’ve even slipped a few times and called for him to help or look at something.” He sat down on the bench and began sobbing. “I just want to forget.”

“George, you should probably see a mind healer. Hermione isn’t trained to deal with this kind of grief.” Harry sat down next to him and put his arm around him. He looked at Ginny and Ron and said “have your parents taken him to anyone yet? He should probably go to St. Mungo’s and get treated or something.”

George began shaking his head “No, no, I don’t want some quack of a healer poking around looking at my private thoughts.”

“But George Hermione’s not trained she could make it worse for you.”

“I don’t care. I’d rather have her than anyone else. I know she helped you after Sirius died I was just
wondering if she could maybe help me too.” He laughed and said “I don’t even want my parents to know that I need her help. They are so upset with her and now, I bet they are talking about you with McGonagall. I was just hoping that maybe she could help clear out some of the more painful memories. If they knew I was allowing her access to my mind they’d freak out.”

Ron sat down on George’s other side. “George, I agree with our parents, she shouldn’t be poking around in anyone else’s brain while she’s still under this curse.”

“Ron there’s something you should know about me by now. I don’t care what our parents think. And I’ve been thinking a lot about Percy today. I think he might be right about some of the things that mum and dad refuse to discuss with him.”

Ron scoffed and said “George, Percy had been saying for years that the Purebloods have the right idea about not lifting the veil. Have you ever seen the veil? Has anyone ever seen it?”

“Wasn’t that the veil in the Death Chamber at the ministry of magic? I assumed it was one and the same.” Harry asked thinking of how much grief he had after watching Sirius being pulled into it.

Ron furrowed his brow in thought for a moment. “That was a veil but is it the same veil?” he paused thinking on it further. “Dad knew it was there but he’s been denying that the purebloods veil exists so that can’t be the same veil.” Ron stated firmly after thinking about.

“I really don’t know, Ron but I want too.” Harry gave one last squeeze on George’s shoulders. “I’ve got one other thing I need to do today before I can be done so I better get going.” He stood and gave Ron and Ginny a brotherly hug before leaving them for the day.
McGonagall closed her office door and turned to Molly and Arthur. “Harry is acting very strangely and I’m a little concerned about him.”

“Strangely, I think that is an understatement. I can’t believe what he’s done.” Molly said as she sat down on a chair.

Arthur sat down opposite of her. “I wish he had asked for advice before he did something so reckless.”

“I don’t think Albus ever considered that he might destroy the wand once he had it in his possession. He expected Harry to use the wand as his own.” Minerva said shaking her head. “but the wand is the least of our concerns. I was hoping that he would use his position to change the public opinion of muggles. Now he’s starting to act like a pureblood. What will happen if he decides that he doesn’t want the push to open the boarders and allow magical people into the muggle world? How will we ever be able to stop him?” Minerva was shaking her head in disbelief.

“I think that is of real concern. He looked like he was dressed for a ministry job. Where ever did he get those clothes?” Molly asked.

“I don’t know, that’s not the outfit that the house elf brought him this morning.”

“I’m sure that the Malfoy’s had something to do with it. They are already turning him into their representative.” Arthur said frustrated. “They got their claws into two of the best candidates for the future of the ministry.”

“I doubt they will let Hermione have a ministry job. If they treat her as other Purebloods have always treated their slaves she won’t be much more than a whore or a maid.” Minerva said in disgust.

Someone knocked on the door and Minerva called “enter.”

“Minerva, I need to speak to you for a moment.”

“Poppy, what is it? Please come in.”

“It’s Sybill, She’s hysterical.”

“What happened now that is making her hysterical?” Madam Pomfrey looked at the Weasley’s not sure that she should speak in front of them. “Poppy, they are friends; I’m sure whatever it is will be kept confidential.”

Poppy nodded her head. “It’s about Potter he stopped in the infirmary looking for you. Sybill stopped him and saw another prophecy. Harry heard her start to recite it and he stopped her. He said that he had enough of her prophecies to last a lifetime. When she went on he threatened her. He said that if she ever blabbed her mouth about another prophecy about him or affecting him he’d introduce her to death himself.”

Molly gasped shaking her head in disbelief. Minerva paled and asked “did she tell you what the prophecy was?”

“No and now I’ve had to sedate her. She’s terrified that she’ll slip into a trance and speak it. She
believes that Mr. Potter will send death to find her.”

Arthur snickered. “Harry couldn’t actually send death to find her. He doesn’t control death.”

“I said the same thing except several of the other people that were the room saw him when he spoke to her. He became very dark and the magic flared around him blowing things around. Apparently he looked very scary.” She looked pleadingly at Minvera. “I don’t know what to do with her, Minerva. What if she does speak the prophecy? She’ll probably die of fear from what I’m being told.”

“Did anyone here the first part of the prophecy?” Arthur asked wondering what she had said that would set Harry off so.

Pomfrey looked at the three of them and said “I’m almost afraid to tell you. This is Harry Potter we are talking about. He’s just a boy still.”

“Poppy, please tell us what she said.” Minvera pleaded with her.

Poppy twisted her hands together and took a deep breath and told them. “Sybill said the he will be the new dark lord and rule the wizarding world. When harry interrupted her she said that even though he had destroyed the wand he still had command over death and that death wouldn’t allow him to abuse that power long.”

“Poppy, are you sure that is what she said? I mean did those that repeated it to you say that there was no question that that was what Sybill said to Harry.”

“Minerva, I wouldn’t repeat hearsay. Everyone heard her loud and clear as well as they heard Mr. Potter threatening her.”

“It can’t be true not our Harry.” Molly started saying. “There must be some mistake. Sybill has to be wrong.”

“How many of her prophecies have come true? How many predictions has she made that have been accurate? Does she truly have a gift?” Arthur asked hoping that Sybill wasn’t very good at predicting the future.

“I only know one prophecy that has come true and that was the one pertaining to Harry. She has made several others but nothing has come of them yet. She has predicted much of what Harry has gone through since she spoke that prophecy though. Albus relied on her when he was making decisions on whether or not to allow Harry to do something dangerous or not. Like the tri-wizard tournament, Sybill predicted that he would win but another would die.” Minerva said frowning. “I just hope that this last prediction isn’t true.”

“Albus, knew that a student was going to die?” Arthur asked surprised.

Minerva sighed. “He did a lot of things for the greater good. Some of them I wouldn’t agree with but he did them anyway.”

“Minvera, what am I to do with Sybill?” Poppy asked trying to get her problem solved.

“Can you put her in an isolation room so no one can hear her if she falls into a trance?”

“I suppose I could but Minerva, she can’t live isolated forever.”

“Just put her in a private room until she calms down a bit. Maybe once the shock of the encounter is over she will be ok.”
Poppy nodded her head and said “I’ll move her to a private room until her leg is completely healed. Can you come and visit with her sometime soon?” Minerva nodded agreeing as Poppy left the office.

“This is getting worse by the moment.” Molly stated once Poppy was gone.

“I agree, we need to stop this from escalating out of control. Harry needs to be reined in and soon. What can we do to put a halt on this situation?”

“Arthur, we don’t even really know what the situation is.” Minerva leaned back in her chair thinking about how to go about stopping Harry from becoming a Dark Lord. “If I knew the steps to becoming a Dark Lord it would make stopping him easier. Riddle went around the world learning everything he could about magic. I think Grindelwald did something similar.”

Arthur chuckled. “So we stop him from learning magic that should be easy” he said sarcastically.

Minerva grimaced. “He’s going to the Malfoy’s to learn about being a Pureblood. Isn’t that what he said, that he wanted to see what that was all about?”

Molly sulked and said “I’m sure that they will be more than happy to teach him all the dark magic they know.”

Arthur smiled “I have an idea. We need to keep ourselves in his life. Be a constant reminder of what we fought for. If we involve ourselves in a positive manner he’ll see that the purebloods aren’t good people.”

Minerva nodded her head “that’s a good idea. What does he have planned the next few days that we can be involved with that we could influence his opinion one way or the other?”

“He’s cleaning out Grimmauld place. He said Draco and his mother offered to help. Maybe we could help too. We’ve spent enough time there we know the place well enough.”

“I disconnected the floo shortly after they went into hiding. I Didn’t want anyone going there looking for them.” Arthur said. “I suppose when we see him tomorrow I could offer to reconnect it for him. I doubt he would know how to do it himself. Plus then I can link it with your office and the Burrow.”

Molly smiled “Arthur can offer to help with the floo and I can offer to help clean. There’s only the one house elf and he’s not very friendly. I doubt he will be able to clean the whole house himself.”

“He also said he was coming here with Lucius Malfoy tomorrow morning to activate the warding stone. Do you know where that is, Minerva? Maybe you should go with them when he arrives.”

“I’ve been here a very long time and I didn’t even realize there was a warding stone. I’ll be curious to see what Lord Malfoy is talking about and what Harry thinks it is. I’ll plan on going on that premise alone.” Minerva said.

“I feel a little better now that we have a plan.” Molly stated. “I’m looking forward to seeing Hermione tomorrow. I only wish it was under better circumstances. I still can’t believe he’s dead. After everything he’s gone through. All those near misses and the trips to St. Mungo’s I guess I thought that maybe he was invincible.” Molly pulled a handkerchief from the sleeve and wiped her eyes. “I really need to keep busy otherwise I’m not going to make it through tomorrow. Helping Harry with Grimmauld place will be a good change of pace for me.”

Arthur said “I agree. I’m looking forward to getting back to work. I’m hoping that my department will be back in order in a few days and we can start weeding through things that the death eaters have made.”
“I hope that the Wards can be restored tomorrow. I don’t know how long we can stay out in the open like this before we start attracting unwanted attention. Shacklebolt asked the muggle government to not let anyone fly over the area but someone’s going to get curious and come snooping about.”
Harry apparated to the front gates of Malfoy Manor. He was happy to have arrived safely as he made the trip based on other people memories of the place. He placed his hand on the gate and was surprised when the gate swung open for him. Glowing orbs appeared along the path lighting his way to the front door. He could see just past the orbs into the garden that surrounded that front of the manor. Statues stood guard around fountains that he was sure would create a beautiful display during the full moons when the garden was in full bloom. He tried to imagine what it must have been like to grow up here as an only child. Did Draco have other children around to play with or did he spend all his time by himself? He glanced down the path to the front door which was being held open by Hermione and Draco as they waited for him to come down the path. Draco didn’t seem like he was sheltered. He thought back to the first time he met him in Madam Malkins robe shop. He had spouted blood supremacy then but Harry hadn’t really thought much about it except that he seemed to not realize who he was talking too. Then, later on the train, he had made another attempt at friendship but Harry had turned him down as he had already decided that he liked Ron’s attitude better. Draco had reminded him too much of his cousin. He reached the front door and smiled at them both. “I hope I’m not coming back too late.”

Draco smiled at him and said “it’s not too late at all. We thought you’d come by floo though.”

“The floo is closed at Grimmauld place and I don’t know how reconnect it. Kreacher said that Mr. Weasley came and closed it after we left.” He climbed the steps to the entry and gave Hermione a hug. Smiling at Draco he asked “did you have friends here when you were younger or did you spend most of your time by yourself?”

“What a strange question to ask Potter. What made you think of that?” Draco asked as he closed the door behind him.

Harry shrugged and said “I was just thinking that this place is enormous and if you grew up here by yourself it must have been very lonely.”

Draco furrowed his brow at him and said angrily “I wasn’t some pathetic little kid that was lonely with no friends Potter.”

They were standing in the entrance hall. Hermione groaned and said “Master Draco, I’m sure that Harry didn’t mean it like that.”

Harry was shocked at his response. Draco sighed and said “I’m sorry I didn’t mean to get so defensive.”

“It’s ok I didn’t mean to upset you. I was just curious.” Harry pursed his lips in thought for a minute before stating “and for record, I was a pathetic little kid that was lonely with no friends. Ronald Weasley was the first boy my age that didn’t treat me like dirt or spout some awful supremacist stuff about how bad muggleborns were.”

Draco grimaced and looked to Hermione for support. “I swear I didn’t mean anything by that you just surprised me with your question.”

Harry nodded excepting his apology. “So answer the question, did you have friends here?”

“My mother was a very social person. We entertained a lot and her friends brought their children to play. We would often go visiting. When we weren’t entertaining or being entertained, I was with
house elves when mother was busy with other things and my father was working. My parents spent a lot of their free time with me. I was never really alone.”

“Thank you for answering that question for me.” He frowned and added “I wasn’t allowed to have friends. I spent most of my time alone.” Harry admitted.

Draco grimaced and said “Really, that’s awful.”

Harry shrugged and said “My aunt and uncle weren’t very nice to me and they allowed my cousin to bully me.” Looking around he asked “where is everyone. I thought if I made it back before nine I might catch them still up.”

“My father is in the library and mother is in talking with Severus. Did you need to speak with them?” Draco asked. “Hermione told us over dinner about your talk with Shacklebolt. How did the visit with the Weasley’s go?”

“It could have gone better.” Harry admitted. “But it went as well as could be expected. I wanted to speak to your father about the funeral tomorrow. Could we go and see him now?”

Draco motioned for him to follow them to the library. “He’s in the private library in on the third floor. There’s another smaller library on the second floor but we mostly use the private one.”

“Both are impressive but the private one is incredible. There are so many books and scrolls in there you wouldn’t believe the information that they have stored here.”

Harry smiled happy to see her so excited about something. “I’m sure it’s great Hermione.” He said sarcastically.

“Harry, you hate libraries.”

“I don’t hate them Hermione, I just think they are kind of boring.”

Draco knocked on the door to the library. From inside they could hear Lord Malfoy call out for them to enter. “Father, Mr. Potter would like to speak to you for a moment. Is now a good time?”

Lucius sat at the table with a few scrolls stacked on top. He smiled at them when they entered and said “yes of course please come in.”

Harry glanced at Hermione and Draco and asked “may I speak to you in private?”

Lucius looked at little surprised at first then he motioned to Draco and said “Draco, take Hermione down to see Severus and see how he’s doing.” He sent a nonverbal spell and the door swung shut silencing the room. “What can I do for you Mr. Potter?” He asked curious as to what he’d need to speak about in private.

“I have a few things I wanted to discuss. I don’t really know the protocols on everything so I thought to be safe I would speak to you as head of your household. Is that the right thing to do?”

Lucius frowned and said “It depends on the topic but I suppose if you don’t know then it’s a safe way to approach any topic.”

Harry nodded and motioned to the chair on the other side of the table. “May I sit?” Lucius nodded. “Where to start?” he said to himself out loud. “Okay. I know. First how is Severus?”

“He’s recovering. Last I checked he said that Draco’s potions were more potent than those that were
sent by St. Mungo’s and he’s noticed a difference already. He joined us for dinner.”

“I’m glad to hear that. I have a matter I wish to discuss with him but I’d like it to wait till he’s feeling up to speaking with me. I don’t want to force myself on him. I figure he’s had enough of dealing with my issues to last a lifetime.”

Lucius chuckled “I’m sure he doesn’t mind. You could probably speak with him tonight. If you like I could go down and ask him.”

“No. It can wait. If he’s up to it I’ll speak with him tomorrow after the funeral. On that thought, Fred Weasley’s funeral is at 11am tomorrow with a luncheon to follow. They would like for Hermione to attend if that’s all right with you?”

“Hermione told us about the funeral. She still hasn’t asked if she can go. I’m not sure what’s going through her mind about it.” He paused and said “I’m sure you are wondering what I’m planning on doing with your friend and her future.”

Harry smiled. “I had a nice chat with Kreacher.” He said changing the subject. “I never realized how old he was or how old House elves in general could be. He was very informative about the history of The Noble and Most Ancient House of Black. He’s been serving the Black family for over three hundred years. His mother served them before that and in some form his family has served them since they established themselves. When I asked if he’d be more comfortable here he said that he wished to remain at Grimmauld serving me. I thought he didn’t like me. I told him that I was cleaning the place out and making it my own he said he’d help. Frankly I was shocked.” He leaned back in his chair and crossed his legs. “He told me that the Black family often had mudblood slaves, women mostly, but a few men, and that it wasn’t spoken about but a few children were traded out when one would die at birth. They would just replace it with one that a slave had bared. He also told me that the slaves often held positions of authority in the Black family businesses.”

“He shouldn’t have told you that. He’s bond to not speak about that to anyone outside of the Black family.”

“I own him now, I suppose. He pledged himself to me last night. The Black family no longer owns him so he’s free to speak about whatever he wants. We got on the topic of slaves when I told him that I would probably be entertaining muggleborns and blood traitors. He told me he had heard that my mudblood friend had taken a collar from the Malfoy family. That he thought that she would do well with them. He told me that there had been a few others that had been forced into slavery over the past hundred years or so. That many of the slaves had been killed when Voldemort came into power for one reason or another. That the pureblood families kept a very tight lid on them and didn’t ever speak about them in public. They were not always treated nicely but that he was sure that the Malfoy family would not treat my friend badly.”

“He was very talkative today.” Lucius said thinking that Harry must have a way with house elves if he had gotten that grumpy one to talk to him so easily.

“Yes, he was. I think I’ve given him something to work for since he’s not been very motivated since Walburga died. He’s starting in the receiving room. He’s going to clean it first then work his way up. So is what we talked about true? Were there slaves as recent as 17 years ago?”

Lucius sighed and said “yes, what he told you is true. Several families had mudblood slaves up until the time Voldemort died the first time. Many of the Pureblood families were being looked at very closely by the ministry at that point so the few slaves that were kept were disposed of quietly some were released but other just disappeared. To my knowledge none have enslaved other mudbloods, there is only Hermione. Voldemort had hoped to use her as an example and reward his followers by
enslaving the muggleborns as they came into their power. It’s one of those secrets that no one ever talks about because they don’t want anyone to bring attention to it. Once the world governments decided that slavery was bad the muggles started to put pressure on the magical world to end slavery here too and for the most part it was but occasionally a muggleborn would come along and for one reason or another would decide that they wanted to be with a Pureblood and they would allow a collar to be placed on them. Since it was frowned upon it wasn’t spoken about in public. But as I guess you’ve gathered it’s not completely unheard of.”

Harry scowled and said “I went to public school and they taught us about how bad slavery was and is. I do not agree with this idea that muggleborns should be forced into slavery.” Harry leaned forward and exhaled trying to calm himself. He said “I’m off topic. I don’t want to discuss your plans for Hermione at this time. Although, I am interested in what you have planned that can wait for another time. So to get back on topic, I would very much like to escort her to the funeral if she wants to go.”

“I will speak to her about it in the morning if that’s alright with you. I expect that she has retired for the evening.”

“That should be fine.” He said and then added “I have another matter that I think is more for Lady Malfoy but I thought I would filter it through you.”

“Whatever it is, I can discuss it with her if you wish.”

“It’s regarding her sister Bellatrix LeStrange. Are you aware of what happened to her at the battle?”

Lucius shook his head. “We haven’t heard from her, we haven’t received any reports that she died, nor have we received any reports saying she was arrested. We are not sure what happened to her.”

“I thought that might be the case. I’m not sure why nobody has done anything about it or said anything to her next of kin but she is still at Hogwarts. She was turned into stone. Her statue stands in stone form in the great hall. Tomorrow, when we go to take care of the wards, I can show her to you. It’s pretty horrific. I get the feeling that she is trapped in the statue. I think she may be still sentient.”

Lucius looked horrified. “I don’t think that is possible. How could that be?”

Harry shrugged and said “you know when you look at a dead person and you can just tell they are dead but when you look at someone that is just petrified you can tell that they aren’t dead, well that’s the feeling I got when I looked at her. Molly Weasley cast the spell when Bellatrix was getting the better on the duel with Ginny. Ginny is quite good at dueling but Bellatrix had some dirty tricks up her sleeve so Molly stepped in and cast the stoning spell. I hope I’m wrong but I figured I should let you know that she is there.”

“I appreciate that. She is family but frankly I feel as though she’s done enough to warrant the kiss. She should have been given it last time the war ended when she was convicted of torturing the Longbottom family.”

“I can’t say that I disagree with you on that.” He sighed. “My meeting with the Weasley family didn’t go as well as I had hoped. They are now convinced that I’m being brainwashed by your family. Professor McGonagall was furious about the wand and I think that Arthur nearly had a heart attack when he heard. I’m not really sure what plans they had for me and it but they were not my plans so it doesn’t matter. That is actually one of the things I wanted to speak to Snape about. They didn’t talk to me directly about this but I have the feeling that they are going to be hanging around me as much as possible for the next few weeks. Don’t be surprised if McGonagall asks to come
along when we look for the warding stone.”

Lucius nodded and said “I wouldn’t dream of denying her that. I’m actually surprised that Dumbledore never showed her where it was. We knew from Severus that there was one but he didn’t know where it laid either. That was one of the things that slowed me down on finding a spell to disable it. I had to make a broad spectrum spell that would seek out the stone and then attach another to disable it. It was very tricky magic.”

“I hope I’m right about where it lies.”

“I thought you might join us for breakfast again tomorrow. I was hoping to leave right afterwards and take care of Hogwarts. Hermione said the ministry was coming in the morning to take statements from us and collect the diary. I don’t want to keep them waiting. Hopefully, Severus will be well enough to join us again and you can speak to him then if you like.”

“No. I would be happy to join you for breakfast but I’ll hold my discussion with Snape until later on.” He stood and stretched saying “it’s been a long day. If you wouldn’t mind excusing me I’d like to check out that bed that you so graciously offered me. It looks extremely comfortable.”

Lucius smirked and said “by all means enjoy it. It’s the least we can do for all your hard work. Can you find your way yourself?”

“I think so but Draco is lingering in the hall waiting to show me the way.”

Lucius scowled “I’m sure my son isn’t eavesdropping in the hall.”

“No, you placed a silencing spell on the room when you closed the door but he’s most certainly in the hall.”

Lucius eyed him suspiciously wondering how he knew about the silencing spell. He stood, went to the door and pulled it open. Draco sat on the bench across from the door waiting patiently for Harry to be done. He jumped up in surprise when he saw his father standing in the door way looking angry. “Is everything ok?” he asked thinking that something must be wrong.

“Why are you sitting in the hall?” Lucius asked suspiciously.

“I figured I’d wait for Harry to be done and show him to his room. I didn’t want him to get lost.”

Harry squeezed past Lord Malfoy and smiled at Draco. “I’m all done.” He said to Draco happily. “Thanks for coming back for me.” He tapped his head and smiled at Lucius. “I told you. I know you’re wondering how I knew and I can’t tell you, I just did.”

Lucius looked nervously at him before saying “Good night, Mr. Potter.”

“Good night, Lord Malfoy.” He turned back to Draco and said “Don’t tell me, eventually I’ll need to find my way around without a guide so let me see if I can remember correctly.” He was saying to Draco playfully as they started down the hall. Lucius closed the door as they walked away.

“Is everything ok? Why did you need to speak to him in private?”

“Yes everything is fine. I needed him to confirm some things that I learned from my house elf. I would prefer not to discuss them with you. If he feels that they need discussing he can bring it up with you himself. I gave him the information I wouldn’t want to step on his toes now that I gave him the option of keeping it to himself.”
Draco sighed and said “now I’m going to be dying of curiosity. You won’t even give me a hint?”

“Nope, so don’t ask. Where’s Hermione?”

“She’s keeping Severus company tonight. He’s still too weak to do anything but he asked if she’d sleep with him anyway.”

“He asked? Not ordered?”

Draco chuckled. “Actually, the only one whoever orders her around is my father. If she ever refused to do something that we ask her to do and we really wanted her to do it we’d take it up with him. That was something that was decided upon a few days after my night with Voldemort. I’m not sure what happened but after that any complaints about her service were to be taken to him. Not that she has ever turned us down for anything. She has been very compliant from the very beginning. Of course in the beginning it was life or death that was keeping her inline but after a few days I think she decided she liked it.”

“She liked it? I’m not sure I’ll ever understand that. I don’t want to question it too much though.”

They reached Harry’s door and he smiled “That wasn’t a terrible walk. See I did pay attention at least a little.”

Draco smirked and said “I’m glad you were paying attention. Do you remember what door is mine?” as he leaned against the wall.

Harry glanced down the hall and said “My rooms are next to Severus’ and your’s are next to his.”

“That’s right if you need anything you can call on Tecks or come down to my door and knock for me.”

Harry smirked and stepped closer to him. “What could I possibly need from you that your house elf can’t provide?”

Draco inhaled shapely as Harry stepped closer to him. “I don’t know, anything really. I’d be happy to help you with anything.” He said but it barely came out as a whisper.

“Hmm, Anything?” Draco nodded his head. “I did want to explore that kiss further.” Draco gulped as Harry pressed closer to him putting his hand up on the wall next to his shoulder. He leaned in and pressed his lips to Draco’s. At first only softly before he began nibbling on his lips intensifying the kiss. Draco gently kissed him back and opened his mouth slightly slipping his tongue across Harry’s lips. Harry gasped and pulled back. “I really want more of that but I’m very tired and I’m afraid that I won’t be able to enjoy it as much because of that. I’m going to save this for another time. Promise me that we can have another chance to explore this.” Draco could only nod dumbly. Harry smirked and asked “is that a promise?”

“Yes, yes it’s a promise.”

Harry smiled. “Good, now stop tempting me and let me go to bed.” He pushed open the door to his rooms and went inside leaving Draco standing in the hall dumfounded.
Harry laid face down in the center of the king size four post bed sleeping soundly. After his shower he had come into the room and barely made it to the bed before falling asleep. Kreacher stood on the bed next to him looking angrily with him. “Lazy half-blood wake up.” He shook Harry’s shoulder roughly trying to rouse him. “Wake up. You’ll be late for breakfast with the Malfoy’s and I’m not going to let you embarrass me the first day after I pledged myself to you now wake up.”

Harry groaned and said into the mattress “Kreacher why are you here so early? I just fell asleep. Go away.”

“It’s after 7am Master Harry and you need to get ready for breakfast. Tecks is saying that breakfast will be served in the dining room this morning at 8am.”

Harry rolled over onto his back. “After 7am? I feel like I just laid down.” He cast a tempus charm and realized that he had been in bed for nine hours. “I don’t think I have ever slept that soundly and for this long.” He stretched and looked at Kreacher who was still standing on his bed. “I’m not sure what to expect from you but thank you for waking me.”

Kreacher grunted “get dressed.”

“I need to get cleaned up a little first and then find my clothes.”

“The Malfoy elves put your things away. I will get your clothes together.”

“I’ve got two funerals to go to today plus I’m making a trip to Hogwarts to work on the wards.” Kreacher nodded and disappeared into the closet while Harry went into the bathroom.

Twenty minutes later he stood looking in the mirror at his reflection. He barely recognized himself. The bags that seemed as though they were permanent under his eyes actually looked better. His hair was still unruly but with the change of clothes it didn’t seem so bad. The outfit that Kreacher had assembled was a tailored fit white dress shirt with a green and black embroidered vest, a black pair of trousers and the same dragon hide boots that he had worn yesterday. Then he handed him the black robe set and said “It’s raining at Hogwarts and at the cemetery where the Lupin’s are being buried. You should cast a waterproofing spell on the robes.” Harry stood looking at his image thinking about how different he looked. He looked more mature then he felt. Kreacher grunted at him “get moving you’ll be late for breakfast.”

Harry smirked at him “thank you Kreacher.” He walked out into the hall and found the werewolf waiting for him. “good morning It’s Mr. Balinchk right?”

The man nodded to him and said “good morning Mr. Potter. I was asked to escort you to the dining hall. If you’ll follow me I can show you the way.”

Harry walked with the man as he guided him to the dining hall. He passed the clock in the hall and noticed it said two minutes after eight. He cringed slightly when he thought about Kreacher reprimanding him for being late. When he entered the dining room he found everyone already assembled and waiting. He considered apologizing for being late then decided it was only two minutes and that bringing attention to it probably wouldn’t do any good. “Good morning.” He said cheerfully to those in the room.

“Mr. Potter how good of you to join us.” Lord Malfoy said to him as he approached the table. He motioned for him to take the seat on his right. Hermione took the seat on his left next to Severus
while Draco settled at the table next to him.

Once he was settled their meals appeared. Harry looked at his plate and smiled “I wonder how they knew I liked pancakes and sausage.”

“I’m sure they spoke to one of the house elves at Hogwarts.” Hermione offered.

“Or maybe even your own house elf.” Lucius said. “I was told by Tecks that Kreacher was here to serve you.”

Harry furrowed his brow in thought “I didn’t realize that Kreacher would know this much about me. He woke me up this morning in enough time to come to breakfast. I’m pretty sure I’d still be sleeping if he hadn’t come. Then he helped me get dressed.” Harry chuckled “I might have been dreaming but I’m pretty sure he called me a lazy half-blood then he told me not to embarrass him by being late.”

“The house elves here are so much different than the ones that we ran into at Hogwarts. Not to mention that Dobby was different than any other house elf that I’ve met.” Hermione said as Lucius began the meal.

“Mr. Potter, I understand that you wish to speak to me about something.” Severus said between bites of his meal.

“I do have a few things I wish to speak to you about but I’d rather wait till later if you don’t mind. There are a few things that need to be done today and I’d rather have them out of the way so I can have a clear mind.”

Severus nodded and said “the ministry will be here later this morning; I can only hope that you have the opportunity to speak to me later.”

Harry clenched his jaw as he stared into space for a moment. Shaking his head to clear it he said “Shacklebolt will come with his men to interview each of you this morning. They won’t be able to make any arrest at this time as everyone they have spoken to so far has told them that you somehow betrayed Voldemort and that the Malfoy family helped you with that.”

Lucius narrowed his eyes at Harry and said “you sound so sure of that, how could you possibly know?”

Harry shrugged and said “I just know. In a few days the reports will start to leak out that you betrayed Voldemort and tricked him into confronting me at Hogwarts knowing that he didn’t have proper control of his wand.”

Hermione smiled and asked “Harry, are you having visions?”

Harry choked and shook his head. Clearing his throat he said “No! I’m not having visions, Hermione. I just know that’s what’s going to happen. It only makes sense after all. Otherwise, how will your names get cleared so that you can go about your lives?” He thought for a moment and added “the ministry will probably make up some story that Remus was working with Severus and that was how they came to Hogwarts. They will probably claim that they knew all along about Severus’ army defecting during the final battle and that’s why they stretched it out for so long.”

Harry looked around the table at their confused faces. “I’m only guessing, if I were minister that’s how I would clean this problem up. The auror department had a lot of people that didn’t fight. They need a reason why more didn’t show up to defend children.”

Lucius glared at him “what do you mean they had a lot of people that didn’t show up?”
Harry shrugged and said “Percy told me that people didn’t show up or did show up and fought for Voldemort. They’ve been trying to sort that out.”

Narcissa scowled and asked angrily “how could they become aurors and swear an oath to protect the innocent and then not show up when children are at risk.”

“I don’t know. But they will use your situation here as some sort of excuse.” Harry finished his pancakes and placed his napkin on his plate. “I’m ready whenever you are” he said to Lord Malfoy.

“I guess we should get going then.” He stood and said “If they get here before we return, if they will, start without me.”

Harry stood and followed him out to the hall. “Is the floo opened? Could we just take that? According to Kreacher it is raining at Hogwarts.”

“We can try it. Someone at Hogwarts will need to open it for us.”

Several minutes later “Mr. Potter is that you calling?” Professor McGonagall’s face appeared on the other side of the floo.

“Good Morning, professor. I was wondering if you could let us through. I’d like to speak to you for a few minutes before Lord Malfoy and I get started.” The floo opened and Harry stepped into the room followed by Lucius. “Thank you Professor McGonagall.” Harry said politely. “Lord Malfoy, would you mind terribly giving us a moment.” Lucius nodded to him and let himself out of the room.

“Professor McGonagall, as you know we are going to look for the warding stone and see about reactivating them so that Hogwarts can get back to its former condition. I’d like for you to join us.”

Minerva was surprised to be invited along as she thought that she would be insinuating herself into the search party. “I would very much like to join you. I’d like to see where it’s at as I expect that I’ll be named Headmistress once the ministry gets itself into order.”

Harry pursed his lips in thought thinking that Severus would be reinstated once things were sorted out but not wanting to discuss that with her. “Good then that’s settled there is one other matter I’d like to discuss. Bellatrix LeStrange has been transfigured into stone in the great hall. I’d like for you to come with Lord Malfoy and myself and investigate that problem.”

“I don’t see what there is to investigate. Her next of kin just needs to come and collect her body. I’m surprised that they haven’t come for her already.”

“They didn’t even know she was here till I told them last night. she’s been made a part of the stone flooring or maybe you didn’t notice that.” Harry waited to see if she had a reaction to that before he went on “and in addition to that I think that she has been petrified and is still alive.”

McGonagall scoffed and said “I sincerely doubt that. Molly Weasley would not have that ability. Surely that would be a dark magic spell.”

Harry pursed his lips and said “I’d like for you to look at her with us anyway. Do you mind?” Harry walked to the door expecting her to follow and not waiting for her response. Out in the hall Lord Malfoy stood at the end looking out over the lake. “Lord Malfoy, if you are ready I can show you to Bellatrix LeStrange now.”

Lucius stood staring at the stone statue in the great hall marveling at the magic that was used to create the figure in front of him. “This must have been a very powerful spell to pull the very stone up from
the floor encasing her in such a way.” He circled her body again and said “I can see what you mean Mr. Potter. I do get the sense that maybe she is still alive. Professor McGonagall, have you ever seen anything like this?”

“No. I actually thought that she had just been turned to stone. I never looked at her close enough to realize that she was made part of the floor.” She looked at the statue and could see what they were talking about. “Surely it’s just because she looks so life like, she can’t really be alive still can she?”

Harry shrugged and said “Lord Malfoy, I would be happy to visit with Mrs. Weasley tomorrow and ask her about what spell she cast if you would like me too. I really don’t mind.”

Lucius pursed his lips in thought. “Yes, I guess that would be a good idea. Entombed alive is a fate worse than Azkaban and the kiss.”

Harry nodded. “I agree, if we allowed this kind of punishment we’d be no better than her.”

McGonagall frowned. “Harry, she would deserve that and so much more. You can’t be seriously thinking of releasing her from this spell.”

Harry raised an eyebrow at her and asked “you don’t think this is a cruel and unusual punishment?”

“No, I certainly don’t. She tortured countless people and murdered many more. She takes pleasure in other peoples suffering. I don’t think she deserves any less than the worst punishment we can think of.”

“I’m sorry to hear that you could be so heartless.” He frowned at her and then said “Even so we need to figure out how to release her from the floor.” McGonagall couldn’t believe that Harry would even think of being compassionate to this woman. What had they said to him that would make him feel as though she deserved any compassion? She was shaking her head in disbelief. She certainly hadn’t expected him to take this turn of attitude. She just couldn’t fathom what had come over the boy. “I’ll try speaking to Mrs. Weasley tomorrow. If I have a chance to today I’ll set up a time that we can meet here and discuss the matter.”

“Thank you Mr. Potter.”

McGonagall couldn’t believe her ears, Lucius Malfoy being gracious to Potter. She felt a little sick to her stomach as though her world was turning upside down. “Professor McGonagall, do you feel alright?” Harry asked as he noticed her looking a little green. She numbly nodded her head. “Now that this matter is dealt with I believe the stone is in the back field. It’s raining out, would you like to get a cloak to help keep you dry?”

Minerva nodded and said “Please give me a minute.”

Harry stared into space for a moment and said “she will speak to Molly first and try to convince her not to discuss the spell with me. If she refuses, I will have to use force to get it out of her and that will cause a rift.”

Lucius looked at him concerned and said “don’t burn your bridge with the Weasley family. It’s clear that you have your eye on Ministry reform and they are a very large, influential family. You don’t want to alienate yourself completely from them. We can find a way around her spell without her help.”

Harry glared at him “I won’t tolerate her refusing to help me in anyway” he said darkly.

Lucius almost took a step back when Harry spoke to him like that. He had never seen that side of
him and it surprised him a little but as soon as he said it the darkness was gone and the cheerful harry
had returned. “I’m just suggesting that maybe force isn’t what we need in this situation. I could
probably speak to Severus or maybe even Draco about how to reverse the spell. We don’t need you
to cause a rift over something that we haven’t even tried to fix yet.”

McGonagall returned with her cloak on and motioned to them to follow her. “You said the back
field? I don’t think I’ve ever notice a stone in that field.”

“I believe it’s buried. I think that founders might have buried it to keep it safe. Dumbledore once said
to me that it was the smallest stone that held the building together. I was sitting on this rock in the
field thinking about Sirius and feeling sad for myself. I think he was trying to make me feel better but
it didn’t make any sense to me then. Now looking back on it he was trying to tell me that I was the
stone protected the wizarding world. Of course it’s nonsense, he was an old man losing his mind he
had too many balls to juggle and they were affecting him.”

McGonagall scoffed. “If that’s what you think Mr. Potter then you clearly didn’t know the man very
well.”

“I thought I knew him really well but then I learned how he put so many people in danger all for
what he considered the greater good. He had a vision of what he wanted the wizarding world to be
and be damned if anyone felt differently. He regularly would cast them aside and use his influence
to push forward with his plans regardless of what others felt.” Lucius was happy to hear that Harry
seemed to understand that Dumbledore wasn’t all that great he wanted to cheer him on when he
continued with “not only that he was as good as a child abuser and those that knowingly let him
abuse the children were no better than him.”

McGonagall sneered at him “a child abuser. That is a very strong accusation, Mr. Potter. What proof
do you have that he knowingly abused children.”

Potter turned on her that dark look coming over him again “what proof do I have? How about scars
on my own body that I showed him my second year and begged him to not make me go back to the
Durely’s. He sent me back anyway and told me that I should look at it as training for when Riddle
returned. He knew then that I would have to fight him and I might as well learn how to deal
with the pain. Did you know that I was being abused by them?” He looked at her with accusation
running through his mind. “You did know. I can see the guilt on your face. You’re as guilty as he
was.” He stated firmly. He turned and stalked away from them leaving her standing with Lord
Malfoy who was looking at her sympathetically. They could tell that he was really angry and Lucius
could now see what Narcissa had meant about his strange behavior. Harry stopped in the middle of
the field looking at a stone that was cover by grass. It was set into the side of the hill but when you
stood on it you could see most of the castle and the surrounding grounds. “Lord Malfoy.” He called
out. “I think that this is it.”

Lucius came and stood next to him. He could still feel the anger roiling off of him. “I don’t think that
this could be what we are looking for Mr. Potter.”

“I’m pretty certain it is.” He motioned for him to stand back. Minerva stood next to them and
watched as Harry cast a blasting spell that cleared away some of the dirt the covered the stone. Once
a sizable portion of the stone had been exposed they could see the runes that were cut into it.

Lucius crouched down and looked at the runes. He studied them for several minutes before casting
another spell to remove the rest of the dirt to reveal a stone pillar about 20 feet tall imbedded into the
side of the hill. It was covered in ancient runes that Lucius was familiar with but hadn’t actually seen
in the real world only in books. He stood reading them for several minutes before he spoke again.
“The founders placed the stone here. It sits on the bedrock of the castle. They carved the runes into
the stone and then activated them.” He washed away more of the dirt and continued studying the runes. “I think this should be fairly easy.” He said confidently as he drew out his wand.

Harry watched as the runes began to glow as Lord Malfoy cast the spell to activate the runes. After a few minutes he lowered his wand and said “I’m afraid to say that I don’t think I have the kind of power that is needed to activate the wards by myself.”

Harry nodded and said “I was thinking that may be the case. We should have brought one more person out with us. Professor McGonagall, if you wouldn’t mind.” He said pulling drawing his wand.

“I’d hate to say this Mr. Potter but this is the kind of thing that the Elder wand would have been able to perform easily.”

Harry turned his wand on her and looked at her angrily. “The only thing the elder wand would have been able to do is kill this stone. It would not have been able to activate it.”

“I disagree.” She said bitterly.

Harry turned back to Lord Malfoy deciding that he was going to ignore her. He said “Lord Malfoy, if you can cast the spell to activate the runes can I cast the spell to keep them active?”

“I’m sure you don’t have that kind of power behind you. We will need to come back with two other people preferably and Hufflepuff and a Ravenclaw.”

“We are here and I’d like to try if you wouldn’t mind.”

Lucius looked at him ready to argue with him that it was pointless but decided that his mood had turned pretty soar and that he didn’t want to upset him further. He showed him the spell and told him he had to cast it like he meant it as if he were casting an unforgivable or a patronous to ward off dementors. Harry practiced the spell once into the air before nodding and saying that he was ready. Lucius shook his head thinking that the boy was pretty arrogant thinking that he could cast a new and difficult spell once and have it down so easily. He began chanting the spell to set the runes in motion again. When he had them all activated he nodded to Harry. He watched him point his son’s old wand at the stone and say the spell under his breath. At first nothing seemed to happen and Lucius almost smirked at him for his arrogance but then the ground began to vibrate as Harry poured more of his magic into the spell. He held his wand pointed at the stone and chanted the spell again. This time a jet of white light shot from his wand into the stone and the castle moaned in the distance. Soon the ground was shaking violently as the runes glowed brightly. The warding shield glowed over head as the castle once again became protected by the centuries old magic. Harry ended the spell and sat down in the grass. From the distance they could see the walls of the towers were already beginning to mend themselves as the grass that had been scorched by fire began to turn green again.

Lucius looked at the man sitting in the grass next to him and wondered how he came to hold such power. “Mr. Potter, are you alright?” He asked concerned as he looked rather pale.

Harry looked up at him and smiled “I bet you weren’t expecting that were you?”

Lucius shock his head no and said “I had no idea that you had that in you.”

McGonagall looked shocked at them both “Harry,” she said dropping the more formal Mr. Potter. “How in the world did you come to have such power?”

Harry stood up and brushed at his wet cloak. “I told you Minerva, the Elder wand was only good for one thing so I destroyed it.” He told her as though that explained everything. He cast a tempus charm
and said “Lord Malfoy, it’s getting late. Did you speak to Hermione this morning? Is she coming with me?”

Lucius almost wanted to say, ‘no that she couldn’t go with this man as he could now see that Narcissa wasn’t wrong to worry about him with Hermione. He relented and said “She does wish to go with you and if the invitation is still there she would like to stay for the luncheon. We will meet you at the Lupin funeral.”

Harry nodded and said “Professor McGonagall, this is where we will leave you. I suppose that we will have to walk to the gate to disapparate from there now that the wards have been reset.”

She nodded and said “I will see you shortly at Fred’s funeral.”

“Lord Malfoy, do you think that we could rebury the stone?”

“Yes, I think that would be a wise idea and then not ever speak of it to anyone. There is a reason that it was hidden.”

After the stone was buried Harry motioned for him to follow him to the gate. Lucius fell instep next to the boy. “I don’t think I like that woman anymore.” Harry said to him as they walked. Lucius didn’t respond as he didn’t have anything to say to him. “I was so mad at Dumbledore when he told me I had to go back. I remember that now but back then after he talked to me I didn’t feel so bad about going. I think he messed with my head.” He said suspiciously. “I bet Hermione could probably find that if I let her look.” He kept walking not saying anything for a few minutes. “I suppose that Professor McGonagall could say that Dumbledore messed with her head too.”

“Did you let Hermione into your head a lot?” He asked thinking that it was odd that he would so willingly let another child mess with his head.

“I didn’t until after Snape tried to teach me occulmency. She did a lot of research and found a few mind spells to help me master the skill. It wasn’t until after Sirius died that I really let her in. She had found a grief spell that helped ease the pain of losing a loved one. After several weeks of me being depressed over his loss she begged me to let her help. I finally relented and allowed her in. She’s very good at it. We talked about how she could use it as an auror but she really didn’t want to do that for a living.”

“I know that she is very good at it. The day that she arrived at the Manor she cast a memory spell on Voldemort. It was so strong that I think he never really remembered what she told him to forget.”

“What did she tell him to forget?”

Lucius smirked “She told him to forget that he was angry at our house elves and that you were looking for horcruxes. Every time your search came up he would get this far away look like he was thinking ‘how could I have forgotten that’. We laugh about it now but at the time we were certain that she had signed all of our death warrants.” They reached the gates and passed through the wards. Lucius looked back at the castle and said “I think that they feel stronger than before.”

“It’s just because they were just reset they will settle down soon enough.” He said shrugging trying to dispel his concerns about the magic he had used to create them.
Harry sat at the table speaking to Xenophilius Lovegood and his daughter Luna. The funeral hadn’t lasted very long. The eulogy was given by Minerva McGonagall and a few people had stood and said some very nice things and some not very nice things in good jest, about Fred. The luncheon was crowded with friends and family most of whom Harry hadn’t really met before. So now he sat listening to the Lovegoods go on about their newspaper. He really wasn’t interested in the conversation but he was being polite and asking the appropriate questions regarding the Quibbler. According to Xenophilius the paper would begin production again sometime in the next week. The featured article would be on the magical creatures that fought in the battle. Harry had been surprised to hear that so many had fought. Of course he knew about the trolls and centaurs but he hadn’t realized that other creatures had been fighting too. He sat and half listened to the list as he watched the other funeral goers chat quietly. Looking around he noticed that Hermione and the bodyguard Mr. Simmons had disappeared from the dining area. Harry stood and excused himself interrupting Xenophilius mid-sentence.

“Is everything Okay, Harry?” Luna asked concerned.

“I’m not sure, Luna. Something isn’t right.” He looked around again and realized that George was gone too. “Excuse me I just need to check on something in the house.” He started towards the garden door just as the smoke from a death eater appeared next to him. He wasn’t surprised to see Lucius form next to him, nor was he surprised to hear the people gasping and jumping to their feet drawing their wands.

Lucius ignored them as he fell in step with Harry once again “Mr. Potter, where is she?” He asked knowing that something was wrong and seeing that he was already in motion walking towards the house.

“I believe she is in the house.” They walked to the house together ignoring the cries of the people in attendance and entered through the kitchen.

Mr. Simmons stood in the door way watching Hermione perform a spell on the Weasley twin. He wasn’t really sure what she was doing but her collar was glowing brightly when he had started to question her, she had said that he shouldn’t worry. He turned around surprised to see Lord Malfoy. “Lord Malfoy.” He said shocked. “What are you doing here?”

Hermione slumped against George’s chest as she ended the spell just in time for Harry and her Master to see. “What you should have been doing.” He said angrily as he pushed past the man and into the living room. Harry squeezed past him frowning. “Hermione, what do you think you are doing?” Lucius asked angrily.

Hermione looked up at him frowning. “Why are you here, Master?” She asked as she was till slumped against George. Behind him she could see Harry, Molly and Arthur following him into the room. She groaned she hadn’t wanted them to know she was working with George.

Harry pulled George away from her and sat down in his place. “Hermione, what did you just do?” George stood and went to his parents trying to push them out the door before they made a scene with Harry, Hermione and her master.

She shook her head and said “I’d rather not discuss it right now.” She said motioning to the others in
“I don’t really care what you’d rather not discuss, Hermione. I want to know what you were just doing that I could feel it halfway across the country.” He said to her angrily.

“Malfoy you cannot come into our home and treat her like that.” Molly stated from the doorway that George was trying to push her through. “George, we can’t leave her with him.” She said batting his hands away and trying to get back into the room.

She groaned and realized that she was going to have to explain herself. “I was performing the nonmagisluctum spell on George. He needed some help. I didn’t realize how draining it would be though.” She said as she rested her head on Harry’s shoulder.

Lucius crouched down in front of her and said “How could you not realize it was so draining?” Hermione shrugged weakly. “This has got to be the most irresponsible impulsive thing that you have done, only shadowed by casting spells on Voldemort himself.” Lucius barked at her angrily.

Hermione shrank away from his as he was yelling at her. “I’m sorry, Master Lucius.” She tried to say to appease him.

“Sorry?” He yelled. “Look at you Hermione. You’ve exhausted yourself. What were you thinking?”

“Lord Malfoy, please calm down.” Harry said quietly looking at the people standing behind him. Molly and Arthur stood shocked at the scene as the rest of their children filed into the room.

Lucius stood and exhaled “you’re right Mr. Potter. She’s clearly okay. It’s just she gave me a scare. I thought for sure something was wrong when I felt her pull on her magic like that.” He sat down next to her on the couch. “I’m sorry Hermione.”

She pulled away from Harry and buried her head into Lucius shoulder. “I’m sorry Lucius. I didn’t mean to scare you. I didn’t realize you’d feel it nor did I realize how strong the spell would need to be. I’m sorry.”

Lucius wrapped his arm around her shoulder and kissed the top of her head. “I’m sure Mr. Shacklebolt is probably thinking I’ve gone insane. I was right in the middle of giving my statement when I felt the pull on my core. I thought you must be under attack. I left without even saying where I was going.”

Hermione chuckled and said “I’m sorry, I’ll get my things so we can go.”

Lucius gave her one last squeeze and stood. “No. I think you can stay. Mr. Potter I can trust that you will keep her safe for a few more hours and bring her along with you when you go to the Lupin’s funeral.”

Harry laughed nervously. “I thought that was what I was doing. I didn’t expect I’d have to keep her safe from herself.”

“You won’t but she will need you to keep her safe.” Harry nodded understanding as Lucius turned back to Hermione. “You can stay. Your wand please.” He held out his hand expectantly. Hermione frowned as she reached into her pocket and produced her wand.

“Lord Malfoy, you cannot take her wand from her.” Molly said indignantly.

“It’s okay, Molly” Hermione said. “He can have it. I won’t be able to use it again today anyway.” She said knowing what was coming next.
Lucius tucked the wand into his pocket. “Hermione, I forbid you from performing any more magic today. Consider yourself a squib until further notice.”

Hermione nodded “yes Master.” She said sadly.

Lucius sighed and turned to Arthur and Molly and said “I’m sorry to have interrupted the wake for your son. My family would like to express our deepest condolences for your loss. Mr. Potter would you please see me out?” Harry patted Hermione’s leg before standing up and walking with Lucius to the disapparation point. “I know that I sounded terribly harsh in there. I hope I haven’t caused you any problems.”

“I’m sure it will be fine. I’m sorry that I didn’t realize that she was going to be causing this much trouble.”

He sighed and looked around at the people at the wake. They were staring at them as though they expected him to attack them. “I’ll see you later, Mr. Potter.” Harry stepped back as Lucius disapparated away in a puff of black smoke.

Harry sighed and went back into the house. The Weasley’s were grilling Hermione on her reason for staying with that man when it was obvious that he was mistreating her. “Hermione doesn’t need to explain herself to you.” Harry stated angrily as he entered the room.

“What do you mean?” Molly asked “Harry, didn’t you hear how he spoke to her? She’s clearly terrified that he’s going to hurt her.”

“Molly, I told you I’m not terrified that he’s going to hurt me. Why can’t you believe me?” Hermione said as she cried into a handkerchief.

“Mom, I don’t think she’s terrified either. He clearly was concerned for her.” George was saying trying to convince his parents.

Harry listened to the family argue amongst themselves. When Ron had started in on Hermione again about how she was choosing the Malfoy family over his family Harry decided that enough had been said. “We have heard enough.” He said loud enough to be heard over their bickering. Hermione was still sobbing as the family stopped arguing and turned to look at Harry. “Hermione, has made her decision and you don’t have to like it but if you really loved her you’d try to understand. She is happy with them. Today she made a bad decision and it alarmed Lord Malfoy that is why he made the surprise visit, he was concerned for her. I’m sure in the future she will try and make better decisions about how she uses her magic when she’s not around her Master.”

Hermione nodded and said “thank you Harry. I will. I’m sorry I got everyone so upset.”

“She shouldn’t have to worry about how she uses her magic, Harry. It’s her gift they have no right to regulate it.” Arthur said defending Hermione.

Hermione stood and said “you are wrong they do have the right to regulate it. I gave them the right.”

“But it was under duress, Hermione. The war is over. They lost. You should be free to do what you want now.” Ron said loudly showing his frustration with her.

“That’s true, Ron but now that I know them better I want to stay. I wish I could make you understand. I really like …”

Harry held his hand up to her stopping her mid-sentence. “You’ve said enough, Hermione.”
“Harry, you can’t be supportive of this. They want to regulate all the muggleborn people.”

Harry nodded and said “I’m aware of what they want to do Arthur. I’d really rather not get into a debate over whether or not they are right or wrong to feel the way they do at your son’s funeral. You have guest in your gardens that are probably wondering what you are doing in here and why Lord Malfoy came to visit. I suggest you return to the party and tell them the truth of why he came.” He motioned to Hermione “Come. I was talking to Luna and her father when I realized that you were up to no good. I rather rudely excused myself. I should go and explain to them that I was concerned for you.”

“Wait up and I’ll join you. I want to talk to Luna too.” George said as he ran to catch up with them.

Harry, Hermione and Mr. Simmons arrived at the cemetery a half hour early. The rain was coming down in horizontal sheets as they walked towards the tents that had been set up around the grave sites of Remus and Nymphodora Lupin. Andromeda stood by their graves waiting for the guests to arrive. She stood next to a young woman with blond hair who Harry thought he recognized but couldn’t place a name to her face. She was holding a baby who’s hair seemed like it could be changing colors. Harry could only assume it was Teddy. “Mrs. Tonks.” Harry said as they approached. He had met her once before at the Wedding of Bill and Fleur but couldn’t remember how she wished to be addressed. She held out her arms to him as though she wanted to embrace him. Harry allowed her but felt stiff about the unfamiliar women hugging him. “Mrs. Tonks, I’m not sure you ever met Hermione before.”

She smiled at Hermione and pulled her into a motherly hug. “I haven’t but I have heard a lot about her over the past few weeks. It’s good to finally meet you.”

Hermione curtsied and said “It’s a pleasure to meet you I only wish it was under better circumstances.”

Andromeda nodded and said “I’m sure we’ll have plenty of time to get to know each other now that Narcissa is free of Voldemort. Harry, I’d like to introduce you to your god son.” She took the baby from the blond haired woman. “This is Theodore Lupin. Teddy this is your god father, Harry Potter.” The baby smiled and reached for Harry.

Harry happily took him from her arms and said “Teddy, it’s very nice to meet you.” He cooed and reached for Harry’s glasses. Harry chuckled as he tried to get away from the baby’s grasping hands. Other guest began arriving but there was no sign of Snape or the Malfoy’s. Hermione started to fidget. “Stop fidgeting.” He said under his breath.

She froze in place not realizing that she was doing it “Something’s wrong. They wouldn’t be late.”

Harry cast a tempus charm showing her that it was 1:50. “They still have ten minutes. I’m sure they will be here.” Hermione stood trying to look calm as they waited for 2 o’clock to roll around. Finally she saw the familiar smoke appear when they apparated into the cemetery. She breathed a sigh of relief. Harry leaned into her and said “see I told you they would come.”

She smirked and nodded her head “and you said you’re not having visions.” He shrugged.

There were a lot of people at the funeral but the appearance of Severus Snape and the Malfoy family were the center of attention. Narcissa hugged her sister as they went through the receiving line. Andromeda pulled her into the family area making room for her and the rest of her family. The other people at the funeral were surprised when the eulogy for Remus Lupin was read by Severus Snape.
The camera flashes were momentarily blinding as he began his speech. Harry almost couldn’t believe the nice things that Snape was saying about his old enemy. He hadn’t realized that him and Remus had reconciled to the point the Snape would be chosen to give his eulogy. Once he was finished others stepped forward and spoke on the deceased man’s behalf. A woman that Harry had never met before gave the Eulogy for Nymphodora. She was funny and had the crowd laughing as she recounted Dora’s antics from Hogwarts ending with her capacity to love and how dearly she would be missed by her coworkers and everyone that knew her.

Flowers and small gifts were placed on their graves as they were lowered into the muddy ground. Harry had barely managed to keep from crying as he watched Remus’ coffin being lowered. Remus would have been his last source of positive information regarding his parents. He glanced at Snape who was looking as serious as ever and not showing any emotions. He glanced at his friend and she was doing her best to not show her emotions too. Harry shook his head and wondered why they felt it was so important to not show that they had feelings in public. Andromeda was thanking people for coming as they placed their items on their graves. Harry thought back to Fred’s funeral. The Weasley’s hadn’t stayed at the grave site to watch it being lowered into the ground and nobody place anything on his coffin he wondered what the difference was with the two ceremonies. He had seen the Weasley place flowers on both of their coffins before they left the cemetery. He watched the last of the visitors leave the cemetery leaving only Adromeda, the blond haired girl, all four Malfoys, Snape, Hermione and him standing under the tent. Teddy had fallen asleep in Harry’s arms during Remus’ eulogy. He wasn’t heavy at all but Harry thought that he’d be more comfortable lying in a bed. “Mrs. Tonks, I think Teddy would be more comfortable lying down.”

She frowned at him and said “he hasn’t slept alone since they died. Every time we put him down he starts to cry.”

Harry shifted him in his arms and said “he’s so young do you think he realizes that they aren’t coming back?”

Severus looked over his shoulder at the baby. “I remember when you were that young. You wouldn’t leave your mother’s arms for a moment. I think she probably carried you for the first six months of your life. I only saw her a few times after you were born but you were always in her arms.” He sighed “I had wanted to be James in the worst way. He was the luckiest man alive in my mind and then he put his trust into Peter even though I begged your mother to believe me. That’s when his luck ran out. All those years I thought it was Sirius even though Remus kept telling me it wasn’t true. I’m glad I found out in time and was able to become Remus’ friend. He was a great man even if he was fighting for the wrong values.”

Andromeda sighed “I didn’t believe him when he said that Narcissa was in trouble and that you were helping her. I thought he had gone crazy. I’m glad to get at least part of my family back.” She smiled sadly and said “I’d invite you back to the house but Greta and I haven’t finished moving Teddy into my house and it’s kind of a mess.”

“Greta?” Narcissa asked as she motioned to the blond haired girl.

Andromeda scowled. “I’m sorry I didn’t introduce you. Greta, this is my sister Lady Narcissa Malfoy, Her husband Lord Lucius Malfoy and their son Draco Malfoy. He was probably a first year when you were in your seventh. Of course you know Severus Snape. That young man is Harry Potter and that girl is the Malfoys’ slave Hermione. This is Greta, a muggleborn witch that has taken refuge at my house for the past two years she has pledged herself to my family in exchange for our protection.”

Hermione furrowed her brow and asked “do you mean that she has willingly agreed to be your
slave? Is that what you mean by pledged herself?"

Andromeda smiled and asked “does that surprise you that another person would chose the same life as you?”

Hermione smiled and said “Yes. I mean No, that doesn’t surprise me there’s no reason why she shouldn’t, I just wasn’t aware that there were any others.”

“I knew that I needed protection and I was already working for Mrs. Tonks. So when I heard that Voldemort had taken over the ministry I came to her and she told me what they wanted in the end. We decided then that we could just say that I was already collared to her. She was a blood traitor but being from a pure blood descent when they brought me in for questioning they said that I could leave with her because I was already properly collared. I couldn’t believe it.”

Harry frowned. “I hadn’t realized that they were pushing that so early in their campaign.”

“We’ve been pushing for muggleborn registry and control for the past two hundred years.” Lucius said shaking his head “but the way that Voldemort went about it wasn’t right.”

“I’ve met several others like you and me, Hermione. They just haven’t been as public as your enslavement has been. Did you see that you made the Daily Prophet?”

Lucius cleared his throat and said “I didn’t show you the article because it wasn’t nice. It was in the paper this morning.”

“Oh, I didn’t have time to check it this morning.”

“I intentionally distracted you from reading it.” Narcissa added.

“I’d like to read it when we get back to the Manor” Harry said. “Did you keep the article?”

“Yes, I believe it’s still in my sitting room.” Lucius told him.

“Andromeda, I’d like to invite you for dinner sometime in the next few days.”

“I’d like that. I miss having a family. Do you know what happened to our sister?”

Narcissa grimaced and said “I’m told that Molly Weasley made her part of the stone flooring of the great hall at Hogwarts. I haven’t seen her myself.”

“I can’t believe Molly would have been able to do such a thing.”

“She’s taking credit for it so I’m assuming that she did it.” Harry told her. “She wants to help me at Grimmauld place tomorrow. I told her I had business at the school first and asked her and Arthur to meet me there. Arthur is going to reconnect the floo for me. I’m hoping that my cooperation with them will get me some cooperation in return.”

Andromeda glowered at him and asked “are they not being cooperative? They’ve been so helpful to me.”

“Do they know of Greta’s situation?” Hermione asked. “They don’t seem to be very supportive of my decision.”

“I’m not sure they have ever talked to Greta before.” She looked at her quizzically. “I have no idea.”

“It doesn’t matter. I need them to be more cooperative with me if they are not then I will have to
decide if I want to associate with them.” Harry stated sadly. “They’ve been like my family for the past six years. Their efforts greatly aided me in defeating Voldemort.”

“We really should be going.” Lucius said to his family. “Andromeda, it’s been good to see you. I look forward to seeing you again for dinner sometime soon. Please feel free to bring Greta along if you wish.” Lucius took Hermione’s hand and led her out into the rain.

Harry scowled at them as he watched Lucius pull her out into the rain. Draco ran after them and cast a drying spell over Hermione as he came up behind them. Harry sighed at least Draco was paying attention. Severus held his hand out to Narcissa. She took his hand and walked with him to the apparition point. Harry juggled Teddy in his arms as he tried to shift the sleeping baby back over to Greta. “Mr. Potter, whenever you want to come and visit your godson you are more than welcome.”

“Thank you Mrs. Tonks. I’d like that. I sure Remus and Dora had no idea that he’d be this young if ever they needed me to be his guardian.”

“Sirius wasn’t much older then you are now when you’re parents named him your godfather.” She said to him then added “I’m still a young woman and I’m happy to have a baby in my home again. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to raise my grandchild.”

Harry nodded “Thank you for being able to care for him. I just couldn’t see how I could do it myself.”
Dinner at the Malfoy’s

Dinner at the Manor turned out to be quiet and introspective. The article on the Malfoys and their slave painted them as evil death eaters that brainwashed the brains of the golden trio. Her appearance at the ministry solidified that fact even though she had appeared with the savor of the wizarding world. Harry’s involvement with the Malfoy family came into question as to whether or not they had made some kind of bargain with him in exchange for Hermione. The article ended with the readers waiting to see if the great Harry Potter could save his friend from the clutches of the evil Malfoy family or would she be used as a bargaining chip in exchange for information on the whereabouts of known death eaters. Harry had cursed and stormed about the sitting room as Hermione read the article after him. She had tried to calm him down but he was furious with the editor of the paper for allowing such speculation to be written. Rita Skeeter’s article on the appearance of Potter at St. Mungo’s with Lady Malfoy did suggest that maybe he was there because Lucius Malfoy had gone missing from the wizarding world. Harry knew that Malfoy’s appearance today at the Burrow and then again at the funeral of a known order members and someone that was openly against Voldemort would surely dispel any questions about his health and where abouts but the article about Hermione being a bargaining chip didn’t sit well with him at all. He wanted to hunt the editor down and curse him for his stupidity of posting such drivel.

He was still angry as they sat down at the table for dinner but no one dared say anything about it otherwise they would get him started again. After the dinner plates had been cleared Severus cleared his throat and said “I think now would be a good time for our little talk don’t you Harry.”

Harry exhaled and said “I think you might be right Severus.” His name rolled off his tongue with an unfamiliar feel. “If you wouldn’t mind excusing us I’d like to have this conversation in a more private setting.” He stood and led Severus from the room “Where ever you are more comfortable would be fine by me. I’m still not completely settled into this place.”

Severus motioned for him to follow him. “In my rooms then. I have a very nice fire whiskey that we could enjoy.”

Harry sighed. “That sounds wonderful.”

Harry stood looking out over the garden at the moon as it began its pass over the planet. “It will be full in two days. What will that fellow Balinchk do when the moon is full?”

“I spoke to him today and he is going back to the pack to see who will be the new leader now that Greyback is dead.”

Harry thought about that for a moment before shaking the thoughts off. “Severus, I guess you can guess that’s not what I really wanted to talk to you about.” He nodded but didn’t interrupt Harry allowing him to continue. Harry sighed as he put his thoughts together. “I need to speak to someone that is more knowledgeable then me. I also need to know that I can trust the person I’m speaking too.”

“If you are asking me to keep dangerous secrets then I don’t want to know. I’m done being a double agent Mr. Potter.” He handed Harry the tumbler of fire whisky.

Harry pursed his lips thinking about his double agent days. Taking a moment to sip the whisky and savoring the burning feeling as it rushed through his body before he said “I don’t think that what I have to talk about are dangerous secrets. I just need to know that they won’t be blabbed to anyone. I don’t want to chance rumors being spread. I don’t believe anyone in this house would do that but I
don’t know them as well as I think I know you and Hermione is obligated to speak to them as she is bound to them.”

“I will keep what you tell me in confidence as long as it’s not something that will be dangerous to anyone.”

“I can live with that. I don’t think I’m a danger to anyone but I would like to talk about a few things.” He sat down on the arm chair facing the fire place and sipped the whisky again “I’ve never had what was considered good whisky before. I rather like it.” Severus smirked at him. “The first thing I’d like to tell you is that I died and saw death himself. He embraced me and guided me to a place that looked a lot like Kings cross station there I spoke to Dumbledore. We had a little chat and then he told me that I could cheat death by using the resurrection stone. I had held it in my hand when I went to meet Voldemort in the forest. It was still in my hand at the King’s cross place. Death then followed me to Hogwarts I could feel him lingering around me as Hagrid carried me to the castle. Then I saw him collect Voldemort from me. I believe that when I broke the wand and crushed the stone that I somehow absorbed the power from them. Did Lucius tell you about the warding stone?”

“Yes, but he didn’t say how you came to be that powerful.”

Harry sighed “It wasn’t the Hallows. I had that power when I battled Voldemort. I left King’s cross with it. I’m not sure I understand but I think it was part of Voldemort or maybe it was mine and it was too crowded in my core for me to access it. Now I have something else inside of me. It has been making me feel very angry and I don’t understand why.”

Severus grimaced and said “I’m sure I couldn’t explain to you why if that’s what you’re hoping for.”

“No. I was just making a statement. I spoke to Sybill Trelawney” he said changing the subject. “She began to speak another prophecy about me and I shut her down. She had knowledge that she shouldn’t have had and I threatened to send death after her if she spoke it to anyone. I know that’s not fair to her. The poor woman isn’t sane to begin with she doesn’t need that floating around in her head. Do you have any idea how those prophecy are collected at the ministry?”

“I think that a prophecy is spoken by a seer to a ministry official and they create the globes. They are sworn to secrecy and may even have some sort of obliviate spell attached to them so that after they make the prophecy globes they don’t remember what is said.”

Harry nodded “I want to know what she has seen but I’m not sure that I would be able to understand its meaning anyway. The last prophecy she spoke was very obscure to me. How did my parents thrice defy him and the part about neither can live while the other survives? It still doesn’t make a lot of sense to me. If you listened to the prophecy do you think you could understand what it meant?”

“I might. I repeated the prophecy to Voldemort trying to gain favor but at the time I didn’t realize that it was Lilly that the prophecy was speaking about.”

“I would like for you to come and listen as the ministry official takes the record.” He paused thinking before he continued “I’ve not been having visions like Hermione suggest but I have been seeing the outcome of things. I can think of something and not see the outcome but think that is how it’s going to happen. For instance I thought about the ministry coming and talking with you. I thought that they would do exactly what they did take statements and reported to you that everyone confirmed that you and the Malfoys betrayed Voldemort and worked against him from the inside. I thought that like I thought that the sky would be blue today. Can you understand what I am saying?”

“Yes, I think I can.”
“When something happens that I didn’t see coming I get angry. I never saw that article coming about Hermione being used as a bargaining chip. I didn’t see Sybill speaking another prophecy or Hermione bringing Lord Malfoy to the Burrow and the argument that ensued.”

“How can you tell me what Sybill said that got you so upset?”

“She started by saying that I would be the new Dark Lord and that I would rule the wizarding world. When I stopped her she then said to me that even though I destroyed the wand I still had command over death and that it wouldn’t tolerate that long. That’s when I threaten to send death to her if she spoke the prophecy to anyone. Unfortunately, I had an audience.”

Severus grimaced and asked “an audience?”

“Yeah we were in the infirmary and she spoke loud enough for everyone to know that she had something on the tip of her tongue and I stopped her by threatening her life.” He shook his head “it’s not a good thing. One she shouldn’t have said that about me being a new Dark Lord and I probably shouldn’t have gotten all dark when I threaten her. I just reinforced her claim but as I said I’ve been having problems controlling my anger.”

Severus sighed “I will go with you and speak to her. She’s hard to talk to as she’s constantly seeing things and wanting to share them with me. Dumbledore relied heavily on her visions of you when making his decisions on what he allowed you to do. I never wanted to put you at any undue risk. So I tried not to listen to her. I will tell you though that she knew that the sword would appear to you in that pond. That’s how I knew to send the patronous out to you. Would you have found it without me sending my patronous, I don’t know but she told me to send it and I wanted you to succeed so I listened to her that time.”

“Hermione and I talked about leaving the wizarding world that night. We were both discouraged and if I hadn’t found the sword and Ron hadn’t returned I’m sure her and I would be in Australia by now.”

“I’ll go and listen to her with you. I just hope that it’s understandable. I’d hate to think that you might replace Voldemort.”

Harry shook his head and asked “does the dark part refer to evil or magic that’s done by using dark power? I never understood that. Hermione has books that say the dark refers to night or blind magic, magic that can be done in darkness. I always thought that it was evil magic but that’s not the case is it.”

“No, its not. You’ve been taught that it’s bad because it tends to come from the darkness but light magic can be just as evil. The more common spells are used for evil intent but all dark spells require feeling to be placed behind then. You have to really mean the dark spell that you are casting in order for it to be effective.”

“I’m pretty good at nonverbal spells. I’m better with a wand but I can do magic pretty well without a wand. I think that I would be very good at darker magic and I’d like to learn how to master it.”

“Well you’ve come to the right place for that. We can definitely help you there. I’ve seen you cast your patronous and I’m sure you will be able to perform the dark spells easily enough.”

“I figured as much. When will you be going back to work?”

Severus laughed “I don’t think I’ll be going back to Hogwarts if that’s what you mean.”

Harry stared into space for a minute before saying “The new Minister of Magic will reappoint Lucius
Malfoy as head of the board of directors and the new board will vote you in as headmaster. That will happen a day after the article is released about how you worked covertly with the auror department. So my question is, when will you be well enough to return to work.”

Severus looked at him in shock. “Are you certain? I can’t imagine that they would appoint Lucius as head of the board again and vote me in as headmaster.”

Harry smirked and said “as certain as I am that tomorrow we will see rain here at the Manor but it will be bright and sunny at Grimmauld place.”
Harry woke up the following morning before Kreacher could come and rouse him. He dressed in the old jeans that the elves had clean and repaired for him and his favorite Weird Sisters t-shirt under his jumper. Kreacher appeared at five minutes to 7am and began berating him for his outfit choice. “Master Potter, you cannot wear that to breakfast with the Malfoy’s.” He said indignantly.

“I know Kreacher. I’m going to the Burrow for breakfast this morning. Please inform Tecks that I won’t be joining them.” Kreacher grumbled angrily about cavorting with bloodtraitors. Harry chuckled and said “I did warn you that I would be doing that. I should also warn you that they will be at Grimmauld place today to help me with a few things.” He popped away without saying anything more. Harry laughed to himself. He was feeling good about his plans for the day as he left his room and made his way to the floo. He didn’t want to walk to an apparition point outside of the Manor because of the torrential down poor that was going on outside so he made use of their floo.

Molly had breakfast in full swing by the time he reached the Burrow. He wasn’t surprised to find that the floo system at the Manor didn’t allow access to the Burrow. He ended up floo’ing to the Three Broomsticks and then to the Burrow from there. Fortunately the Three Broomsticks wasn’t all that crowded that time of the morning but there were a few people who recognized him and offered their congratulations for the defeat of Voldemort.

“Harry!” Molly greeted him surprised that he was there so early in the morning.

“Good Morning, Molly. You don’t mind if I join you for breakfast do you?”

“Of course not I’m just surprised to see you so early. You’re staying with the Malfoy’s but they aren’t feeding you?” She asked curiously.

“They will be disappointed that I won’t be joining them for breakfast but they will understand my need to get an early start. I’ve a lot I wish to accomplish today.” He sat down at the table and asked “you are still planning on helping at Grimmauld place today aren’t you?”

Molly smiled and said “I’m looking forward to it. It will be nice to clean out some of that old furniture and the portraits especially the one of Walburga Black.”

Harry chuckled and said “I told the portrait that if she continued to yell at my house guests she’d find herself burned in the back garden. She’s been fairly quiet since then. I hope she stays that way. I rather like the portrait but not if she’s yelling all the time.”

Molly shook her head sighing. “She’s part of the supremacist’s family, Harry, you don’t want her hanging around.”

Harry smirked and said “is that sausage that you’re cooking.”

“Yes, and pancakes” She said.

“Can I help with something?”

“No, you know I’d rather do it myself.”

Harry nodded and asked “can I talk with you while you’re cooking?”
“Of Course, Harry.”

Harry smiled he could tell that Molly was happy to have him at the Burrow. He only hoped that what he wanted to talk about wouldn’t kill her good mood. “I was wondering if you could tell me why people put things on Remus and Dora’s grave’s but not Fred’s?”

“Remus and Dora were both halfbloods and they follow the muggle tradition of laying items at their graves. Fred was a pureblood and we don’t practice that tradition.”

Harry said “I’ve only been to one muggle funeral and that was of Vernon’s uncle. They didn’t put items on his grave like that.”

Molly scowled and said “I think that funeral might have been an exception then. Maybe that muggle wasn’t well liked?”

Harry shrugged and said “they only brought me along because they had too. All I did was sit in a corner and read.”

“Harry, you’re here.”

Harry turned and smiled at Ron. “Yep, I’m here.” He stood and gave him a hug.

“The Malfoy’s kick you out did they?”

Harry scowled and said “no they didn’t. I just thought that since I’m spending most of my day doing things with your family I’d come for breakfast and get an early start.”

“What are you doing today?” Ron reached around his mother and stole a sausage link before Molly smacked at his hand with the spatula.

“First I want to go over to Hogwarts to see how the wards are holding up. I also want to see about removing Bellatrix LeStrange’s statue from the Main hall. Molly’s going to help me with that.” He said confidently before adding “I also need to check on Sybill Trelawney I gave her a bit of a scare the other day and I want to make sure she’s ok.”

Molly frowned and said “I’m not sure how I can help you with that?”

Percy came down dressed for work at the Ministry “Good morning, Harry. I’m surprised to see you hear so early.”

“I’m surprised to see you here at all, Percy. What happened to your apartment?”

“It is in the ministry district and there’s been so much traffic the past few days that I decided that it would be better to sleep here. I’ve been working late every night.”

“How did you scare that crazy old bat?” Ron asked going back to the conversation before his brother came in.

“What crazy old bat, Ron.” Ginny asked as she joined her family in the kitchen.

“Harry said that he scared Professor Trelawney the other day he wants to check on her.”

“You’re going to check on her Harry? Is that a good idea?” Percy asked thinking about the exchange two days ago.

“I’m going to have someone from the Ministry go to her and record her newest prophecy. I’ve
decided that I do want to hear it.”

“Merlin Harry, she spoke another prophecy about you.” Ron asked concerned.

“I didn’t give her a chance too. When I saw her going into one of her trances I stopped her but I
know that she’s a seer and can’t hold that type of thing in. I’m going to have a ministry official
record it and then forget about it.” Molly placed the plate of pancakes in front of Harry. “Thanks
Molly.” He said as he dug into the pancakes. “I probably won’t speak to her directly as I don’t want
her to speak it till someone can record it. I’m just going to check with whoever is on in the
infirmary.” He said over a mouth full of pancakes. “The Malfoy house elves made me pancakes
yesterday but for some reason yours always taste better.”

Molly smiled and said “That’s a nice compliment, Harry.”

Arthur and George were the last to come down and join them. “Good morning, everyone.” Arthur
said as he took his seat. “Oh, Harry, your here early.”

Harry smiled. “I wanted to get an early start. Are you still going to Grimmauld with us today to
reopen the floo?”

Arthur nodded and then said “I’ll meet you there at some point today. I’ve been called into work to
take care of an artifact. I’m not sure what it is except I was told that it was leftover from Voldemort.
It must have some pretty strong magic surrounding it as they’ve called in a whole team of us to look
at it.”

He was clearly excited about the work he was going to be doing today. Harry was concerned that it
might be the throne at the Malfoy’s but he didn’t express that concern. “I can see you’re happy to be
getting back to work.”

Arthur smiled “it wasn’t safe at the Ministry while Voldemort ruled it. I haven’t been back to work
for nearly a year.”

“I kept trying to tell you dad that it was safe for you because you were a pureblood. You could have
come back at any time.”

Arthur shrugged. “I couldn’t chance it. I’ve got a family to look after, Percy. When you have
children of your own you’ll understand.”

“I’d like to go to Diagon Alley today and see how our store looks.” George said as he looked around
the table. “Is anyone available to come with me?”

“I’ll go with you George.” Ginny offered. “I’d rather do that then go to that stuffy old house.”

Molly sat down at the table with her plate. “Harry, do you have an idea of what you want to
accomplish today at Grimmauld?”

“I want to see the Master Bedroom. Kreacher said there was a lock on it. I asked him to find they
key. I’m hoping he did otherwise I’ll be blasting the door off its hinges today.”

“When we were using it for order business he told us that we weren’t allowed in that room.”

“I own the place now and I want to see what’s inside.” He said firmly.

“What will you do with the Lestrange statue?” Ron asked.
“First, I want to know what spell you used, Molly, which made her part of the floor.” He said “then we should figure out how to remove her from the floor. I’m not sure what the Malfoy’s want to do with her after that.”

“I used a spell that I created for the gnomes in the garden. It’s called inlocolapidaferunt. I’ve never used it on a human before. I was quite impressed with how well it worked.” Molly said proudly.

Harry nodded. “When we get there I want to talk about how it worked. I’m not sure I’m thrilled with its results.”

Molly glared at him and said “not thrilled, Harry? What do you mean by that?”

“I’m concerned that she may not be dead, Molly.”

Molly looked a little shocked by that revelation but then she recovered and said. “If she’s alive then she got what she deserved. Being trapped alive in her inside her own insane mind is the least we could do as punishment for her crimes.”

Harry pursed his lips realizing that he and Molly wouldn’t ever come to terms regarding cruel and unusual punishments. “I just want to explore the spell further. I really don’t want to get into being judge, jury and executioner with you.” He said feeling a frustrated with her already.

Molly became indignant and angry when Harry suggested that she was being immoral by wanting Bellatrix to suffer in her current form. She stood up and began speaking to Harry harshly. “I will not sit here and listen to you preach to me about what is cruel and unusual punishment given to someone who was the cruelest and most unusual punisher of them all. Maybe you’ve forgotten what crimes she has repeatedly committed.”

Harry looked at her through veiled eyes and said very quietly “I haven’t forgotten, Molly. I know exactly what she has done but it isn’t our place to decide how she should be punished.”

Percy cleared his throat trying to distract Harry. “Harry, don’t you think that maybe the ministry should have a say in that?”

Harry snapped his attention to Percy. “I would have thought something like that but it’s been three days and they haven’t even bothered to inform her next of kin that she is there. If Ginny hadn’t showed me she would still be there waiting for the ministry to do something about her.” He said angrily.

“But Harry, why do you even care?” Ron asked surprised at his friend’s anger.

“I care because she was a witch that is part of our society and she deserves to be treated with respect.” He through his hands up in the frustrated with the topic and added “I know that she’s crazy and that the judge will probably grant her the kiss this time but as a magical person she deserves to be treated with dignity.”

“What about all the people she didn’t treat with respect?” Molly yelled at him.

Harry stood and slammed his hands down on the table. “I can’t do anything about those people but can’t you see if we venture to treat her like she treated everyone else then how can we consider ourselves better than her.”

Everyone around the table looked at Harry in shock. His magic crackled around him as his eyes grew dark. He seemed to change in a way that none of them had ever witnessed before. Percy placed his hand on Harry’s shoulder and said “Harry, I think you need to calm down.”
Harry shrugged his hand off and stormed out of the kitchen out into the garden. He was frustrated more with himself now then the argument with the Weasley’s. He had lost his temper again and had shown them his dark side. He had to get a grip on this before he really hurt someone. He paced in the garden for a few minutes until he noticed one of the garden gnomes. He knelt down and looked at it closely trying to decide if he could feel anything inside of the little statue.

In the house the Weasley family sat stunned by Harry’s outburst. Arthur was the first to say anything. “Percy, is that what he did with Sybill two days ago?”

Percy frowned. “That display was worse then what he did in the infirmary but I think that with Sybill he added a threat behind it so it was just as scary as what he just did here.”

Molly frowned and said “no wonder Poppy was so upset. I don’t want any of you kids hanging around him till we figure out what’s going on with him.”

Arthur stood and said “I’ll go out and talk to him. He’s under a lot of pressure, I’m sure he didn’t mean to become so angry.” Arthur was surprised to find Harry sitting on the ground holding one of the stoned gnomes that Molly had created. He stood next to him looking down at the boy he considered a foster child. “Harry, are you feeling okay?” He asked concerned for him.

Harry frowned and shook his head that he wasn’t. “I’m sorry I lost my temper in there, Arthur. I’ve been doing that a lot lately. I have to work on controlling it.” He held up the gnome. “I’m sure it’s alive still. I’m considering casting a finite spell over it and seeing what happens.”

Arthur said “Put it down and stand up. I’ll cast the spell.”

Harry did what he asked and watched as Arthur cast the spell over the little stone figure. The gnome fell over and scrambled away trying to escape the garden as fast as it’s stumpy little legs would carry it. “That’s what I thought. Bellatrix will have to be released so she can stand trial.”

Arthur frowned and said “We should call the aurors in to retrieve her then. She will have to be taken in right away.”

Harry called into the house. “Percy, can you come out here please.”

Percy poked his head out the door. “I was just getting up to go back to work.” He said hoping that he wasn’t going to be drawn into another encounter with Harry.

“Arthur cast a finite spell over a stoned gnome and it was still alive. Can you inform the auror department that Bellatrix LeStrange needs to be released and taken in?”

Percy grimaced and said “I’ll tell them as soon as I get in.”

“Thank you, Percy. Arthur, when can I expect you at Grimmauld place?”

“Later today. I’ll send an owl when I have a better idea on my time.”

Harry nodded quietly and went back into the house acting as if nothing had just happened to upset anyone. “I’m going to Hogwarts before I head over to Grimmauld. If you want to join me, I’ll be leaving shortly.”

He went back out to the garden and cast his patronous charm out to Lord Malfoy telling him what he found out about Bellatrix. Once the patronous darted away carrying the message he pointed his wand at another stoned gnome. The gnome fell over but didn’t get up and run away. Harry nudged it with his foot and decided that it must have died either when the spell was cast or as it waited in its stone
encased prison. He grimaced and looked around the garden. There must have been at least twenty of them just where he could see how many more did she cast into stone and dispose of without realizing what she was doing? He felt sick to his stomach thinking about their fates. They were just gnomes but it didn’t make him feel any better about the abuse they were suffering. He went back into the house and asked who was coming with him. Molly had her cloak on already and was waiting to go.

“I’m going to hang with George today instead, Harry. I hope you don’t mind.” Ron said trying not to make eye contact with him.

“Alright, Ron. I’ll catch you later then. George let me know if you need any help at the shop. In a few days I hope to have some free time. I wouldn’t mind coming by and lending a hand.”

George gave Harry a weak smile and said “I’ll let you know.”

Harry smirked as he stepped into the floo. He was sure he wouldn’t be hearing from them anytime soon and wasn’t all that upset about it. Molly handed him the floo powder and stood back as he called out his destination, arriving once again at the three broomsticks. He stepped out of the floo and brushed himself off as he waited for Molly to join him. They walked together to the gates in silence. Harry stood at the gates looking up at the wards. Their colors were fluctuating as if they were contracting and expanding or blowing in the wind except there was no wind. He thought it was curious that they could be seen now and wondered if that would ever go away.

Molly looked up trying to see what he was looking at. Finally she couldn’t take it any longer and asked what he was seeing. “Harry, what are we looking at?”

“It’s the protection ward for Hogwarts. It’s beautiful don’t you think. I like a milky soap bubble.”

Molly looked again and said “I don’t see anything, Harry.”

He looked at her strangely and asked “you can’t see it?”

“No, I can’t see anything.”

He thought about if he was the only one and decided he needed to explore it later. “Molly, try and open the gate.”

Molly pressed her hand to the gate to see if it would open for her. When it didn’t budge she said “I’m sure Minerva will send a house elf down to open it for us. Why didn’t we just floo into her office?”

Harry frowned and said “Minerva’s office doesn’t have a floo in it and I tried the headmaster’s office this morning and couldn’t get in. It was early and I didn’t want to wake Snape so I came to the Burrow by way of the Three Broomsticks.”

“Why would Snape have access to the head masters office still?”

Harry groaned not wanting to discuss this topic with her. “The wards are active again and will only let those that the castle knows in.” He pressed his hand to the gate. It swung open and let them in. He motioned for her to precede him through the gate.

“Why did it open for you but not me?” Molly asked him.

“It’s probably got something to do with me resetting the wards.” He said casually. “Let’s see Professor McGonagall first then I’ll go and check in at the infirmary while you two chat.” He said out loud but thinking to himself he said ‘chat about me being a new dark lord’. He groaned to himself thinking about what they were going to be saying about him.
“I thought you wanted to see about the LeStrange statue?”

“We covered that topic at the Burrow” he stated angrily. “I asked Percy to inform the aurors about her condition. They will deal with her now.”

Molly scowled at him. “Her condition?” She asked angrily.

Harry stopped walking and turned to look at her. “Yes, Molly her condition.” He said angrily. “I would rather not argue with you about this. Now you offered your help and I accepted if you’d rather not help me today then that’s fine but I won’t keep revisiting this topic.”

Molly frowned and said “Okay, Harry, you don’t have to get upset about it we don’t need to discuss it anymore.” She said trying to appease him seeing his anger rising again.

Harry started walking towards the castle again thinking to himself ‘I should have just gone into isolation like I wanted to do’.

“Wow, would you look at that. It’s almost completely repaired. It looks better than before” she said as the castle came into full view.

“It does look good doesn’t it? It looks cleaner.”

Professor McGonagall stood on the steps to the main entrance waiting for them to arrive. “Good Morning” she said greeting them happily.

“Good Morning, Minerva. I can’t believe how good the castle looks after just a day.”

“I know and you wouldn’t believe the changes that are happening inside the castle. Everything is getting an upgrade. The bathrooms are changing and the dorms have been reorganized. Even the infirmary has changed with the patients still in it.”

Harry smirked “I bet Madam Pomfrey is pleased with that.”

“She is very pleased. Most of the patients have been moved either to St. Mungo’s or sent home. All that remain now are two teachers and a three of muggleborn students that don’t have homes to go to.”

“I’m glad to hear that. I need to talk to Madam Pomfrey, can I find her in the infirmary?” As he started off in that direction.

McGonagall asked him as he was already half way down the hall “why do you need to speak to her? Is everything ok?”

Harry waved his hand in the air brushing away her concern and kept walking leaving the women in the hall. Once he was out of ear shot Molly filled her in on the morning’s events.

Harry entered the newly renovated infirmary. He was surprised to see that it now had walls separating each bed giving it a more private feel. The windows were still large but they seemed to be cleaner or brighter he couldn’t tell which but the room over all gave a cleaner feeling then it did before. He poked his head into the office looking for Pomfrey when she wasn’t there he decided to look around for her. Eventually he found her in the room of one of the muggle born patients. She was comforting the girl who was crying about being home sick. Harry cleared his throat trying to get her attention. “Madam Pomfrey, I’m sorry to interrupt but I wondered if I could just have a moment of your time?”
She quickly excused herself and pulled Harry into her office. “Mr. Potter, what can I do for you?”

“I wanted to check on Sybill Trelawney. I gave her a bit of a scare the other day and I was concerned for her.”

Madam Pomfrey scoffed “is that what you call a bit of a scare, threatening her life?”

Harry grimaced and said “I lost my temper with her and I’m sorry but you must understand what I have been through and mostly because she spoke a prophecy.”

Madam Pomfrey shook her head “it’s no excuse Mr. Potter. I’ve had to keep her sedated ever since you left here that day. She’s frantic that you are going to kill her.”

“I’m not going to do that.” He said feeling frustrated. He paced her office for a minute putting his thoughts in order. “I’m going to have a ministry recorder come and hear whatever it is she has to say. Hopefully, I can have that happen tomorrow. Can you keep her comfortable till tomorrow? Once she’s spoken the prophecy she’ll be free to go, she’ll see that I won’t really send death after her. I don’t have control over death like that. She’s crazy to think that I do.”

Madam Pomfrey scowled at him and said “I’ve known Sybill for 18 years and I know that she is a powerful seer. She believes that you do regardless if it’s true or not she believes it and it’s making her insane.”

“I’m sorry for that. I promise I’m trying to make it right.” Suddenly he felt like a student again begging a teacher not to give him detention or take house points.

“See that you do Mr. Potter.”
Harry was really impressed with the receiving room at Grimmauld Place. Kreacher hadn’t failed him at all. The room was dust free and spotless. It clearly needed new furniture and a paint job but now that the dirt had been removed he could see that the room would eventually be one of his favorites. Kreacher had found the key to the master bedroom which hadn’t been cleaned since Walburga died in 1985. The bed was still made as though she would be climbing into that night. Everything in the room was covered in a thick layer of dust but all the furniture looked in good condition. It was antique but Harry kind of like it and was considering keeping it and just changing the mattress and linens. Until Kreacher mentioned that Walburga share the bed with Orion and had conceived both their children in it. Harry decided then that he didn’t want to think about other people having sex in his bed and that he would just replace the all the furniture in the room with new stuff.

Arthur had sent an owl saying that he would arrive at five o’clock to reopen the floo. So Molly and Harry with Kreachers help spent most of their time sorting through belongs that had been left behind by the Black family. Clothing and linens were set in piles in the hall. Everything was so old that most of it was rotting away and creating much of the dust that was covering everything. They had cleaned the house before when the order was hiding out here but there was so much dust floating around that Harry felt like it may never be clean again. At Five o’clock Arthur knocked on the front door. Harry felt exhausted and was happy that he was finally there. Molly and he had butted heads on several topics during the day and he couldn’t wait to be free of her. Once the floo was reopened and Arthur showed Harry how to make connections with other places by creating one at the Burrow and another at the three Broomsticks, Harry shoo’ed them through the floo and locked it. He collapsed in the arm chair sighing in relief.

Kreacher appeared “Master Harry, Tecks is enquiring as to whether or not you will be joining them for dinner tonight.”

He cast a tempus charm and sighed “Dinner is at six, right? There’s no way I can get cleaned up in time to join them. I’ve only got 10 minutes.”

Kreacher grunted “You’ll never make it if you keep sitting around like that.”

Harry chuckled and said “your bossy. Please tell Tecks that I will not be able to join them for dinner. He stood and took the floo powder and tossed into the fire place and called out “Malfoy Manor.” He waited a few minutes for the fire to flare green.

Hermione smiled through the green flames “Harry, you’ve got the floo reconnected.”

“Yes, Arthur just left. He told me all I had to do to establish a connection was to have someone on the other end toss floo powder in at the same time I do. Can I connect to the Manor’s floo? It would make coming and going easier for me.”

Lord Malfoy’s face came into view in the flames “on the count of three. One Two Three.”

Harry quickly grabbed a handful and tossed it in the fire. The green flames burst out of the fire place before settling back leaving a clear path between both places. Harry stepped into the flames and locked the grimmmauld floo down as he passed through. “Thank you, I’m exhausted and really need a bath. I’m sorry I won’t be able to join you for dinner.”

“We wouldn’t mind waiting for you or I could just have your dinner sent to your rooms. Maybe you’d care to join us for drinks afterwards.”
Harry smiled. “I wouldn’t mind drinks. I could get cleaned up and join you after dinner.”

Hermione smiled at him “we’ve so much to tell you. Did you get to read the paper today?”

Harry grimaced and said “After yesterday’s article I’m almost afraid to ask what they have printed now. I haven’t had time to look. Molly and I spent most of the day cleaning and Arthur was all business like when he came to reconnect the floo. I didn’t mind though I’ve had enough of them for one day. I couldn’t get Molly out of there fast enough.”

Lucius smiled and said “Hermione, let him get cleaned up and then we’ll tell him all that has happened today over drinks. Our dinner is probably being served now.”

“Thank you, Lord Malfoy. I’ll come back down as soon as I can.”

Harry joined the Malfoy family in the receiving room once he was cleaned up and had eaten the meal that was left for him. He had wanted to find something simple to wear like jogging pants or something more comfortable then the trousers that seemed to make up most of his ever growing wardrobe. He had only expected a few outfits from Madam Morsely but now the closet was full of new clothes. He counted eight new robes of varying colors, lengths and materials. At least twelve pairs of trousers mostly black but a few other colors likely to match the robes. Dress shirts and with matching ties and a few very muggle looking business style jackets with matching vests. He had no idea where he would wear most of the clothes. What he really wanted was another pair of blue jeans and a t-shirt that he could wear for more casual things. After rifling through the selection he found a dark blue pair of trousers and a light blue dress shirt that he thought might be casual enough for sitting with the Malfoy’s and having drinks.

“Mr. Potter.” Lord Malfoy said by way of greeting as he walking into the receiving room.

Harry sighed and said “Lord Malfoy, would it be wrong to ask you to just call me Harry? The Mr. Potter thing has been wearing on my nerves. It’s too official or business like. I’d rather keep it to Harry if we aren’t engaging in some sort of formal exchange.”

Lucius gave him a crocked smile “That would be fine, Harry. I wondered how you were feeling about all the attention. You’ve gone from a sixth year student to one of the most influential wizards in England in a matter of days.”

“I don’t know about being influential but a few days ago I was just Harry now I’m Mr. Potter and everyone seems to think that I’m not me anymore.”

Severus handed him a glass of amber colored liqueur. He held the glass up to the light smiling “is this the same as last night?” He enquired.

Severus smiled and said “I knew you liked it.”

“I do. I could get used to drinking it to the point where I’d probably have a drinking problem.” He said as he took a small sip of the liquid.

Draco motioned to the sitting area. Harry took a seat on the couch as everyone else settled around him.

“We were surprised that you left so early this morning.” Hermione said as she sat down on the chase
next to Narcissa.

“I wanted to make an effort to spend some time with The Weasley’s. It didn’t go as well as I planned.”

Narcissa frowned and said “The ministry sent over an auror around noon time to tell us that my sister had been taken into custody. Hermione and I went over a few hours later with the escorts to meet with her. She expects to receive the kiss but no one could tell us when her trial will be held.”

Harry thought that seemed odd and asked “and she’s ok with that? She’s not freaking out and begging for a release?”

“She wanted to die a few days ago after your visit to Gringotts. She saw then that Voldemort was truly mad. Today she said she didn’t want to live in this world anymore anyway.” Hermione said frowning.

Narcissa nodded “I knew she saw it. When she told me to just let her die I think I knew then that she saw it but she kept up appearances and still tried to support him. She’s angry with me, well us, for not telling her we were working against Voldemort. She said she knew that something was wrong but couldn’t quite figure it out.” She sighed and added “and she wanted me to thank you for realizing that she was still alive.”

Harry gimmaced and said “Molly has a garden full of gnomes that have suffered the same fate. Arthur cast a finite spell over one of them and it got up and ran away. I cast it over another and it was dead when I freed it.”

“I’ve seen those gnomes in her garden and never realized what they were. I thought they were decorative.” Hermione said in shock.

“She’s not even a little bit remorseful about the gnomes or Bellatrix.” Harry said feeling frustrated about the situation. Harry took another sip of the whiskey. “I’m sorry about your sister, Narcissa. I know you probably loved her.”

Narcissa nodded and said “I do but she has truly gone mad and has been for quite some time.”

“So tell me what else happened today?” Harry asked thinking that they must have more to tell him then Bellatrix’s release.

“The ministry showed up here just after 9am. A team of ten people under the supervision of Arthur Weasley. They came to catalog the items in Voldemort’s room.”

Severus chuckled and said “Arthur was quite flustered when Lucius told him that I would be the one to help with the items in Voldemort’s rooms because I spent more time in there than anyone. Arthur mistakenly asked what I was doing in there with him.”

Lucius burst out laughing and said “I thought he might faint when I told him.”

Harry put his hand up and said “please I don’t want to hear about that. I’ve already seen flashes of what they were doing and I work really hard to not remember them.”

Severus frowned and said “I’m sorry you were made to see that.”

“I don’t want to think about it but sometimes I do wonder what I was seeing.” He covered his eyes trying to block out the most current vision. “Okay I do have one question, did you like it?”
Severus laughed and said “most of it wasn’t awful but there were a few times that I would rather not have participated.”

Harry scrunched his nose up and said “I really don’t want to know.”

“If you ever change your mind and want to ask feel free. You would probably feel better about some of it if you understood what you were seeing but since I don’t know exactly what he shared with you I can’t know for sure what to say.”

“So Arthur spent his day here with you? When he came to Grimmauld place he was all business. He barely said anything to me. When he arrived Molly and I were arguing about buying new furniture. I asked her where I could go to get new furniture for the parlor. She told me there were plenty of places in muggle London that sold furniture and that we should just go to one of those places. I asked if there was a place in magical world that sold it as I’d rather buy from them. She started trying to tell me that it didn’t matter if they were muggles or wizards it was the same and that I shouldn’t worry about it. I tried to bite my tongue but she kept going on saying that the Purist think that it should be kept in the magical world but it didn’t matter it was all the same world. I snapped at her and told her to just shut her mouth. Arthur knocked on the door just then which was a distracting relief to the fight that was sure to be coming between us.”

Draco laughed and said “I wish I could have seen her face.”

“We argued about furniture, bedding, sex, dinner plates, and opening windows. I felt like everything I said or suggested she had a different opinion just to have a different opinion.”

Hermione laughed and asked “you argued about sex? How did that come up?”

Harry chuckled and said “I liked the furniture in the main bedroom until Kreacher told me that Walburga and Orion conceived both of their children in that bed. I decided that it was gross to sleep in the same bed that she had slept in with her husband. I knew it would be a new mattress but the thought just skeeved me so I added new bedroom furniture to my list. She thought I was being childish and spent several hours trying to talk to me about my sex life. Apparently, Ginny told her that I was impudent. Which I’m not of course and I told her so but then she was trying to get me to think about sleeping with Ginny. Saying she was so pretty and she was sure she was very good in bed as she never had any trouble getting dates.”

Draco chuckled and asked “did you tell her that her daughter didn’t have trouble getting dates because she’ll sleep with anyone?”

“No, I didn’t and if I had she probably would have told me that it was ok to sleep around like that and I don’t agree with that mentality. That would have been another argument.”

Hermione looked at Draco critically and asked “have you slept with her?”

Draco glared at her. “No, I wouldn’t sleep with a blood traitor but she’s got a very talented mouth.” He said waggling his eyebrows at her.

Harry scrunched his face in disgust. “I would rather not talk about this topic any more. So Arthur spent his day here. How did that go?”

“They boxed up several items and took them away, the rest is ours to do with what we want. Then they worked on the throne. After several hours they decided that they needed to do some research and that they’d be back in a few days.” Lucius filled him in on what Arthur’s team had done.

“Humph, I thought that would be more interesting. Especially by the way he was behaving when he
Severus laughed. “I’m sure he wasn’t happy to be the one chosen to come to the Manor. He wasn’t happy with the fact the Hermione was helping answer questions and then she went to the ministry with Narcissa. He saw her leave and asked where she was being taken. I know it wasn’t any of his business but I told him that Bellatrix had been released and taken in and that Narcissa and Hermione were going to see her. I could tell that he was upset by that but he didn’t say anything.”

“I think he was more upset about the Daily Prophet article.” Draco said. He got up and went into the dining room returning with the paper in hand.

Harry groaned as he took the paper from Draco. Draco plopped back down onto the couch closer to Harry then before. Harry looked up at him and smiled. “Do I even want to know what it says?”

“Yes you do.” Hermione said happily.

Harry took another sip of his drink before he set it aside and opened the paper. On the front page was a picture of Severus Snape with the Headline **SNAPE CLEARED OF ALL CHARGES.** And in smaller print **Award of Merlin first class to be awarded** Harry skimmed through the article and found that the ministry after interrogating multiple people found that Severus Snape was a double agent and working on the inside with the Auror department to bring about the fall of Lord Voldemort.

“Turn to the second page, Harry.” Hermione said excitedly.

Harry turned the page and read the headline for that page. **Malfoy Family working with Auror department through Snape.** Harry read through the article and said “I don’t think this article sounds very good. Won’t your friends see you as blood traitors?”

“No, none of our real friends will have a problem with it once they see that we are still pushing for ministry reform.” Lucius said.

“I see. So it’s a good article then.”

Lucius smirked and said “and later on in the day I got an owl reinstating me as school board director and inviting me to the first meeting at the newly renovated Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry.”

“And it was raining here all day today, the team from the ministry apparated to the gate and walked in from there. They weren’t happy.” Severus said smiling giving Harry a little wink.

“Lucius, I wanted to ask you about the wards. Can you come with me tomorrow to look at them?”

“I’m actually pretty busy tomorrow; since I’ve been cleared I’ve been asked to go to Gringotts in the morning to reset the wards so that the bank can reopen.” He said happily. “Then I’ve got the school board meeting at 2pm.”

“Could we meet before the school board meeting? I really only need maybe five minutes of your time, if it becomes more complicated then looking at the wards and answering a few questions then we can find another time to figure it out.”

“Sure, is everything alright?”

“Yes, I think so. I just have some questions that would be better answered at the gates. 1:30 sound okay?”
“Yes, that sounds fine. Will you be here for breakfast?”

“I plan on it. Tomorrow is the first day that I don’t have anything planned except the visit to Hogwarts. I’m at a stall until Gringotts is reopened. Dumbledore told me I had plenty of money but I really have no clue. Plus he left me some money but again I’ve got no clue how much nor how long it will last. I really need to get some idea. I figure the bills are already piling up. Madam Morsely has sent me a full wardrobe of very fine clothes. I can’t even imagine what the bill for that will be or where I’m going to wear most of the clothes. Plus do wizards pay things like property tax. I’ve owned Grimmauld for several years, who’s been paying for it? Those are all questions that I need answered before I can start refurnishing that place.”

Narcissa smiled and said “I’d be happy to help you with that. I know several furniture makers and a lot of the old furniture can be sold at auction. It’s antique if there are no spells on the furniture muggles buy it up like its gold.”

“That would be great but I still need to know what I’ve got and how to best spend it.”

“I’m not finance manager but I could take a look at what you’ve got. Or I’m sure Gringotts has a list of people that they trust. You could ask them.” Lucius offered.

“Harry, Fleur works for Gringotts she could probably help you.” Hermione suggested.

“I never thought about her. I’ll send her an owl in the morning. I probably should send some kind of note thanking her for keeping us for the last month. I’m sure she was terrified the whole time that we would be discovered.”

“Is that where you were hiding?” Hermione asked.

“Yes, when we escaped from here Dobby took us to Shell cottage. He’s buried in the dunes behind their house. We brewed the poly juice potion in their basement. We stayed there for a few weeks while the potion was brewing for the Gringotts break in.”

“How did you get hair from Bellatrix?” Narcissa asked.

“Griphook had a handful from when she was interrogating him. And Ron grabbed some from the other guy when he was being wrestled into the dungeon. It was just luck that we had both of their wands too.”

“Voldemort nearly killed Bella for her involvement.”

“But she wasn’t involved.” Harry said defending her.

“Nope, she wasn’t but the goblins reported that she was the one to demanded entry into the vault. I think he figured it out once he brought Hermione forward and interrogated her.”

“Your continued use of poly juice potion astounds me, Harry. Didn’t you think that there would be some counter curse for it?” Severus asked. “And how long did the transformation last? Poly juice has to be brewed just right otherwise it’s less effective and you’re not that good at potions.”

Harry shrugged. “I couldn’t tell you how long it would have lasted as we went through this water fall when the goblin was taking us by the rail system to the vault. It washed away the compelling charm I placed on one of the goblins and the poly juice potion. At that point it had been well over an hour. Then an alarm sounded and dumped us out of the cart. I don’t know how far we fell but Luna cast a feather weight charm before we hit the bottom. I was amazed at how fast she could think on her feet or in this case falling through the air. We’d be pancakes now if she hadn’t thought of that. From there
it was only a short walk to the dragon and the vault.” He laughed. “The whole plan was Ron’s idea. Use the poly juice, take the wand to show the goblins, cast the compelling charm with me and Griphook hiding under the invisibility cloak. It didn’t start to fall apart until we hit the Gemino and Flagrante spells in the LeStrange vault. The guards were coming the items were hot and multiplying, and Griphook wouldn’t help us till we gave him the sword then he disappeared. I had finally gotten the cup but now we had Death eaters and bank security guards on our backs trying to stop us. Luna cut the dragon loose and we jumped on its back. I don’t know how she told it to get out of the building but as soon as it was hit by a stray spell it started climbing up. We were incredibly lucky to have escaped.”

“You managed to brew a potion that was that effective for that long?” Snape asked sounding skeptical.

Harry nodded and said “we’ve brewed it before, if you will recall, this was the third time so I had a pretty good idea on how to do it.”

“You took a great risk going about it in such away.” Severus said to him scowling.

Harry frowned and said “everything I did was risky. It’s a miracle that I survived any of it.” He picked up the tumbler of Amber and swallowed the last bit. He held up the glass and smiled “It’s probably not the best time to remind you, seeing that I’d like another glass of this, but I am just a kid. I undoubtedly shouldn’t have been expected to take on one of the most powerful wizards to ever live before I am even old enough to be served in a bar.”

“He’s right. I was furious with Voldemort for assigning Draco to an assignation job, not because I thought he couldn’t do it but because he was so young. He was asking a child to do something that men couldn’t do. It wasn’t right.” Narcissa added sadly.

“I was terrified that Dumbledore was going to kill me instead.”

“Did he know that you were the assassin?” Harry asked.

Snape nodded. “Oh he knew. He decided to let it play out even though Draco failed several times and it injured students.”

Harry scowled and said “for the greeter good.”

Severus shrugged and said “in the end, it worked.” He reached for Harry’s glass. “I think you’ve had enough of that for the night though.”

Harry nodded in agreement. “You’re probably right.” He stretched and said “I should probably think about getting to bed soon.”

Narcissa nodded. “We should all be getting to bed soon.” She stood and held out her hand to Lucius. “Coming darling?”

Lucius smiled and stood up taking her hand “Good night, everyone.” He said as he held her hand.

Narcissa leaned over and gently tilted Hermione’s head back and kissed her softly. She whispered into her ear making Hermione blush before she led Lucius from the room.

The four of them watched her lead Lucius away. Once Harry was sure they were out of hearing range he said “your parents are quite different than I expected, Draco.”

“What did you expect?” He asked curiously.
Harry shrugged. “I didn’t expect that they would be actually in love with each other since they had an arranged marriage. When I learned that their marriage was arranged by their families I figured it was just a marriage of convenience.”

“That doesn’t mean that they can’t love each other.”

“Nope, I suppose it doesn’t.” He leaned back into the couch considering Draco. “Do you think you could fall in love with Astoria?”

Draco sat back turning to look at Harry. “I hope I can. I don’t really know her all that well.”

Harry smirked at him and said “I always thought everyone married for love but now I know that’s not true especially in the world of magic.”

Hermione sighed. “I knew that not everyone married for love but I had always hoped that I would.”

Severus frowned. “you don’t have to get married to have love, Hermione.”

She smiled at him and said “I know that Severus. I really don’t want to be married anyway. I’d like to have a career or some purpose.”

“You will. We just need to figure out where you can be most comfortable.” Snape said smiling at her.

“So, you don’t just plan on her being some sort of house pet?” Harry asked.

Draco burst out laughing. “Of course we don’t. That would be a waste.”

“A house pet, Harry, is that what you think I signed up for?”

“I don’t really know what you signed up for, Hermione. Other then it was originally to keep you alive. The war is over and yet you’re still signed on with them.” Harry said sheepishly.

“Hermione is a very talented witch even if she’s come about her magic in an unusual way. It would be a waste for her to not use it.” Draco said smiling.

“But if she decided to use it to go against the Purist cause you’d try and stop her.” Draco and Severus both tensed. Harry could see the answer and added “that’s where I have a problem with this supremacy thing. I understand the blurring of the veil and muggle ideology changing your way of life. I can even understand them exposing us to their diseases but there’s got to be a way to make a compromise, laws or something that stop that from happening.”

“And that’s why I think you’d be a good politician.” Draco said again.

Harry stared out into space for a minute. “Tomorrow I’ll be asked to go to the ministry to meet with Shacklebolt. While I’m there, Severus, I’m going to see about the prophecy recorder.”

“Why do you think that, Harry?” Hermione asked.

Harry shrugged and said “they need a statement from me regarding how a child came about killing one of the most powerful wizards who ever lived. Mostly they already know as they’ve already said that Severus and the Malfoy’s were working against Voldemort. People will have already said how I was able to do it. They will just be looking for my confirmation.”

“And what’s that got to do with you being a good politician?” Draco asked wondering why that came up.
“After I give my statement to the Wizengamot, I’ll be offered a seat on the Wizengamot.”

Draco laughed and said “I’m sorry to crush your fantasy Harry but they only offer those positions to old wizards and witches that have severed at the ministry for years. They are not going to offer it to a child.”

Severus frowned and said “are you sure about that, Harry? I believe Draco is right it would be unheard of for them to offer it to someone so young.”

Harry shrugged. “Anything can happen.”

“Would it be so awful if they did?” Hermione asked.

“No, it wouldn’t be awful.” Severus said as he stood up. “What would be awful is if everyone started badgering him trying to get him in their pockets. The Malfoys would be accused of buying his vote if he continued to stay here and associate with us.”

“That wouldn’t be good especially if he started voting towards the Purist causes.”

Harry leaned his head back and pinched the bridge of his nose. “I’m pretty sure that’s what I would be doing.”

“Hermione, I’m going to bed. Where are you sleeping tonight?” Severus stated.

She looked at Draco and Harry wondering what Draco had planned. Draco glanced towards Harry wondering if he was going to stay up a bit longer. “Go ahead, Hermione.” He said thinking that he might have a chance to explore things with Harry a bit tonight.

Harry peeked his eyes open in time to see Hermione smiling and taking Severus’ hand. He closed his eyes again and said “good night, Hermione. Good night, Severus.” He heard them laughing the hall and thought to himself that it was nice to hear him laugh considering what he’d been through. “I find it strange to think about our cruel potions Master sleeping with my best friend. He was so mean to her in class. You were so mean to her in school and now you and your parents are being nice to her. It’s weird for me to comprehend.”

“We were mean because she wrongly believed in muggleborns rights to our world. Now she knows that she’s part of our world, that it is precious and needs protecting. The blood traitors are taking their magic for granted by exposing muggles to it and embracing their ideas. The muggleborns should be merging into our society not taking the magic back to the muggle world. It’s all sorts of messed up that they think they can just come here and change things around to suit them. We’ve had our society rules laid out for centuries and now they want to change things around.” He shook his head trying to clear away the tension. “I don’t really want to get into that line of discussion tonight.”

Harry smiled and said “I was headed in another direction. The things I saw Severus doing with Voldemort were pretty disturbing. I wonder if Hermione enjoys those things or if Severus only did that kind of stuff with Voldemort.”

“I’m not really sure what you saw Severus doing with Voldemort but I can tell you that Hermione enjoys her time with him even though sometimes the next day she’s a little uncomfortable. She never once has complained or not wanted to sleep with him. In fact I think she looks forward to it. Voldemort would only allow him to take her to his bed the nights after he slept with him. So she’s been in his bed maybe six times. I’m not sure there were a couple of nights that she was sent in to him after he was with Voldemort but she has never spoken of exactly what they do together. I understand it’s kind of rough, like I said she’s uncomfortable the next day.”
Harry sighed and asked “so you thought Ginny had a talented mouth?”

He laughed. “all over the place tonight aren’t you. Yes, she did. I caught her after a Slytherin Hufflepuff match fucking their bludger. She offered to blow me if I didn’t tell anyone. Actually she offered to fuck me but I declined. I did let her suck me off. She was pretty good. In all honesty I wouldn’t have told anyone anyway but she seemed desperate for me to not say anything, I was just playing with her saying that I could maybe be persuaded. She definitely persuaded me to not say anything and to come back for more. I tried to catch her a few times just to see if she’d do it again and she did.” He said chuckling. “I gotta say I’m glad you are not engaged with that slut.”

“I liked it a lot until I found out she was doing other people. I thought we had something special. I really don’t like the idea of just fucking everyone. I guess I want to be monogamous. I think that’s the right word.”

Draco sighed and asked “what if you were monogamous in a multi partner relationship?”

“How does that work?”

“My parents and Severus have shared each other’s beds since the time my mom was pregnant with me. My dad and Severus were close in school and then after my parents graduation Severus came and spent much of his time off from school here. My dad introduced Severus to Voldemort who took an instant liking to him. When your parents were murdered my parents were the ones to comfort him.”

“Your parents sleep with Severus too?”

“Yes, before Voldemort returned they often shared the same bed and were openly affectionate with each other in private. It’s been different since he returned.” He sighed looking into Harry’s sleepy eyes. “I probably shouldn’t be telling you their seerects but the morning after the first night Voldemort took Severus to bed, my father held him in his arms while he wept. It was surreal to see my uncle so broken. My mother sat stroking his head as I watched from the doorway not fully understanding what was going on. That was the day that my parents decided that they were going to do everything they could to put an end to him with no chance of coming back this time.”

Harry smirked and said “they should have done that in the first place.” He yawned and asked “will you walk me up to my rooms?”

“Only if I can have another kiss” he said slyly.

“Do you want it here or upstairs?”

Draco leaned in gently kissing Harry. “I think I’d like one here and then maybe another upstairs.”

Harry grasped Draco’s shirt and pulled him into him kissing him more forcefully. Draco gasped in surprise at his forcefulness. He place his hand on Harry’s chest but allowed harry to control the intensity of the kiss. Harry darted out his tongue stroking over Draco’s lips as he continued nibbling. He released Draco’s shirt but continued kissing him until Draco breathlessly pulled away. “Does that count as one?” Harry asked as he stroked Draco’s arms.

“That was not a kiss, Harry. I don’t know what that was but wow that felt nice.”

Harry chuckled and said “It did feel nice. I could get use to kissing you like that.” He sighed and shook his head “but you’re all but engaged to another. This could never come to anything with us.”

He ran his fingers over the area where he knew the Sectumsempra scars to be. “Can you see the scars still?” he asked curious as to how bad they marred his body.
Draco took his hand and held it to his chest “they are only scars. Voldemort left far worse.” He laughed and said “I use to hate looking at them but after Voldemort left his marks I look at yours and find them…” He paused looking for the right word and then said “comforting? I always thought that you were heartless for using such a spell on me but now I know that you weren’t.”

“I didn’t want to duel you. I wanted to comfort you but you got angry and started throwing curses around so I tried that one not really knowing how it worked. I felt so much guilt it was almost disabling.”

“I know that now. I could show them to you if you want to see them?”

Harry shook his head “no I want to do more than see them and I don’t want to get any more emotionally involved then I already am. I’m afraid that you are going to break my heart.”

Draco grimaced. “I wouldn’t do that to you, Harry.” He said becoming more serious.

“You would. You wouldn’t mean too I’m sure but it would break my heart if we became involved and you married another. Look at what it did to Severus. I don’t think it could go through that. Please don’t ask me too. And don’t tempt me so.” He pushed him away and stood up from the couch and said “I’m sorry that I started this” he said motioning to them. Then added “I didn’t mean to start something I have no intention of finishing” before he walked out of the room.

Draco sat confused for a moment not really comprehending what had happened. One minute they were talking blowjobs and his parent’s sex life and then kissing and now Harry was gone from the room. His mood swings were almost too much to keep up with. He wanted to follow him out but didn’t know exactly what to say. Harry was emotionally involved with him already? He had thought that they were just exploring each other but emotionally involved was more than Draco had considered. Harry was right though, he would marry a suitable girl to create an heir even if he was madly in love with another. He would do right by his family first then follow his heart and for Harry who said he wanted monogamy that wouldn’t work. He sighed thinking of all the arguments he could come up with that could convince Harry to explore his feeling for him further but none seemed convincing enough.
Kreacher sat on the foot of Harry’s bed waiting for 7am to roll around. He wasn’t sure what his new master had planned for the day and his not having a regular schedule was driving Kreacher to distraction. He was starting to regret pledging himself to the boy that saved the wizarding world as he was reverting back to being an annoying halfblood. He slept far too much for a wizard and his sleeping habits were bad. Last night he had fallen into his bed fully clothed. He hadn’t even bothered to take his boots off. It was making more work for the house elf and he had enough work already with the cleaning out of his former mistress’ house. His patience got the better of him and at 6:55am he started trying to wake the boy up. At first he shook his shoulder telling him it was time to get up but all the boy did was moan that he wasn’t ready. Then Kreacher began kicking him on his side calling him a lazy blood traitor but he just curled around the pillow and told him to go away. The Kreacher feeling frustrated fetched a bucket of cold ice water and dumped it on his head. The boy finally jumped out of the bed screaming that it was cold. Kreacher chuckled to himself thinking now I know how to get him up in the morning but was surprised to find himself thrown up against the wall and held in place by his Masters hand.

“If you ever do that to me again I send you to your death.” The boy said as he strangled him.

Kreacher had never seen a wizard get so mad before and he had seen several in his lifetime with anger issues. This boy looked like he could be death himself as his eyes had become very dark the color washed from his face giving him a pale ethereal like appearance. The room around him seemed to hum with power that Kreacher had never felt before. All he could do was nodded his head and croak out a “Sorry Master Harry.”

Harry dropped him to the floor and backed away from him shaking his head “I’m sorry Kreacher. I was just surprise. I’m sorry I threatened you. Please don’t wake me like that again. My aunt use to do crap like that I don’t want to ever be woken like that again.”

Kreacher was nodding his head rubbing at his neck saying “I’m sorry Master.”

“What time is it anyway?”

“7am Master. Tecks told me you planned on eating here this morning so I was trying to get you up in time for breakfast.” He said as he wrung his hands together.

He sighed and looked at his wet clothing. “I only meant to lie down for a moment last night. It’s that fire whiskey that Severus gave me.” He sat down on the edge of the bed and groaned thinking about the night before. He had kissed Draco again and it had felt really nice, too nice.

“What do you have planned for today?” Kreacher asked nervously. He was worried about upsetting the boy again. He didn’t want to see him angry ever again.

“I have to go to the ministry sometime this morning and then Hogwarts at 1:30 with Lucius.” He laid back on the bed “I really need a day off.” He moaned.

“A day off?” he asked thinking that he was becoming lazy again.

Harry sighed “I haven’t really had a day off in forever. I’m not even sure I remember what it feels like. For the most part I’ve been working since I was old enough to walk. I’ve been fighting for my life since I was eleven and now I’m still working. I need a day to just not do anything stressful.”
Kreacher frowned suddenly feeling bad for the boy. He hadn’t considered that he’d been fighting for the past few years and this last year he knew that he had been on the run. He supposed that he probably did deserve a day or two to just not do anything stressful.

He sat up quickly and said smiling “the Daily Prophet will be here soon along with an owl post from the ministry. I need to get changed. Especially since I’m soaking wet and little cold.” He said jokingly. Kreacher breathed a sigh of relief, the happy boy was back. “Can you pick out a suitable outfit for my visit to the ministry?”

Harry was chastising himself as he quickly made his way down to the dining room. He was late again. He cast a tempus charm as he quickened his stride. Two minutes after 8am he cursed under his breath as he entered the dining room to find everyone taking their seats. “Ah, I’m sorry I’m late.” He said frustrated.

“You’re always late Mr. Potter,” Severus said.

“You seem to be two minutes behind all the time. Even for your confrontation with the Dark Lord, I noticed that you were two minutes late. He was readying to go back into battle when you entered the clearing.” Lucius noted.

“I was right on time this morning but Kreacher threw me for a loop. Do I look alright for a meeting at the ministry? I think I’m really overdressed but he insisted that this was right look.”

Narcissa nodded “you are dressed like a ministry official. They are dressing in muggle style suits and ties with wizarding robes over top. You look perfectly handsome dressed like you are and powerful too.”

“Yes, thank you,” he said flustered with the compliment “but is this the look I’m going for?”

“It’s a good look. You’re clearly moving towards a political career so yes I would say it’s perfect.” Lucius agreed with Narcissa.

“Father, Harry thinks he might be offered a seat on the Wizengamot later today.”

“The Wizengamot? Who would elect you as a candidate? Half the Wizengamot was owned by Voldemort and the other half were terrified to go against him.”

“I suppose the half that were owned probably have been displaced and the half that were terrified would probably vote for me as I went against him in battle. The final battle wasn’t just wand against wand, him and I had a little discussion about what he did wrong and why his people were turning against him.” He chuckled and said “I never shared this with you yet but I told him about Severus’ betrayal and how most of the people that Severus had recruited were turning against him including the Malfoy’s. He turned in a circle, looking for you, I think,” he said motioning to Lucius “and when he realized what was happening and that Severus wasn’t his after all. Well, I can’t even really describe it to you. Shock, hurt, mortification, anger, maybe some sickness, I don’t know he had so many emotions at that one moment then he tried to cast the killing curse. I used the Draco wand to block it and wandlessly called the Elder wand to me. His spell bounced off my shield hitting him as the wand flew from his hand.”

Severus paled “you told him that I betrayed him?” he asked.
“I wanted to see that so bad.” Hermione said.

“Some time I’ll let Hermione pull that memory from my mind so you can all see the look on his face when it happened. In any case that’s why I think they will offer me a seat.”

“I thought you said you had no plans for today.” Lucius noted.

“Hmmm,” Harry sat down at the table and said “Something has changed and I will be asked to come in and give a statement.”

“What has changed?” Narcissa asked. Their meals appeared followed by Tecks with the newspaper and a letter for Harry.

Harry took the letter and thanked the elf. He put the letter aside and looked at Lucius expectantly waiting for him to start the meal.

“Aren’t you going to open the letter?” Lucius asked.

Harry shrugged and said “I didn’t want to hold breakfast up any longer. It’s the invite for my meeting with shacklebolt and the court recorder.”

“How can you be so sure?” Narcissa asked.

Harry took the letter and broke the ministry seal. He read the letter out loud

“Dear Mr. Harry Potter,

The Ministry respectfully request your presence at a court recorder hearing with the current acting Minister of Magic, Kingsley Shacklebolt. You have been assigned an appointment time of 10am today.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Percy Weasley, Assistant to the acting Minister, Kingsley Shacklebolt

Ps: Please be prompt as Mr. Shacklebolt is a very busy man.”

Severus tried to peek over his shoulder at the letter. Harry held it to his chest and said “nosey much?”

Hermione laughed and said “Percy did not put that last bit in about you being late did he?”

Harry laughed and said “no, but he might as well have.” He handed the letter to Severus. “I think the ministry’s got some nerve assigning me an appointment time as though I’ve got nothing better to do then jump on their command.”

“The Ministry is use to people jumping on their command.” Lucius added.

“They’ve got another thing coming if they think they are going to boss me around like that. I should send the letter back and change the time just on principle.”

Lucius sniggered. “Your age is showing. You’re acting like a spoiled teen.”

Harry looked at him angrily and said “I’m far from a spoiled teen, Lord Malfoy. I do not appreciate being called such even in jest.”

Lucius looked at him shocked and said “Mr. Potter, do not speak to me in that manner.”
Harry took a deep calming breath and said “you’re right. I’m sorry, I didn’t mean to get angry with you. I’ve got to figure out why I keep doing that. I nearly killed Kreacher this morning.”

“Why would you be angry with your house elf? Surely you weren’t angry because he picked a bad outfit for you?” Narcissa asked worried about Kreacher.

“No, I was slow to wake up. He was calling me a lazy halfblood and kicking me again and I was ignoring him so he dumped a bucket of ice water on me. That did the trick. I jumped up and before I got my barings I had him pressed to the wall and threatened to kill him if he ever did that again. My Aunt Petunia would do something similar if we had to be up earlier than usual. I wasn’t allowed a clock in the cupboard under the stairs so my internal clock would go off before they got up unless they had to be up early then she would dump a glass of ice water on me.”

“That’s awful.” Narcissa exclaimed “How old were you?”

“After I got my letter to Hogwarts and I attended my first semester they moved me into Dudley’s second bedroom. So from the time I was about two till I was not yet eleven I lived under the stairs and was never allowed a clock.”

Narcissa frowned and asked “Severus, did Dumbledore know that he was being treated so badly?”

Severus cleared his throat and said “I’m not entirely sure if he knew before Harry came to school how he was being treated but Harry told him after he got there and Dumbledore insisted he return to them during breaks. So you see, Lucius, why Harry would be defensive about being called a spoiled child. He’s never been spoiled not even by Dumbledore.”

Lucius frowned and said “I’m sorry, I didn’t mean to insult you. I had no idea.”

“It’s ok, and again I’m sorry I became angry with you. You’ve been nothing but kind to me. It’s strange to me but that doesn’t excuse losing my temper. I don’t know why I have such a short temper now. I keep thinking it’s because I’m tired or under too much stress but I’ve slept plenty and this isn’t anywhere near as stress full as carrying a horcrux for months at a time. I just can’t explain why I keep snapping like that.”

Lucius nodded and began the meal. Harry had lost some of his appetite thinking about how his meeting with Shacklebolt would go and he had this niggling feeling that something was wrong but couldn’t figure out what it was. Lucius frowned and said “this isn’t good.” He handed the paper to Severus reaching past Harry.

Severus read the article the passed it to Harry. “This is probably why they want to see you today.”

He turned to the article. The title read, **Popular Children’s Story is True.** Harry groaned “That can’t be good.” He said out loud. He read the article and put the paper aside. He sat staring into space for a few minutes as though he was in shock.

“Harry,” Hermione tried saying to bring him back to the moment. Severus held up his hand to her to let him think for a moment.

Harry sighed and looked at everyone’s expectant faces. “I’ll have to make a statement to the Prophet. I have no idea what I’m going to say.”

“What do you need to say to them?” Narcissa asked. “What does the article say?” Harry handed her the paper.”

“I’ll need to tell them that I destroyed the Hallows don’t I?” he said angrily “I probably shouldn’t tell
them how I destroyed them just that they are gone. Otherwise, I’ll have everyone after me to try and control them. I really hate the editor of this paper. They haven’t done me one signal favor.”

“I still can’t believe you destroyed them.” Draco said shaking his head.

“The editor of the paper, Barnabas Cuff, is a Pureblood. He prints most of the articles to sell papers but he believes in the Purist cause.” Narcissa added.

“He prints stories leaning more towards the cause then honesty.” Lucius added solemnly.

“Who do you think I should talk too? And don’t say Rita Skeeter, I’m liable to hex her head off if I’m in her presence for too long.”

“There’s Fenetre or Smudgely, either of them would be happy to come here a take a statement from you. Do you plan on answering any questions or just giving a statement?” Lucius asked.

“Can I get away with just a statement?”

“Sure I suppose you could. Although it might be good to answer some questions so that it appears that you are being forthcoming.”

Harry nodded in thought. “I guess it’s too late to do it this morning, if I have to be at the ministry at 10am.”

Lucius smiled and said “I’ll put a call into Cuff and have him send one of his people over tonight after dinner.”

“Or I could write a statement and send that in to them.”

“You’d be better off giving them a verbal statement. You could read it to them if you like but to send something in writing they will interpret it as they see fit.”

“It’s been my experience that they write what they want anyway.” Harry said grimly.

Harry stepped from the floo at the Ministry Of Magic at exactly 9:55. He was running later then he wanted to be but figured he’d still be on time if he didn’t get held up at the reception desk. As he walked through the lobby towards the reception desk an auror approached him. “Mr. Harry Potter?” The auror asked him. Harry nodded in confirmation. “If you will follow me please.” Harry thought it strange that an auror would be escorting him to a meeting with Shacklebolt but kept his thoughts to himself. They approached a security desk where three more Aurors appeared and greeted them. Harry was starting to get a funny feeling in the pit of his stomach. Something wasn’t right. “Mr. Potter, please place you wand on the desk and put your hands behind your back.”

Harry pulled out the Draco wand and placed it on the desk. An older man quickly took the wand and placed it in a box with a locking mechanism. He placed his hands behind his back and asked “Am I being arrested for something?” He asked as the auror bound his hands with cuffs that also bound his magic.

“You are under arrest for the murder of Sybill Trelawney. It was good of you to come in this morning as we thought we would have to track you down.”

Harry now realized what was off this morning, something that he hadn’t seen happening. He tried to take a deep breath and calm himself as he could feel his anger brewing. He knew that this was just a
misunderstanding. “I was supposed to be meeting with Minister Shacklebolt this morning that’s why I’m here” He said trying to keep his anger from rising.

The auror raised an eyebrow at him and asked “and why would you be meeting with him?”

Harry shrugged and said “my inside coat pocket has a letter requesting my presence at a court recorder hearing.”

The auror reached into his coat pocket and pulled out the letter. He grunted “I’ll tell Weasley you are here in the holding area.”

“I’d appreciate that.” Harry said trying to sound casual but feeling certain his voice showed his anger.

Harry was escorted to the holding area where he was placed in the cell with the cuffs still on. The auror slammed the cell door shut making a loud clanging sound. Harry sat down on a bench and tried to meditate to see where this was going. He couldn’t see that anything was going to come out of it and that worried him more than being arrested in the first place. He only waited about a half hour before Percy showed up. “Harry, we are trying to get you out of here but the auror department has a ton of paper work to do.”

Harry was relieved to see Percy. “What’s going on? Is Professor Trelawney dead? The auror said I was being arrested for her death.”

Percy nodded and said “they found her this morning.”

“Why am I being charged?”

“They have several witnesses that heard you threaten to kill her.”

“Yes, but only if she spoke the prophecy to anyone.” Harry grew dark when he realized what she must have done. “That bitch spoke my prophecy.” He snapped angrily. “I told her not to talk to anyone.” His magic swirled around the little cell making Percy take a step back. He screamed angrily and started pacing around the little cell cursing under his breath. “I didn’t kill her Percy but I might have had I known that she blabbed to someone.” He groaned again “She probably died of a heart attack from fear of my threat of sending death for her if she ever spoke it to anyone. Stupid bitch.” He said again angrily.

Percy grimaced and said “I don’t think that she died of a heart attack, Harry.”

Harry continued his pacing. “Do you know who she spoke to? This could be disastrous.” He said completely ignoring the fact that a person was dead. Then something clicked in his head. He stopped his pacing finally, looked at Percy and said “Merlin, Professor Trelewny is dead. That’s just awful. I know she’s kind of crazy but I never really wanted her to die.” He sighed and sat back down on the bench. “No wonder they think I killed her.”

Shacklebolt appeared with two aurors and said to Harry “they won’t let you out until they figure out exactly how she died. In the mean time they want to ask you a few questions.”

Harry nodded and asked “shouldn’t I have legal representation or something if you’re going to question me?”

“If you think you’re going to need it then I’ll have them wait for your lawyer to arrive.”

Harry thought about it for a moment and decided that he didn’t need a lawyer plus he didn’t know
anyone that he could call. “It's fine I can answer any questions they have.”

Shacklebolt motioned for the aurors to open the door. “They are going to take you to an interrogation room. There the court recorder will take your statement.”

“What about the actual statement I came down here to give?” Harry asked wondering if it was really why he had been brought down here.

Shacklebolt frowned “I'll have my own recorder come in and take that statement.”

“So you really did want me down here. I was afraid it was a setup to arrest me for Professor Trelawney’s death.”

“No, I really do want to speak to you about the Deathly Hallows but that can wait till later.”

“I see. If you wouldn't mind sending Lucius Malfoy an owl I'm supposed to be meeting with him at 1:30 and I’d really rather not stand him up.”

“I can do that.” Percy said as they reached the interrogation room.

“Thank you, Percy.” Harry said as he stepped into the little room “Guess I'll see you later then.”

Harry entered the little room and felt a wave of nausea pass over him. The auror motioned for Harry to sit down. “Mr. Potter, this room has spells on it that compel the person being interrogated to tell the truth. If need be we can get the Wizengamot to approve the use of veritaserum if we feel as though you are withholding information.” Harry nodded but didn't say anything. He wanted to wait and see exactly what they planned on asking him. An older man came into the room and took a seat across from Harry. The auror told the man “We're ready whenever you are, Roger.”

“I'm ready Clarence. You can begin the questioning any time.” Roger pulled out a quill and began making date notes at the top of the page.

“For the record please state your full name.” Clarence began.

“My name is Harry J. Potter.”

Clarence smiled and asked “what does the J stand for.”

“James, it was my father’s name.” Harry answered feeling the compelling spell working on him.

“Can you tell us why you are here today?”

Harry nodded. “I was invited to the ministry today to speak with Minister Shacklebolt.”

“Why would Shacklebolt want to speak to you?”

Harry struggled against the spell. He really didn’t want to discuss with these aurors what he suspected Shacklebolt wanted to talk to him about. “I think you should stick to questions that you really want me to answer and not get off topic.” The man looked at him angrily. Harry sighed and said “You want to ask me about Sybill Trelawney. Just stick to the topic.” He bit out.

The auror felt it strange that he didn't seem to be responding to the compelling spell but continued with the questioning anyway and asked “maybe you’d like to make this easy for us. Why don’t you tell us how you killed Sybill Trelawney?”

“I didn’t kill her. Can I go now?”
The auror laughed and said “I’ve got several witness that say that you threatened to kill her.”

“I did threaten but I didn’t kill her.”

“So why don’t you tell us why you would threaten to kill her?”

Harry nodded and said “now you’re getting somewhere. Professor Trelawney was a seer. The only problem I had with her is that she spoke a prophecy that could have been about anyone but Voldemort decided it was about me. Because of her prophecy Voldemort went to my parent’s house in Godric’s Hollow where he killed both of my parents and marked me as his equal.” Harry tossed his head trying to move his bangs out of the way to expose the lightning bolt scar on his forehead. “When he killed my mother he accidently spilt part of his soul and created a horcrux in me. For the past seventeen years I have been dealing with her prophecy. The other day she started to go into a trance and began speaking another prophecy just two days after I completed the other one she carelessly spoke. So I told her if she dared speak it again I would send death after her. Of Course I can’t really do that can I? Nobody can control death.”

“So you figured she spoke to someone and you went to Hogwarts and killed her since as you say you don’t control death you must have killed her yourself.”

“No, I didn’t kill her. Maybe she spoke the prophecy and knew that I’d be mad and somehow died of fright.”

“You scared her to death?”

“No, her own paranoia might have scared her to death. I wouldn’t have actually killed her.”

“We have witnesses that say they heard you threaten to kill her.”

“I might have threatened but I didn’t actually do it.”

“If you didn’t scare her to death then how do you know how she died?”

Harry laughed and said “now you are baiting me.” He motioned to the court recorder and said “if you look back in his notes you’ll see that I only speculated that she was scared to death.”

“So if you didn’t scare her to death how did you do it?”

“I didn’t kill her at all. How did she die? At this point you know more than me.”

The auror grunted and said “why don’t you tell me about the prophecy that she supposedly spoke about you?”

“Which one the first one that started all my problems or this second one that she only half spoke.”

“Let’s start with the first one.”

Harry nodded and said “at this point I have it completely memorized. The one with the power to vanquish the Dark Lord approaches... born to those who have thrice defied him, born as the seventh month dies... and the Dark Lord will mark him as his equal, but he will have power the Dark Lord knows not... and either must die at the hand of the other for neither can live while the other survives... the one with the power to vanquish the Dark Lord will be born as the seventh month dies. I don’t even know what most of that means but apparently it means that I could kill Voldemort which I did just six days ago.”
“So you admit to killing the man known as Lord Voldemort six days ago?”

Harry narrowed his eyes at the man and said “is that what this is about? You’re a supremacist and you’re looking to pin Voldemort’s murder on me. It was self defense and his own spell that back fired and killed him.”

“You claim it was self-defense but we’ve had several people tell us that you were hunting him down slowly killing bits of him.”

Harry sat up and smirked saying “I think at this point I should have legal representation.”

“I think you should just answer the questions that I ask you. How did you kill Sybill Trelawney?”

Harry shook his head and said “I didn’t kill her.”

“Look we know you did it, confess and make this easier on both of us.”

“Why don’t you try asking where I was when she died?”

“We know where you were.”

“Oh? Tell me, where was I?”

“You were on the top of the astronomy tower.”

“What? Why would I be there?”

“Because that’s where you pushed her over the edge so that she could fall to her death.”

“What, she jumped off the astronomy tower?” Harry asked in surprise.

“How do you know she jumped if you weren’t there?”

“I don’t know that she jumped. Why would she jump? That’s awful to think she killed herself.”

Harry said thinking about Professor Trelawney falling to her death. “Look we can talk around in circles for the rest of the day and the only thing you really have on me is that I threatened to kill her but I didn’t actually do it. I suspect that you don’t have any evidence otherwise you wouldn’t be asking me for a confession to make your job easier. Do you have any other questions for me?”

“I do. Let’s talk about how you killed Lord Voldemort.”

Harry laughed and said “Okay, let’s talk about it.”

The auror waited patiently for Harry to go on but when it was clear that he wasn’t going to so he prompted Harry. “Why don’t you tell us what curse you used to kill Lord Voldemort?”

“Voldemort used a wand whose allegiance was to me. In other words he tried to use my own wand against me and it back fired on him. He cast the killing curse trying to kill me but since it was my wand when I put up a shield to defend against it and called my wand to me the curse backfired and killed him instead of me.”

“You would like for us to believe that the most powerful wizard to ever live accidently killed himself?”

“He actually wasn’t all that powerful. He was cruel and without morals, he killed without regard to blood status, he was truly insane and in capable of feeling love or compassion in that regard he was
weak. It was his eventual downfall.”

“You casting a spell to rebound his curse was his downfall.”

Harry shook his head and said “if he hadn’t been so upset about his followers revolting against him he probably would have been thinking clearer and retreated but instead his ego told him that he was still more powerful than me and that he could over power me.”

“You are delusional Mr. Potter if you think that you somehow are more powerful than Lord Voldemort.”

“Am I?”

The auror looked at him in surprise and said “you do think you are greater than Lord Voldemort was.”

Harry shrugged. “I won didn’t I? He’s dead by his own spell isn’t he? I think that gives me a certain power over him.”

“Tell me Mr. Potter don’t you think it’s a little strange that two people that you didn’t like are dead presumably by their own hands?” The auror sat back in his chair and asked “Who else don’t you like that you wish to see dead?”

Harry could feel the compelling spell pushing against him as he thought of a whole list of people who should probably receive the kiss for their involvement in this war but none of them that he would kill himself. “I cannot think of any that I wish to see dead by my own hand. There are several that I think the Wizengamot should sentence to the kiss but none that I would seek to kill myself. I should also add to that statement that I did not wish to see Professor Trelawney dead either, I merely lost my temper and threatened her. I would never have followed through with such a terrible thing.”

“But you did follow through with it when you followed her to the astronomy tower and pushed off of it.”

“No, I did no such thing. When did it happen, maybe you should look at where I was when it happened?”

“Okay, where were you between the hours of 9pm and 11pm last night.”

“That’s easy. I was at Malfoy Manor having drinks. I sat up with them till about 10:45pm then I went to bed.”

The auror looked at him strangely before asking “why were you at the Malfoy manor having drinks? I thought you were a muggle supporter and they are Purist.”

Harry shrugged and said “I needed a place to stay and I wanted to learn more about the Purist ideas. So they offered for me to stay with them till I got my own place in order and to teach me why they think their values are correct.”

“The Malfoy’s offered to take in the man who killed their leader? I find that hard to believe. Did you threaten them also? Maybe they are in fear for their lives if they don’t help you.”

“No. They needed very little of my help. I did use some of my influence at St. Mungo’s to retrieve a healer for Snape and to get Shacklebolt to move things along with their cases but they had enough evidence to support their cause and redeem themselves to the ministry.”
“Evidence? Redeem themselves? What are you talking about? They were loyalist to the Purist cause. Voldemort was using their home as home base to purify England. They would never betray their cause.”

Harry narrowed his eyes at him and said “how do you know that? Were you one of Voldemort’s followers? Does your name appear in Snape’s diary or is it in Draco’s?”

The man began spluttering “That is none of your business Mr. Potter.”

“Oh but I think it is. I think that you are still working for Voldemort even though he has passed, you are still trying to get revenge on me.” Harry looked at him angrily as a thought came to him. “Who took Sybill’s recording of her newest prophecy? Who did she speak to?”

Clarence stood and slammed his hands down on the table saying “you are not going to get away with murder Mr. Potter. Nor will you be the newest Dark Lord. I will see to it that a muggle loving halfblood never rules over wizarding England.” The auror pulled out his wand. Harry jumped to his feet but his hands were still bound behind his back. He concentrated on his new shielding skills and pressed a bubble around himself. The auror took aim as the door flung open and three more flooded into the room. Roger had jumped up and was also pointing his wand at Harry not understanding what was happening. The five of them stood wands raised and pointed at Harry,

Harry stood in his bubble and said “your auror friend, Clarence, just threaten to kill me. He pulled his wand out first. I’m only defending myself.” Harry said from inside his protective bubble.

One of the other aurors asked “Roger, what happened?”

Roger shook his head and said “Clarence lost his temper and said that he wasn’t going to let Mr. Potter get away with murder. He started to pull his wand out and then Mr. Potter broke through the bindings and created that shield. He’s not supposed to be able to do that in here.” He pocketed his wand and said “I’m just a recorder I’m not supposed to have to deal with this kind of crap. Call me back in when you’ve got him secure.”

“Clarence, what do you think you are doing? You were supposed to be getting a confession out of him regarding Trelawney’s death not threatening to kill him.”

“He’s a Voldemort follower and that’s how they dealt with people that didn’t do as they asked. Check his arm, I bet he’s marked and he’s probably in one of the diaries unless he took his name out.” Harry said turning the tables on Clarence.

One of the other men said to him “Clarence, I’ll show them mine if you show them yours?”

Clarence scowled and said “Argus, I not showing him my mark.”

Argus rolled his sleeve up exposing a very faint mark that was similar to the inner circle mark that Harry was familiar with. “Let’s see it.” Argus said to Clarence.

The first man lowered his wand and said. “Put you wand away, Clarence.”

Harry stayed in his bubble not wanting to take any chance that Clarence would make a move against him before the other aurors had him under control. “I think your man here might have had something to do with Trelawney’s death too. He apparently heard her newest prophecy.”

“Her newest prophecy? You were at the school yesterday when we picked up Bellatrix Lestrange, did you talk to the professor when you were there?”
“I did speak to her when I was there. I called in Roger and he took the prophecy. She’s labeled Mr. Potter as a new Dark Lord.” He pointed his wand at Harry again. “I won’t let this muggle lover take over the ministry.”

The auror motioned to Argus and said “go and make sure Roger doesn’t go anywhere. I’m going to need to talk to him next.”

Harry smirked and said “I don’t think you are really in a position to decide what I’ll be taking over.”

“Clarence, put your wand down.” The lead auror said again.

“Frank, the seer was right about him being the one to vanquish the Dark Lord. She’s going to be right about him again. He’s going to lift the veil. She’s foreseen it. Don’t you see that we can’t let him do that?”

“Clarence, put your wand down. There’s nothing we can do about a prophecy prediction. There’s no way to know if it will really come true.” Frank put his hand on Clarence’s hand and pushed it down. “Go take a break. I’ll finish up in here.” Harry watched the man walk out of the little room. He eyed the new auror suspiciously knowing that he was apparently a Voldemort supporter too. “Mr. Potter, please take your seat.”

“I’d be more comfortable if you could remove these cuffs.”

Frank took a seat and observed Harry for a moment. He sighed shaking his head and said “I was at the battle at Hogwarts and I saw you defeat Voldemort. I figure you could probably remove those cuffs yourself.”

Harry paled slightly and said “and what makes you think that?”

“Hmm, what makes me think that? First off, that shield you’re creating, you shouldn’t be able to produce that kind of magic with the cuffs on. Second, you’ve been able to fight the compelling spell and not answer direct questions. We’ve been watching you from the other room.”

“So that makes you think I’m capable of removing the cuffs?”

He nodded and said “why don’t you try to remove them yourself and see if I’m right?”

Harry sucked in a breath and tried concentrating on the cuffs. The locking mechanism popped open and his arms came free. He placed the cuffs on the table and sat down across from the auror letting his bubble pop. “I didn’t realize I could do that.” He said honestly. “So you were a death eater and somehow you’ve infiltrated the auror department and managed to stay off of Snape’s radar?”

Frank chuckled. “I am a death eater. It’s a vowel you take for life. However, I can’t say that I’m sorry that Voldemort is dead. He was insane and making our jobs so much harder. Now that he’s gone we can go back to pushing for ministry reform.” He picked up the parchment that Roger had been writing on. He read through the transcription “So you are claiming that you didn’t know that Trelawney died.”

“No, I didn’t know. I really wouldn’t have killed her for speaking the prophecy. Yes, I was really angry when I found out that she had told someone but honestly I had planned on asking to have a recorder come to Hogwarts with me so that they could take it from her and I could hear it too. I was going to do that after I spoke to Shacklebolt this morning. I wouldn’t have killed her.”

“I see and why were you going to see Shacklebolt?”
“He asked to see me.”

“What does he want to talk to you about?”

“You should ask him yourself. He’ll be here in a few minutes.” Frank turned and looked at the door. “Does he know that his auror department still has death eaters in it?”

“He doesn’t need to know about that as long as we do our jobs and not let our personal political positions interfere.”

Harry nodded and said “and arresting me isn’t a personal political decision.”

He shook his head “no, because we obtained several statement this morning saying that they heard you make the threat. You have motive and capability as you’ve killed before.”

Harry laughed. “I’ve never killed before as I told your friend, Voldemort’s spell rebounded and he killed himself.”

Frank nodded and said “I know but everyone else thinks that you killed him. So tell me what does Shacklebolt want to talk to you about?”

Harry shook his head and said “I really couldn’t tell you.” There was a knock at the door Harry smiled “Maybe you should ask him yourself.”

The door swung open and Shacklebolt stepped into the room. “Auror Malone, I thought Clarence Bright was interrogating Mr. Potter.”

Harry sat back in amusement as he watched the auror try and fight the compelling spell. Finally he said “I had to take over when Mr. Bright lost his composure.”

Harry chuckled and said “He threatened to kill me. I guess you could say he lost his composure. I lost mine when I threatened Trelawney but I think Mr. Bright would have followed through with his threat. Did you know he was a Voldemort supporter? He’s pretty mad at me for my involvement.”

Shacklebolt frowned. “I didn’t know that.”

“I think you’ve got some house cleaning to do still. It seems there are a lot of them about. Now you know I’m not saying that they are all bad, as I’ve recently learned, but some of them might be worse than others.” Harry said glancing at Auror Malone.

“Auror Malone, are you finished with Mr. Potter?”

The auror looked at Harry. “I think we have all the information we need.” He stood up “Mr. Potter if we should have any other questions where can we find you?”

“I’ve been invited to stay at the Malfoy Manor until I can get my own place in order.”

“The Malfoy Manor?”

“Yes, does that surprise you, Frank?” Harry asked casually.

Frank sputtered as the compelling spell pressed against him again. “It does surprise me as they were Voldemort’s strongest supporters.”

Harry laughed. “Don’t you read the paper? The Daily Prophet reported yesterday that they were working against Voldemort from the inside. How is it that the Prophet knows this stuff before the
Frank looked a little ashen and admitted “I haven’t actually read the paper in several days. We’ve been pretty busy here cleaning up the mess that Voldemort left us.”

Harry shrugged. “There’s several very interesting articles in there. You should check out today’s edition page three I think it was.”

Auror Malone stood up and said “Thank you Mr. Potter I’ll do that. Minister Shacklebolt.” He nodded as he left the room.

“So Kingsley, How much of that interview did you watch?”

Kingsley took the seat recently vacated by the auror. “I saw you tell Malone that you expected me any minute. How did you know I was coming?”

Harry shrugged and said “Is this off the record or am I being interviewed still?”

Shacklebolt cast a silencing spell about the room. “Off the record Harry, what’s going on? You’ve changed since you were at the Order of the Phoenix meetings, something is different.”

“Kingsley, I had a bit of Voldemort’s soul blocking me. Once that was gone I could feel all of my magic. I’ve been able to do so many things that I couldn’t do before.”

“Is it the Deathly Hallows that you are using, Harry?”

“No, I destroyed them the morning after the battle. I broke the wand and crushed the stone.”

“You what?” Kingsley said in shock.

Harry laughed. “That’s the same reaction that everyone has.”

“I just can’t imagine that you would do such a thing. Why would you do that?”

Harry shrugged and said “they really weren’t good for much; the wand was good for killing which I think we’ve proved that we don’t really need a special wand for that. The resurrection stone was only good for bringing people back from the dead but they don’t come back right and death comes for those that used it. And the invisibility cloak was the only thing out of the three of them that could actually be used and not get you killed. I have that still. I plan on placing it in my vault at Gringotts as soon as it reopens.” Kingsley sat and stared at Harry for a few minutes trying to comprehend the enormity of what Harry had done. Finally Harry said “Honestly Kingsley, nobody should ever have that much power. The power over death, it’s not something that mere mortals should control. It’s better left to death himself. I know that and I didn’t want to chance that it be taken from me and used again so I destroyed them. It’s simple really.”

“Harry, you could have ruled the wizarding world with those items.”

“I could have had a reign of terror just like Voldemort’s but if I was going to rule I’d rather do it with love and compassion. Honestly, I think when he marked me as a baby he not only placed a bit of his soul into me but he also gave me a copy of his power plus as a magical person to begin with I had my own power. I think I might even be more gifted then he was because of it.”

“So they are gone.” He said as more of a statement then a question. “The Wizengamot will want to hear a statement about how you went about ridding us of Voldemort’s evil.”
“Okay, I don’t mind giving a full accounting as long as they don’t plan on prosecuting me for things like breaking into the Ministry or Gringotts.”

“I do not believe that that is the current council’s intention.”

“Have you weeded out the Voldemort’s supporters? How many are left after that?”

“There are 22 members left. Tonight six new people will be offered a position. Tomorrow morning they will sit full counsel. Your hearing will be held at 11am. I’d like for you to arrive at 10am if you wouldn’t mind so that I can brief you on what they are likely to want to know.”

“What if they don’t accept the offered position?”

“It is a great honor to be even considered for a position. The current council has voted on those that will be offered the position, I doubt any of the people on our list would refuse the honor.”

“So because it’s considered such a great honor you just assume everyone will jump at the opportunity?”

“Harry, maybe you don’t understand the importance of the Wizengamot, it was created to shape the laws of wizarding England. Every politician’s goal in England is to achieve a spot on the Wizengamot council.”

“I see.” Harry said thinking that maybe the Wizengamot was part of their problem. “Are we done here, Minister Shacklebolt? What time is it, maybe I can still make my meeting with Lord Malfoy.”

Harry cast a nonverbal tempus spell revealing the time to be 2:23.

Shacklebolt frowned and said “you shouldn’t be able to do that in here.”

Harry shrugged and said “the wards in this room are wearing thin. You’ve had too many wizards and witches in here rubbing against them. They will need to be strengthened.”

Shacklebolt looked around the room suspiciously. “I’ll have them do that.”

Harry stood. “I might need an escort out of this place since it’s got so many death eaters roaming about.”

Kingsley laughed. “I really don’t think there’s that many roaming about and I doubt you’d have any trouble dealing with them but I’ll find someone to escort you back to the security desk so that you can retrieve your wand.”

“Maybe Auror Malone would like the job. He seemed pretty interested in my case.”

“I’ll see if he’s available. So I’ll see you tomorrow morning at 10am?”

“Yes, I’ll be here.”

Harry followed the Minister out of the little room. In the hall were several aurors gossiping about what was happening in the little room. Shacklebolt enquired about Auror Malone and the man appeared a minute later.

“Mr. Potter if you would follow me please.” He said abruptly.

Harry fell instep next to the man and followed him to the elevator. Once inside Harry asked “May I ask where your allegiance lies now that Voldemort has been defeated?”
The man smirked and said “does it really matter. It’s clear that you have Shacklebolt in your pocket.”

Harry chuckled and said “Shacklebolt thinks he has me in his. He doesn’t though. So are you looking for purification or supremacy?” Frank looked at him angrily but didn’t answer. Harry shrugged and said “it doesn’t matter to me as long as you hold to your first vowel and that is to protect the wizarding world. Is that how you see it? Voldemort believed that he was protecting the wizarding world by ridding it of people that he considered filth. Do you see people that have the gift of magic filth, Frank?”

“Mr. Potter, muggles that are born with magic have come about it illegally. They have stolen it from those that have it naturally. It’s not right and they should be punished for it.”

“So you are of the belief that muggles somehow have this ability to steal magic. You think a newborn infant can somehow reach into the magical world and pluck the gift from someone else or that their parents can do that for them?”

The auror nodded “I know that you being a halfblood and raised by muggles you probably think that concept is crazy but it’s true.”

“I do think it’s crazy because I was raised around muggles. I know that they do not have that ability and the muggles I was raised with thought that my gift was a curse. It’s not something they would have wanted me to have and if they could have removed my magic from me they would have. I also know that they weren’t the only ones that feel that way.”

The elevator door slid open revealing the lobby. Frank motioned for him to precede him out before he went on and said “muggles lie Mr. Potter. They may have told you that your gift was a curse but they lied.”

“Wizards lie too, Auror Malone. I’m of the belief that magic is a gift it can be handed down from generation to generation or it can be created in a new form. I also believe there is plenty of it to go around. Muggleborns are the breathing new magic into our society. They should be embraced and treated for what they are, new magic. Not shunned or ridiculed, their magic is what is going to build the new world.”

The man at the security desk grimaced when he heard the end of the conversation. Auror Malone sneered at him and bit out “Mr. Smith, please give Mr. Potter back his wand and make sure he signs for it.” The auror turned to Harry and said “Mr. Potter, I will leave you here. Good day to you.”

Harry nodded to him and said “I’ll see you tomorrow at 10am.” The auror scowled and walked away. Harry chuckled and turned to the man behind the desk “Mr. Smith is it. I’d like my wand back now if you don’t mind.”

Mr. Smith trigger the locking mechanism on the box and opened the lid Harry wordlessly called the wand to him. “Mr. Potter, please sign here.”

Harry signed and smiled at him. “You’re muggleborn aren’t you?” The man nodded. “How is it that you’ve kept your job here?”

“I’m married to a pureblood. When Voldemort took over the ministry they took my wand but since I was married to Helena and we have three children together two at Hogwarts one in Slytherin house I was allowed to keep my job. There are several of us in the same situation.”

Harry pursed his lips as he thought then asked “when will they return your wand?”

Mr. Smith shrugged “It’s only been a few days and they are still bringing in death eaters that have
committed crimes against witches and wizards. I don’t think they’ve had time to work on returning our wands.”

“I see. Thank you.” Harry said motioning to his own wand. “See you tomorrow.”
Harry stepped from the floo at Malfoy manor in a rush. He had overheard that Gringott’s was open again and he was anxious to get to the bank and get some money. Draco and Hermione were sitting in the receiving room playing a game of wizard’s chess when he came running out of the floo.

“Harry, what’s the rush?” Hermione asked as he started from the room.

“The banks open. I’m going to withdraw some money and go into London and buy some new clothes.” He paused mid step and turned around “Hey, you two should come with me.”

“No. Are you insane?” Draco said in surprise.

“Come on, Draco. It’ll be fun, the three of us can hang out, go shopping and get a bite to eat.” Harry said persuasively.

Hermione took his hand and said “Draco, I haven’t been in London for over a year. Please can we go? It’s so much fun; the stores, the people watching, the food vendors and not to mention the lights and sounds. It’s so exciting.”

“Hermione, we are not going to muggle London. It’s too dangerous.” He stated firmly.

“It’s not dangerous, Draco. Have you ever been to London?”

Draco shook his head no “I’ve never been for a reason, Harry. Muggles are dangerous. They carry diseases and they are violent.”

Harry laughed and said “No more violent then death eaters and you didn’t seem to have any problems hanging around them.”

“That’s different Harry, they were wizards and witches.”

Harry waved him off “never mind if you’re too much of a coward to go into London then don’t go. Hermione, do you want to go?”

Hermione looked at Draco imploringly “Please Draco, I don’t think I should go without you. Please come with us. You don’t know what you are missing.”

Draco harrumphed and crossed his arms over his chest. “I don’t think you should go either, Hermione. It’s too dangerous.”

“Ugh! It’s not dangerous.” She said stamping her foot.

Harry sighed and said “too bad, Hermione, maybe next time. I got to get going. I’m losing business hours.” He ran up the steps taking them two at a time.

“Pretty please, Draco. Please.” Hermione said giving him her best puppy dog eyes.

Draco groaned and said “I know I’m going to regret this.”

Hermione practically squealed and said “I have to change. I can’t go dressed like this.” She ran up the steps nearly running into Harry as he was coming out of his rooms. “I’m changing and we’re
Harry smiled broadly “Alright, I’ll meet you downstairs.” He said excitedly.

Draco sat at the desk in the receiving room writing a note. “I know my father is not going to be happy with me.”

Harry frowned and said “do you always do what he says?”

“Harry, it’s one of those pureblood traditions that you said you wanted to learn about. I’m an unmarried male living in my father’s home so yes, it’s expected that I do as he says.”

“Has he ever said ‘Draco, don’t go to London.’” Harry asked giving his best impression of Lord Malfoy.

Draco shook his head no and said “but I’m sure if I asked him he’d say no.”

“So don’t ask, and he can’t say no.” Harry suggested.

Hermione came flying down the steps dressed in a muggle style sun dress. She had in her hand the enchanted purse and a pair of dress flats. “I’m ready. Let’s go.”

Draco frowned when he saw how she was dressed “you’re going like that?”

“She looks perfectly muggle Draco. That outfit is perfect.” Harry looked at Draco’s clothing “you should lose the robe and probably that vest and tie too.”

Draco looked down at his clothes and scowled “I’ll feel naked.”

“You will look pretty silly dressed like a wizard around the muggles.” Hermione suggested.

“Dammit,” he cursed as he began pulling off the clothing making Hermione and Harry laugh.

Harry, Draco and Hermione were busy laughing as they walked to the alley that was listed as a safe disapparation point. They were each carrying bags loaded with purchases that they had made in various stores in London’s shopping district. It was late and the last store they had been in had actually closed their doors while they completed their purchases. After closing down the last store they had stopped into a little diner and had something to eat. Now they were exhausted as they carried their bags down the alley. None of them noticed the two men hiding in the shadows.

“Keep your hands where we can see them.” They turned around surprised to see the two men one was holding a gun and the other a knife. Harry slowly lowered his bags to the ground. “That’s right put the bags down and back up.”

Hermione and Draco stood in shock not knowing what to do “Hermione, Draco, put your bags down. Do what he says.” Harry said as he took a step backwards pressing his shield charm around the three of them. They followed his command but Draco was reaching for his wand. Harry saw the movement, as the mugger with the gun pointed his gun at Draco. Harry seeing that the man was going to fire at Draco lunged forward blocking the bullet from hitting Draco. Draco pulled out his wand and cast the killing curse. The man dropped dead as Harry fell to the ground. Hermione screamed and the man with the knife grabbed the bags and took off down the alley.
Hermione pulled her wand out and stunned the man dropping him to the ground. “Draco, help me.” She cried as she started to inspect Harry.

Draco was panicking as he saw the blood pooling around Harry. “Hermione, you have to do something.”

“I’m trying but it’s a bullet wound not like a cutting curse. I don’t know what to do.” She said as she pressed her hand to the wound. She tried a spell to heal the entry point but because it was deeper then she was used to she didn’t know how to fix it. Two police officers appeared at the entrance to the alley. Hermione saw them and called “Please call an ambulance my friend has been shot.”

The officers came running down the alley. One of them began helping her with Harry’s injuries as the other inspected the two Muggers. “This one’s dead.” He said as he knelt next to the shooter. He checked the other one “this one is just knocked out.”

A minute later two aurors appeared. Draco groaned under his breath and said quietly to Hermione “Aurors, Hermione.”

Hermione looked up and paled “Draco, your father probably felt me pull on my magic. He should be here any minute too.”

“Not on this side of the veil, girl, he won’t come for you.” Draco said sadly. “He’s probably going out of his mind in worry.”

Hermione frowned and said “I’m sorry Draco.”

The ambulance could be heard in the distance and one of the bobbies started arguing with the auror “I don’t care what kind of diplomatic immunity he has that man is dead and someone is responsible.”

“Please, Harry needs a healer. Can’t we argue about this some other time?”

The auror knelt down next to Harry. He lifted his bangs and said to the other auror “Hey Frank, look who we have here.”

The other auror knelt next to Hermione. “Fuck, Clarence.” He said angrily. He looked at Draco and Hermione and said “what the hell are the two of you doing in muggle London?”

Hermione motioned to the bags “shopping. We were shopping. Please those two men tried out mug us. Harry’s been shot. Please help him.”

Clarence stood up and said “this is our chance, Frank. We could let him die here.”

“Clarence, are you mad? This is Harry Potter we can’t just let him die in an alley.”

Hermione looked at the two aurors not believing that they were considering letting her friend die in an alley. “Please help him” she said pleadingly.

Frank sighed and said “Clarence, take care of the muggle authorities, I’ll get Potter wrapped up so he can be taken to St. Mungo’s.”

Hermione sighed in relief as the auror cast a spell over Harry. She could see that bleeding slow down as he levitated his body. The muggle officer gasped and started forward saying “hey you can’t move him.”

Hermione pulled her wand out again and pointed it at the officer. Before the auror could stop her she
cast an obliviate spell over the muggles in the alley. The auror yelled at her “Are you crazy? You can’t use magic against a muggle.” He grabbed her wand from her and put it in his pocket. 

Hermione unfazed by the auror turned to the other auror and said “Let’s go.” She motioned for him to proceed.

Draco began gathering up the bags, following Hermione, Harry, and the auror to the disapparation point. He looked back at the other auror and the two officers that stood stunned staring into space. “Hermione, what did you do to those men?”

“I erased their memories of the past few minutes. They won’t even know that any of us were here. They’ll be fine. Come on let’s go”

Seconds later they arrived in the emergency area at St. Mungo’s. Hermione and Draco were blocked from going to the back with Harry. They only waited a few minutes before the auror that had escorted them to hospital came back to the lobby and asked them both to have a seat. “What happened back there? Who cast the killing curse?”

Draco grimaced and said “I did. The man had his gun pointed at us. I was pulling my wand out when he pulled the trigger. Harry must have known that he was getting ready to fire because he jumped in front of me. I cast the first thing that came to mind.”

The auror glared at him and asked “the first thing that came to mind was avada kedavra.”

Draco nodded. “Yes,” He said and added "he was a muggle with a gun and I’ve heard what they are capable of I didn't want to take any chances that he would have a second chance to fire at us.”

Hermione wrapped her arm around his shoulders and said to the auror “it was self-defense. That man was going to kill us. He might have killed Harry.”

“And then you thought it would be ok to cast a spell against two of the muggle authorities?”

Hermione shrugged “they were going to delay Harry getting help.” She looked over her shoulder at the emergency entrance. “Is he going to be ok?”

The Auror sighed and said “I really don’t know. What spell did you cast on the muggle officers?”

“It was type of obliviate spell that I created myself. I told them to forget that they saw any of us. They’ll be slightly confused by the other auror but once he’s clear of the scene all they will remember is the guy that I stunned hit his head and anybody that touches the dead guy will think he had a heart attack. Even the medical examiner will come to that conclusion.”

The auror laughed and said “that’s not possible. You really don’t expect me to believe a muggleborn witch such as yourself could create a spell the powerful. Why don’t you just tell me what you really did?”

“That’s probably what she really did. She’s very good at memory spells.” Draco said proudly.

The auror frowned and said “okay why don’t you try telling me why you were in London so late?”

“Harry wanted to go shopping then we went for a bite to eat. We were just headed to the disapparation point when those two men jumped out behind us. We must have walked right past them and didn’t even see them.” Draco said recounting the attack in his head. “Harry was just going to give him all our stuff. I should have just let them have it.” Draco said shaking his head sadly. “I’m sorry if I got him killed, Hermione. Merlin I hope I didn’t get him killed.”
The second auror appeared and motioned to Frank to step out of ear shot. “Hey, whatever that mudblood did she completely erased their memories of them even being there. I couldn’t get them to look at me as they came around. They were completely focused on the dead guy who had the heart attack like I wasn’t even there. I cast a *Rennervate* over the man that hit his head and the ambulance took him away. I don’t think we have to worry about him either. He didn’t even seem to know where he was.”

The aurors looked at Hermione and Draco. Draco was holding Hermione’s hand trying to comfort her. He was emotionless as he sat waiting for news on Harry’s condition. Frank frowned and said “Clarence, the mudblood cast a really powerful memory spell. It’s affected you too.”

“What do you mean it’s affected me?” He asked angrily.

“That man was hit with a killing curse he didn’t die of a heart attack.”

Clarence frowned and said “are you sure? I am certain that he had a heart attack.”

Frank shook his head and asked “You know who they are don’t’ you?”

“Yeah Frank, I know who they are. Can you imagine what the daily Prophet will say when they get wind of this?”

“You thinking of selling the story? I think that enough people saw them come in that the paper already has an accounting of it.” Frank asked knowing that Clarence often leaked stories to the Daily Prophet.

“I wouldn’t know what part to sell.”

“I suppose we should call the boy’s father and her Master.”

Ten minutes later Lucius stood talking with the two aurors as Severus sat with Draco and Hermione. “I can’t understand why the two of you would do something so foolish.” Severus was saying to them quietly. “Harry, had to put you up too this. This is something that he would do. Ridiculous that’s what this is.” He was angry with them and chastising them for the childish behavior.

Hermione was sobbing now that Lucius was here. He was giving her and Draco angry looks from across the room. Draco sat with his back straight trying to show no emotions even though he was really worried about Harry. Hermione was saying to Severus as she tried to control her own emotions. “We were almost home, two more minutes and we would have been in the entry hall of the Manor.”

Lucius thanked the auror and approached Hermione and Draco. “They say you can come home. The muggle that attacked you apparently had a heart attack so they can’t press any charges for him having shot Mr. Potter. And since nobody remembers you being there they aren’t pressing any charges for using magic against the muggles.”

“What about Harry? Did you find out how he’s doing?” Hermione asked with concern.

“Mr. Potter is not my concern.” Lucius bit out angrily. “Get your things.”

Draco and Hermione jumped to grab their bags and followed him to the floo. Lucius and Severus were talking quietly as they stepped through to the Manor. They heard Severus say “I think that’s a bit extreme, Lucius. They are just kids.”

“Your back! What happened?” Narcissa said as she watched them step through the floo.
“You may be more lenient with them thinking that they are just kids but they are adults old enough to know better. They both willingly went to London knowing that it was not something they should be doing. I feel that your work at Hogwarts has made you soft.”

“What happened in London?” Narcissa demanded to know.

Severus glared at Lucius “I’ve not gone soft Lucius. Lots of people make trips to London and don’t get mugged. You’re over reacting to their disobedience.”

“Lucius, speak to me. Did you say they got mugged?” She asked as she inspected Draco giving him a hug. She turned to Hermione and glared at her. “and you, Do you have any idea how worried we were when Lucius felt you tugging on your magic.” Hermione shrunk back from her nodding her head.

“It’s my family Severus and I’ll not have them behaving like this under my roof.”

Severus threw his hands up in the air and said “fine, do it but I think you are making a mistake.”

“Draco,” Lucius bit out and said “Come here.” Draco hesitantly approached his father. “You were more than aware of the fact that I would forbid you to go to London.” Draco nodded and started to speak his apology but Lucius held his hand up silencing him. “As you are old enough to live on your own and obviously wish to no longer follow the rules of my house I am giving you the option of moving to the chateau in France or finding some other place to live.”

“Father, I don’t want to move out. Please don’t throw me out.”

“You obviously do as you blatantly disregarded the rules of this house.”

“You never said that I couldn’t go.”

“I’m sure you are more than aware of how I feel about the muggle world and yet you went into London and purchased items of muggle make. Not to mention that you took my property with you. Are you aware of the fact that she cast spells against muggles? That’s a crime and against the laws of the ministry they could have considered me liable to the point where I could have seen prison time for it?” Draco paled and shook his head. “Well, it’s true I’m lucky that the aurors that handled this were lenient and didn’t wish to prosecute her or me.”

“I’m sorry, Master Lucius.” Hermione said not realizing what she had done would affect him.

“Quiet.” He barked at her. “I deal with you in a moment.” Hermione paled. She had never seen him this mad before even when she had cast a spell against the Dark Lord he didn’t seem this upset by it.

“Father, I promise I won’t do it again. Mother, please don’t let him put me out.” Draco said pleadingly.

Narcissa frowned. She wasn’t happy with how her husband was handling this problem but she also wanted to show her support. “I’m sorry Draco, you know the rules. There’s nothing I can do.”

Draco looked between his parents trying to think of a good argument to persuade them differently. Finally he said “I’m sorry, father. Can I stay till I find a new place to live? I do not wish to move to France.”

“You can’t do this Master, please, it was my fault as I begged for him to take me. Please don’t throw him out.”
Lucius turned his glare on Hermione. “Draco, I would like you to remove your collar from Hermione’s neck.”

“What, father?” Draco asked in shock.

“I want you to take your collar off of her.” he said more firmly.

Draco pulled out his wand and tapped the collar three times. The enchanted lock disengaged and fell loosely around her neck. He removed the collar and handed it to his father. Hermione began crying and saying “please don’t Master.”

“You will refer to me as Lord Malfoy. Tomorrow you will go to the ministry and report to them that you no longer wish to be enslaved to me.”

Hermione was shaking her head “No, it’s not true. I do wish to be here. Please, don’t release me.”

Narcissa glared at her and said “your actions today say otherwise. I thought that you understood our position on the muggle world and how we felt about it. Clearly you do not and you are no longer welcome in our home.”

Hermione felt as though she might have a heart attack. Lucius was looking at her as though she were distasteful scum. She looked to Severus who also looked angry with her. She straightened herself and said “I am sorry. I do understand your position but I guess I didn’t realize that you felt that strongly about even visiting the place.” She felt utterly defeated.

“Father, she would never have gone if I hadn’t taken her. This isn’t her fault. Please don’t punish her like this.” Draco began trying to plead her case. “Harry came in and said he wanted to go. Then he had the bright idea that we should go with him. At first I said no because I felt it was dangerous. Hermione was begging me to go but she wouldn’t have gone without me. This is my fault.”

“I agree, this is your fault and your actions tonight have cost our family a good and loyal slave. You should be ashamed of yourself for not being man enough to say no to her and Mr. Potter. You went against everything that our family believes in so that you can have an adventure in the muggle city of London. You could have been killed or gotten our slave killed.” He growled and said “I want you to go to your rooms. I don’t want to look at you anymore tonight.” He kicked at the bags. “And take your muggle filth with you.” Draco picked up all the bags not bothering to sort through whose was whose. “Tecks!” he barked out. The elf appeared and bowed to him. “I want all of Ms. Grangers things taken to the blue room. Ms. Granger, you will be allowed to stay in the blue room until you find another place. I will have the escorts on call or stationed outside of your door. You will be allowed access to the floo. You can go whenever you like however if you wish to return you will need permission to do so. I expect that you will make other arrangements in a timely fashion.”

Hermione nodded and said “Yes sir.”

Simmons appeared at the door having been summoned by a house elf. “Mr. Simmons, Ms. Granger will need an escort while in my home. She is allowed access to the floo and the blue room but nowhere else. She will send for you when she needs to leave the blue room for the floo system. Please see to it that she complies.”

“Yes Lord Malfoy, Ms. Granger if you would follow me I can take you to your room.” Hermione nodded sadly and followed him to the door.

After Hermione and Draco were out of hearing range Narcissa asked “Lucius, what happened?”

He groaned and said “they were attacked by muggers. Draco killed one of them but not until after
Harry Potter was shot with a gun. Hermione hit the other guy with a stunning spell and then tried to heal Potter but it was too deep. That was the first pulls on her magic that I felt. The muggle authorities showed up when a gun shot was reported and because Draco used the avada kedavra curse the auror department showed up too. It’s a traceable spell and now they are back to tracking people down when they use it. The third strong pull from her that I felt was her casting her obliviate spell on the three muggles that were in the alley with them. It was strong enough that the muggles think the man that Draco killed had a heart attack and none of them remember that they were even there.” He said sighing. “They were lucky. They could have been killed and all for some muggle clothing.”

Narcissa scowled and said “you’re throwing our son out of his home and you dismissed Hermione. I think that is a bit extreme.”

“I wanted to make my point clear, Narcissa. What they did goes against everything we’ve been trying to teach them.”

“Lucius, I want you to make this right. I do not want my son living outside of our home. Nor do I want Hermione leaving us.”

“My plan was to let them stew for a day and think about what they did but now I am thinking that Hermione should move out for more than a day. I want her to have some freedom so that she can decide if she really wants what we are offering her.”

“Lucius what if she decides not to come back?” Severus asked concerned.

“Then she doesn’t come back. If you want to pursue her on your own we’d understand.”

Narcissa nodded in agreement. “What about Mr. Potter? How is he?”

“The auror told us that he was still in surgery but when he’s released I think he should take his things and move to Grimmauld even if it’s not finished.”

“I agree he’s a bad influence.” Narcissa said.

Severus frowned and said “I can’t disagree with that, he’s got problems with following rules and can be very persuasive. I think maybe Hermione should move in with him. It would be good for her to see what it’s like to have no rules. I think she will flounder without them.”

Luicus nodded in agreement “I’ll talk to Draco and you can talk to Hermione before we leave for the Wizengamot meeting tomorrow. Tell her that you spoke to me and that you persuaded me to change my mind about her going to the ministry. If she decides that she still wants to go then so be it but otherwise we’ll give her a month or so before we take her back.”

“That long?” Narcissa asked concerned.

“Maybe less we should let her decide that.” Lucius added.
Harry sat on the bed at St. Mungo’s hospital room. He was anxious to get out of there as he didn’t want to miss his meeting with the Wizengamot. His chest was aching from where he had been shot the night before but it had healed some during the night and he figured that sitting at a meeting would be rest enough. The healer entered his room. He was tall man with a greying beard and dark blue eyes. Harry thought he was probably a handsome man in his younger years but now he looked old and haggard. The healer was surprised to see him sitting up in bed. “Good Morning, Mr. Potter. I’m Healer Relic, It’s good to see that you are awake. You gave us a good scare yesterday showing up here with a muggle bullet wound in your chest.”

“Yeah, sorry about that,” Harry said, sarcastically. “I’ll be getting out of your way as soon as you let me.”

“Oh, are you ready to go already?”

“Yes, I feel much better, your team did an excellent job healing me. I’ve got some place important to go this morning and I’d rather not be late.”

“Mr. Potter maybe you don’t realize how badly you were injured.”

“I think I have an idea.” Harry said thinking about his latest visit with death and still feeling a little heartbroken about it.

“We had to operate to remove the bullet from your chest and your heart stopped beating for over a minute. You were dead.”

Harry groaned and said, “I know. As I said your team did an excellent job of bringing me back to life. I feel great. I don’t think I need to tie up your bed any longer. I promise to take it easy is there anything else that you need to do before I leave?”

The healer frowned and said “I’d like to see the incision site one more time just to ensure its healing properly.”

Harry leaned back in the bed and shifted the hospital gown exposing the bandaged area. The healer lifted away the bandage and inspected the site. “It does look as good as expected. I want you to avoid lifting and anything strenuous. The bullet passed close to you heart and lungs. The tissue may feel healed but because it’s a bullet wound our magic doesn’t work on them well. The wound will be slow to heal. I’d like for you to give it a week before you go back to your normal activities. Keep the bandage area clean and dry till that is completely closed up and I’ll give you a spell that you can perform on yourself or have someone else do it for you. Any problems don’t hesitate to come right back in. You don’t want to take any chances with this type of muggle injury.”

“I understand. Now can I go?”

The healer chuckled and said sure “Your clothes are in the cabinet.”

“Am I allowed to call my house elf here to get me new clothes?”

“You have a house elf?” he asked surprised.

Harry chuckled and said “I sort of inherited him.”
“It’s allowed. The administration has paper work for you to sign. I’ll be right back.”

Harry called for Kreacher and was surprised when he showed up with clothing already chosen for his meeting at the Ministry.

Shacklebolt sat in the first meeting of the new Wizengamot. The six new members were sworn in early in the morning and were now being brought up to date on the current laws that were being considered. As he suspected, when the old members of the council had elected such a varied group of people, arguments were breaking out over several of the laws that were on the table. Lucius Malfoy and Arthur Weasley were arguing over the need for tracing spells on the magically gift muggle born children. Alfreed Hardy, who was muggleborn himself, actually agreed with the proposed law. Phoebe Culver, whose was the newly appointed child advocate disagreed as it was a terrible invasion of their privacy. Severus Snape wanted to abandon the law entirely not because it was an invasion of privacy but because he felt that the children should be raised in the magical world and not be returned to the muggle world. Josephina Tolkin, was on the fence and not really sure how she should vote.

Shacklebolt groaned as the arguing started up again when Weasley stated that if the muggleborn children were traced then all children should be traced as it was only fair. A messenger came into the room and handed Shacklebolt a message. He read the note and interrupted the meeting. “We are going to take an hour break and reconvened at 11am to hear the statement regarding the defeat of Lord Voldemort.”

“Who is going to be giving a statement? I thought Harry Potter was in St. Mungo’s recovering from an injury.” Arthur Weasley asked as though he was annoyed with the interruption.

“I just got word that he is here and prepared to speak with us. So we will take a break and get set up to hear his statement.” Shacklebolt said as he dismissed the assembly.

Almost four hours later Harry sat in the throne like chair that was provided to him by the Wizengamot. He had given a full recounting of his fight against Voldemort starting at the first day that he got his letter and how his muggle guardians handled the situation. He answered numerous questions pertaining to his pleas not to be sent back to their care and even more questions about how he had managed to survive several attempts by Voldemort to end his life. The questions regarding the hallows had been annoying, as the majority of the council hadn’t believe that they could be destroyed. They found it even less believable, that a young wizard, as ambitious as Harry Potter seemed to be, would actually destroy something with that much power. Harry shifted in his seat wincing as the bandage pulled on his wound. The current topic of their debate was whether or not the people of the wizarding world should be informed of the destruction of the items. Harry was tired of listening to them argue back and forth about it and decided he was done. He cleared his throat trying to get everyone’s attention but no one bothered to acknowledge him. He tried again this time standing up and speaking loudly “If you don’t have any other questions for me, I’ll be going now.”

One of the older Wizengamot men laughed and said “Mr. Potter we will dismiss you when we are satisfied with your interview. Please remain seated until then.”

Harry chuckled and said “you will dismiss me when I say and I say that I am done here.” He started for the door.
“Wait just one minute” another person started to say but Harry was already at the door.

The guard stood blocking his way. Harry smiled at the guard and said “you are going to open the door for me.”

Guard frowned and said “I’m sorry, Mr. Potter, but I don’t take orders from you.”

Harry eyed him warily and said in a serious tone “I suppose you don’t take orders from me but you are going to open the door anyway.”

The guard visibly gulped as he heard the Wizengamot arguing amongst themselves about letting Mr. Potter speak to them in such a way. Harry glanced over his shoulder at the group that was arguing and then back to the man. The guard nodded understanding the silent command and opened the door for him.

Once out in the hall, he asked the guard how he could get to the hall of records. The guard gave him directions and Harry proceeded to the location anxious to find the second recorded prophecy of the seer, Sybill Trelawney. He found the room with no problem having been there once before. There was now a guard at the door when he was here last it was late at night and nobody had been standing guard. Harry approached the woman and asked “I’d like to see a prophecy that is stored here do you know who I can see about that?”

“At the top of the corridor you just came down was an office, the head of the Hall of Records should be in there. He can grant you access.”

Harry thanked the guard and proceeded back down the hall looking for the office. He was surprised to find a small office with three desks crammed into it. At the center desk sat the man who had taken down his statement yesterday regarding the death of Professor Trelawney and had spoken to her the day before she died. Harry smiled at the man. “Good afternoon” he said as brightly as he could.

The man looked up, at first surprised, then his surprise turned into terror. He cried out “Rose call for help”, He shouted as he pulled his wand out pointing it at Harry.

Harry hadn’t expected that reaction and put his hands up making the incision tear open and bleed. He winced at the feeling and felt his anger rising. “What the hell is wrong with you?” he exclaimed angrily. He was more angry at himself for moving wrong then at the man.

The man motioned for Potter to back up into the hall. “What are you doing down here?” He asked suspiciously and then said “Rose, did you call for help.”

Harry glanced over his shoulder and found the guard from the door at the end of the hall had come halfway down the hall and also had her wand drawn. “I’m not sure what you think I’m doing down here, but I have no intentions of harming you.” He said as he stepped out into the hall.

“I called for help, Roger. What’s going on?” Rose said, wondering why she was holding Harry Potter at wand point.

“I’m not sure. Why are you down here, Mr. Potter?” Roger asked.

The elevator door slip open and three aurors stepped into the hall with their wands drawn already. Harry sighed when he saw Auror Bright and Auror Malone and a woman with them that he had seen yesterday but never met. He turned back to the man named Roger and said “I heard you took a recording of a prophecy that pertained to me. I wanted to hear it. I figured this was the place to come and hear it.”
Roger scowled and said “you can’t just come down to the hall of records and listen to a prophecy.”

Harry shrugged with his hands still held up and asked “How do I go about getting access to the prophecy then, if I can’t just come down and ask for it?”

Auror Malone asked, “Rose, what’s going on that you called for backup?”

Rose motioned to Harry. “Mr. Potter walked into the office and Roger called for help. I don’t really know what is going on.”

“Roger, what did Potter do that you called for help?”

Still holding his wand at Harry he said “he killed that Trelawney woman for giving her prophecy and now he’s down here to kill me for hearing it.”

“Auror Malone, can I put my hands down now? My shoulder is killing me from last night.”

Malone motioned the others to put their wands away. “I’m surprised to see you were released already. Roger, I’m pretty sure Mr. Potter didn’t come down here to kill you. You can put your wand away.”

Harry lowered his arms and hissed at the pain. “My healer told me to take it easy no fast movements or anything strenuous. I think I might have pulled a stitch putting my hands up.” He said gently pressing on his wound.

“Frank, he wants to hear the prophecy we recorded from Seer Trelawney.”

“I know, I heard, Roger. If the prophecy is definitely about him then he has a right to hear it.”

Clarence groaned and said under his breath “we should have let him die in the ally, Frank.”

Harry frowned and asked “You were the aurors that came to my rescue last night?” Frank nodded. “I should thank you for not letting me die in the ally, even though I can tell you wanted too. I am very grateful to be alive still. That was rotten luck to run into those men after having such a good time in the city.”

Clarence scowled and said “you shouldn’t have been in the city anyway, especially not with Lord Malfoy’s son and their slave.”

Harry shrugged and said “I’m not dead and I still have a life to live, I plan on living it.” He looked at Roger. “but first it thought I’d like to hear what Trelawney had to say about that.”

Roger sighed and said “You need permission from the ministers department to view any prophecies held in storage, even if it’s about you.”

“See, now were getting somewhere. Any idea who I should speak to up there?”

“You’ll probably need to speak to Percy Weasley, he’s been sorting through most of the request that come into that office.” The female auror said.

“Thank you, if you wouldn’t mind leading the way, I’d be happy to go and get permission.” Harry said smiling.

Auror Malone motioned for him to proceed. “I must say, Mr. Potter, that you determination to see a prophecy that upset you so much, at one point, you threatened to kill someone, is astounding. Did you check yourself out of the hospital just to come here and retrieve it?”
Harry chuckled and said “I plan on taking a vacation once all of this is done. I had an appointment with the new Wizengamot this morning at 11am, I checked myself out in time to make that appointment. They were done with me so if figured I’d come down here and have a listen, since I was here already.”

“What did the Wizengamot want with you?” Malone asked as he and the two other aurors joined him in the elevator.

“They wanted a detailed accounting of how I came to defeat the Dark Lord, and of what I did with the Deathly Hallows.” He said casually.

Frank chuckled and said “I did go back and read that article you suggested on page three. It was very interesting. May I ask what you did with them?”

“I destroyed them, Auror Malone. I didn’t want anyone using them against me or anyone else.”

“You destroyed them?” Auror Bright asked incredulously.

“Yeah.” Harry answered casually. “Why, Auror Bright, would you have liked to duel me and try to gain control of the Elder wand?”

“Yes,” Clarence said honestly. “Power like that could be used to bring about real change.”

Harry shook his head and said “it really wasn’t the wand that gave the bearer power over life and death it was the people who held the wand. The wand itself wasn’t really any more powerful than an everyday wand.”

The female auror asked “how do you know that? Maybe in the hands of a more powerful wizard or witch it would have been a powerful wand.”

Harry smirked and looked at the other two aurors and said “I suppose that’s possible.”

Both men frowned knowing that Potter didn’t believe that was the case and neither did they.

The elevator door opened to the auror department. Clarence and the woman stepped out. “I’ll catch up with you in a few minutes Clarence. I’m going to escort Mr. Potter to the Department of Ministry Office. I’ll be right back.” The door closed and Frank turned to Harry. “It’s hard to believe that you would destroy something as powerful as the Elder Wand.”

Harry nodded and said “you’re not the first person to tell me that. Even my close friends were shocked.”

“There’s something different about you. I can’t put my finger on it.”

“Again, you’re not the first person to feel that way.” He shrugged and said “I’m just a normal guy, no different than you.”

“I don’t think that is true at all, you are very different.”

The elevator door slid open to the office level of the ministry. Harry followed Auror Malone to front desk where a young wizard sat “Mr. Thomas, this is Harry Potter he needs to fill out a request form for the hall of records.”

The young man smiled at Harry and said “hey Harry, Do you remember me? I graduated two years ago.”
Harry smiled and said “Yeah, I remember you. You were in Hufflepuff and you joined DA just before you graduated.”

The man smiled as he pulled a form out and handed it to him. “I’m glad we won. I was worried that the death eaters would be here permanently. It wasn’t easy working here even as a halfblood. I was constantly looking over my shoulder in fear that Voldemort would change another law and start going after the halfbloods too.”

Harry frowned and glanced at Auror Malone. “I found it strange that Voldemort would have something against halfbloods considering he was one himself.”

Malone glared at Harry and said “He more than made up for his unfortunate birth by giving voice to the purist movement.”

Harry smiled and patted him on the shoulder. “We will have to agree to disagree on that topic.” After he finished the form he handed it back to Mr. Thomas. “Any idea how long this will take?”

Mr. Thomas looked the form over and folded it up. He tapped it with the end of his wand. “I’m not sure how long it will take.” He said as the message went whizzing away.

Harry sighed. “Can you at least give me an idea? Should I wait or come back?”

Mr. Thomas shrugged and said “I can’t really be sure, a few minutes or a few days. It’s hard to say.”

Auror Malone sniggered and said “welcome to the bureaucracy of the ministry. They do things on their own time line.”

Harry sighed and asked “Is it always this difficult?”

Mr. Thomas nodded. “They will send you a note, if your request has been approved.”

Harry glared at him. “It will be approved. I’m not leaving until it is.” Harry said angrily.

Frank was shocked at the sudden change in temper and took an involuntary step backwards. The elevator pinged. Minister Shacklebolt and Percy Weasley stepped out of it. “Mr. Potter,” Shacklebolt called out to him sounding annoyed. “I’m glad to have caught you. I was just going to send a message to try to track you down.”

He didn’t seem happy with finding him there but Harry kept his observations to himself. He turned his attention to Shacklebolt. “I’m done with the Wizengamot for today, Minister Shacklebolt” he snapped. “I was just trying to get my request to hear a prophecy about me fulfilled.”

Shacklebolt frowned and said “I didn’t realize that you had submitted a request for that.”

Mr. Thomas interjected, “he just did, not two minutes ago. It’s probably waiting on Mr. Wealsey’s desk.” Percy squeezed past them to get to his desk knowing that it would need to be looked at as soon as possible.

“I wanted to take care of this today so that I wouldn’t have to come back tomorrow.” Harry stated firmly.

“I expect you will have to come back tomorrow anyway but let’s see what we can do about the prophecy now.” Shacklebolt said. Harry wondered what he thought he was going to do to make him come back tomorrow.
Percy handed the form to Shacklebolt. “It’s done all. He just needs an escort.”

Shacklebolt took the form and looked it over then handed it to Auror Malone. “Do you think you could escort Mr. Potter down to the hall of records?”

Frank groaned and complained, “when did I get to be assigned as his personal escort?”

Harry chuckled and said “yesterday, when you saved me from your partner. I really do appreciate that you know.”

Frank shook his head and said “come on. I don’t want Roger getting his knickers in a bunch again because of you.”

Shacklebolt added, “when he’s done in the Hall of records bring him back up to the Wizengamot. The council wants to talk with him again.”

Harry scowled and said “I don’t want to talk to them again” angrily.

“I could have Auror Malone bring you there now and call the assembly together. We are on a break right now but I’m sure they haven’t gone far.”

Harry glared at him thinking ‘you could try’ but said “No, It’s fine. You say they are on a break. I must say I was surprised to see Snape and Malfoy in the assembly.”

Shacklebolt frowned and said “I hadn’t expected him to be reinstated as the Headmaster of Hogwarts again. The board of directors voted almost unanimously with only two votes against him. The Headmaster holds a seat on the Wizengamot.”

“As does the governor of the school board?” Harry asked.

Shacklebolt grimaced and said “No, Lucius Malfoy reinstated as Governor of the school board base. The Wizengamot voted him into the council after reviewing his history of making decisions based on the betterment of the wizarding community. Even though some of us feel his attempts were misguided the majority felt as though he would make a good council member.”

Harry thought that he didn’t seem very happy about that but didn’t comment. “I wonder if we could track down Headmaster Snape and have him meet me at the Hall of Records.”

“Why would you want him there?”

Harry shrugged and said “I trust him. I’m not so great translating prophecies.”

Twenty minutes later, Harry stood in the hall of records, holding a crystal globe very similar to the one he held several years ago. Similarly to the last time he held a prophecy ball, he was surrounded by death eaters. This time Lucius Malfoy wasn’t trying to take the globe from him, but instead he was trying to convince him to not reveal the prophecy to anyone. “Mr. Potter, it doesn’t matter what the prophecy says. You won’t be able to change it one way or the other even if you try. It’s just not how they work. If it’s a true prophecy then it won’t be able to be changed and anything you do to try and change it will just push it further along.”

“Lord Malfoy, I understand your concern, but I really think that knowing is better than not knowing.”

“It really won’t make a difference one way or the other. It’s much like knowing the sex of your child before it’s born. It doesn’t matter as long as it healthy.” Snape was saying.
“But it will drive a person crazy trying to change the fate of the prophecy, look at what it did to Voldemort.” Lucius said still trying to convince Harry that he shouldn’t listen to the recording.

Harry shook his head and said “I won’t be like Voldemort. I’ve got something he doesn’t have.”

Auror Malone chuckled and said “You still think you are better than him?”

Harry narrowed his eyes at Malone and said “I know I’m better than him. I still have my soul intact.”

Severus grimaced and said “Harry, that doesn’t mean a whole lot, you could still go mad from listening to the prophecy. People go crazy trying to analyze their own prophecies. You are going to drive yourself mad trying to figure it out. It may not even be a true prophecy.”

“I know that, Snape.” He snapped out. “Two days ago you said you’d listen to this with me and try to help me make sense of it. What’s changed your mind?”

Snape Paled and said “you changed my mind. You obviously haven’t changed much as you are still breaking the rules. You won’t be able to ignore this, Harry. It will drive you mad.”

“Then I’ll welcome the madness.” He held the globe out and said “I’m going to activate it. If you don’t want to hear it then I suggest you leave the room now.” He looked around at everyone. Lucius and Severus were both regarding him angrily while Frank and Roger were both waiting anxiously for him to activate the globe.

Harry concentrated on the globe, Sybill Trelawney’s voice sounded out into the room.

*The new dark lord approaches from the light. He will vanquish the evil that has been created by the veil. He will free those that are oppressed to live as they wish and release those of stone. He will protect the lives of those that have been gifted by the light and the dark. The new dark lord has come from the arms of death and will bring new life to the magical world. The one that is marked will be the savior of those that are thusly marked. The new dark lord approaches from the light and will rule in darkness with love and compassion.*

Harry frowned and said “That sounds contradictory. ‘rule in darkness with love and compassion’ what the hell is that supposed to mean?” He asked angrily.

“What evil was created by the veil?” Frank asked.

“Sybill was certain that Mr. Potter will fix the veil. She kept saying that he’s going to fix it. When Clarence tried to ask how he was going to fix it. She kept saying that he was a dark wizard and he was going to fix it.” Roger sighed and said “She was so relieved that we came to listen to the prophecy. She thought that Potter sent us. At the end of the interview Clarence told her that he didn’t send us. She was crying that Potter will send death after her.”

“I can’t do that Roger. You must realize that that was a threat that I couldn’t really follow through with.” Harry said feeling newly frustrated with the death of Professor Trelawney.

“Harry, now that you heard it you can see that it makes no sense. Sybill was clearly mad and at the end of her life. She didn’t speak a really prophecy.”

Roger grunted and said “I’ve been dealing with seers for the past forty years and I can tell a true seer from a false one. I know that she made several false prophecies but somehow she had a good connection to you, Mr. Potter. Everything she has said or predicted about you has come true.”

Severus scowled and said “you’re not helping” to Roger.
Harry chuckled and said “Severus, you are right. None of this makes sense. She probably was crazy and even if she wasn’t and this is true, it’s not a bad prophecy. There’s nothing about his prophecy that is negative.”

Lucius smirked and said “it all depends on how you interpret it. ‘release those that have been oppressed’ that could mean something like releasing criminals from Azkaban.”

“Why would I do that?”

Malone shrugged and said “a lot of Voldemort supporters have been imprisoned for doing things that were not really that bad.”

Harry frowned and asked “why didn’t Voldemort release them when he was in charge?”

“He was too busy fighting for his life. There was this little boy that was slowly killing off parts of him.”

Severus and Lucius chuckled. Lucius laughing said “I guess you could look at it that way.”

“There are also a lot of people that he had his Wizengamot send to Azkaban that probably didn’t deserve to be sent to that prison.”

Harry, feeling frustrated, motioned to the auror. “He and his auror friends are thinking about it that way. His partner threatened to kill me during the interrogation and then he wanted to leave me to bleed to death in the muggle ally. If your son and slave weren’t there he probably would have done something to speed it along.”

Lucius glared at him angrily. He was still mad at him for taking his son and slave to the city in the first place. “It’s all in how you interpret it. As I said, hearing it won’t make any difference. You can’t do anything to change it.”

Harry nodded in agreement “I see your point.” He handed the globe back to Roger. “Thank you for your help.” He turned to Severus and Lucius and said “Shacklebolt asked Auror Malone to make sure I came back to the Wizengamot meeting when I was done here. Care to walk with me?”

“Mr. Potter, do you have any idea why Shacklebolt told you to come back to the Assembly?” Lucius asked wondering if he had another premonition.

“No, I suppose it will be to ask more stupid questions about the Deathly Hallows or how I hunted down bits of a Dark Lord in an attempt to destroy him.” He said taking another poke at Auror Malone.

Malone chuckled and said “you even admit that you did it. How is it that he’s not even being tried for murder?”

Severus laughed and said “because he did us all a favor by getting rid of that mad man. I don’t think you ever had the pleasure of working closely with the Dark Lord did you Auror Malone?”

“I met him once when I took my oath, but no I never really had the chance to work with him directly. I know he was insane but he was better than what we had. He turned things around for us in the sense that now the wizarding world has been forced to see what we are capable of and that we have the power to take over England and make our own sovereign state.”

“Frank believes in purification and supremacy. He would like to rid the world of the less than purebloods like you and me, Severus.”
Frank frowned and said “it's a shame that you were born to a muggle father Professor Snape, as you clearly have embraced Purist ideology.”

“I have embraced the supremacy of those born with magic over those who were not. Blood status doesn’t make much difference to me as long as you embrace your magic and stay in the magical world. I don’t appreciate those that cross over and support the muggles.” He said eyeing Harry angrily.

Harry noticed and grimaced. He stopped in the hall looking at both of them. “You are mad at me for the trip to London yesterday?” He asked in surprise.

“Of all the reckless things that you could have done, but what’s more infuriating is that you dragged my son and my slave along with you.” Lucius bit out angrily

“I didn’t drag them. I offered for them to come along. We were having fun until that man pulled his gun on us.” Harry said defensively.

“Well, that won’t be happening again.” Lucius stated firmly. “When you are done here today you will be moving out of the Manor.”

Harry looked at him angrily and said “You are right, that’s probably the best thing. I can move into Grimmauld place even though it’s dusty. I can live with the dust.” He started walking towards the council hall again.

“Just like that, you’re moving out?” Severus asked him in shock.

Harry stopped again and nodded to them. “Yeah, I am. It’s something that I’ve been considering after talking to Draco yesterday. I’m a single man living under the roof of another man, I should be following certain rules and frankly I’m not going to be able to follow those rules. It’s not fair to you, or your family, to expect you to accept that kind of behavior from me. I was hoping to have a few more days to get furniture but today is as good as another.” He said still sounding angry as he turned and started back down the hall.

Lucius was at a loss for words. He had thought that Harry would at least ask for a reason for being thrown out but he once again his maturity had surprised him. They arrived at the Wizengamot hall. “We’ll talk more about this once were done here.” Lucius said trying to regain some composure.

“There’s really nothing more to talk about. I broke one of your rules and for that I’m being thrown out but he once again his maturity had surprised him. They arrived at the Wizengamot hall. “We’ll talk more about this once were done here.” Lucius said trying to regain some composure.

“Had we had this conversation, prior to the vote, I would have voted for him not against him.”

“I probably would have too. What the hell are we supposed to think about him when one day he’s going to muggle London and the next day he’s acting like he’s wants to be a proper wizard.”

Malone scowled having been dropped from the conversation. “What did you vote against him for?”

Severus sighed and said “I probably shouldn’t tell you this as it’s not been confirmed yet but he was nominated for a seat on the Wizengamot. We voted and 21 of the 28 members voted for him to take the seat.”
Frank glared at them and said “that’s insane. He’s just a kid.”

“I know but he’s got this ‘I defeated the Dark Lord’ appeal about him.” Lucius said scowling.

“Not to mention the confidence that he exudes. He literally dismissed himself during the earlier session. People have been accepting his authority as though he was in a position to be giving orders.” Severus told him.

Frank nodded and said “I’ve seen that and thought it odd, but not only that I let him do it to me.”

Severus chuckled and said “don’t feel bad, we’ve all done it to some extent. I think this will be quick you might want to wait for him to be done and escort him out.”

Harry went in and sat back in the seat in the center of the room. Most of the Wizengamot were already assembled they were just missing the two men in the hall. He looked back out the door at Severus and Lucius still talking to the Auror. He said to Shacklebolt “they are busy talking to my escort in the hall.”

Percy poked his head out and said “Lord Malfoy, Headmaster Snape, we are ready to get started.”

Once they were seated Shacklebolt started the meeting again. “Thank you for joining us again.”

“You are welcome. Let’s make this quick, I suddenly find myself very busy this afternoon.”

Shacklebolt frowned not knowing what he could be so busy with that was more important than this. “Very well, Mr. Potter. As you know it is a great honor to be offered a seat on the Wizengamot...”

Harry only half listened to Shacklebolt’s speech thinking ‘I was right they are going to offer me a seat.’ He refocused on Shacklebolt in time to hear him say “and after a vote of the current Wizengamot it has been decided that you will be offered a seat.”

Harry laughed and said “you’ve got to be kidding, right? There’s no way I’m taking a seat on the Wizengamot.” He continued laughing saying “Can I go now?”

Severus couldn’t help but snicker. He was trying really hard to not let out his laughter about Harry refusing such an important position in such a blunt way was too much for him. Finally he regained his composure. He looked around and realized that he had an audience. “I’m sorry; I just find this whole thing to be rather strange. Mr. Potter, had a premonition that he would be offered a seat. So he was clearly prepared for this offer. Mr. Potter maybe you’d like to think on this for a night. It is a very important position which you are remarkably well suited.”

“It’s quite alright, Headmaster Snape. I can assure you that we are all rather surprised to hear you laugh like that not to mention a person turning down an offered seat. Mr. Potter I would highly recommend that you reconsider your position. If you need a night to think about it we will meet again tomorrow at 8am.”

“and that might be another reason for me turning down this position. Does it pay? I mean, if you are expecting me to get up that early on a Saturday then I hope you are expecting to pay me for my time. I’d probably have to get up at 6am every morning just to get here on time. Now, I don’t want to say that I’m lazy, but I was hoping to get a job with better hours.”

One of the older men stood up and said “and this is why they don’t offer positions to someone so young and foolish.”
“I may be young but I am not foolish. I have very good reasons for not wanting to be tied to a job with a bunch of old people that do nothing to but argue amongst themselves. You are not going to get anything done behaving like that. You need to work together and make laws that will protect everyone.” Harry abruptly stopped talking. He stared blankly at nothing for a few minutes. The council sat watching him wondering what he was doing. Severus and Lucius sat on the edge of their seats waiting to hear what he would come up with next. Finally, he refocused on those in the room. “I’ll take your offered seat.” He said abruptly. The first thing I’d like to discuss is the tracing spell that you want to place on muggleborns as soon as they are detected by the ministry.” Murmurs went up about the room, about how he even knew that was a topic. “What would be the purpose of placing that spell on them?”

“We want to be able to find them and make sure they aren’t being treated poorly.”

“So something to the equivalent to a child protective service?” Harry asked. “Who would be in charge of that? How many muggleborn children are we talking about?”

“Right now there are 349 muggleborn children in muggle England between the ages of six months and seventeen.” Phoebe Culver told him.

“That’s a lot of children to trace. Are you talking about starting a new department or would this fall under the Auror Department?”

“That hasn’t been decided yet. First we wanted to discuss the ethics of placing a tracing spell on underage muggleborns and whether or not that their parents should be informed of the spell.”

Harry pursed his lips thinking about the ethics of tracing spells and children. “This can’t really be decided until we decide if those children born gifted should be allowed to be raised by muggles. Are they better off in the muggle world or bringing them into the magical world and fostering them out to other magical people?”

“Who would agree to foster muggle born children?” one of the witches asked.

“Anybody that wanted to protect our society from the muggle invasion” Harry stated. “If those children were brought in at a young enough age they could be raised with the magical world as their background. They won’t have the urge to leave this side of the veil and remain here but is that what we really want, to kidnap children?” Harry sighed and said “this is a huge topic. What it really comes down to is whether or not we feel muggleborns have any rights. We could assume that once they are born with a magical core then they automatically fall under the supervision of the magical world. They would have the right to a proper upbringing but who’s to say that a muggle can’t successfully raise a magical child. I know several muggleborns that are perfectly well adjusted witches and wizards. Some of them will most likely stay in the magical world but some may go back to their own towns and get jobs in the muggle world.” He sat thinking for a moment and then added “I want to work on this at home. I’ll see you in the morning.” Standing he walked from the counsel room. The guard at the door opened the exit door without even hesitating. Once in the hall he was happy to find Auror Malone.

“Mr. Potter, that was fast.”

“I didn’t want to keep you waiting.” He said casually. “I hope to be able to find my way around in the morning.”

“I thought I heard you say that you didn’t want to come back in the morning.”

“I did say that, but I’ve taken the offered seat on the Wizengamot and they want to reconvene in the
morning. So I’ll be here at 8am.” When they reached the elevator Harry said, “I think I can take this up to the lobby level, right?” Frank nodded his head. “I can find my way out from here. Thanks for your help.” Once in the lobby he found the security desk and the same man from the day before sitting behind it. Harry asked “any luck getting your wand back?” the man frowned and shook his head no. “I’ll see what I can do for you.” He said smiling.

Back in the Wizengamot assembly hall they were back to arguing but this time it was about the boy who thought he could leave as he wanted. Severus and Lucius were quietly talking about asking Harry to stay on now instead of him moving to Grimmauld. They were not getting involved with the debate as to whether or not he should be allowed to dictate when a meeting was over or not. They both knew the rules, that the head warlock, in this case Shacklebolt, dismissed the council. They were pretty sure that Harry knew the rules too. Or at least knew that what he was doing was against the rules but he clearly didn’t care.

“Lord Malfoy, would you care to weigh in on your opinion of Mr. Potters behavior?” Auror Burbage, Head of the Auror department asked.

Lucius was a little surprised to be called out in such a manner but recovered quick enough. “I couldn’t really give any advice to this argument other than to say, I’m pretty sure that Mr. Potter knows that he was breaking some kind of rule by leaving in that manner but he just doesn’t care.”

Severus cut in and said “Mr. Potter has always been a rule bender for as long as I have known him. He’s found himself in a position of authority now. I don’t think he’s meaning to behave like this he just needs to learn that you expect him to follow the rules.”

“Since you’ve so graciously opened your home to him, maybe you could take a few minutes to talk to him about the rules.” Arthur Weasley said sounding bitter.

Severus could hardly keep from rolling his eyes at Arthur’s snide remark but Lucius responded with, “Mr. Potter may be moving out of my home this evening. I suppose that’s what was more important that he didn’t want this to take too long.”

“Are you throwing him out?” Shacklebolt asked surprised.

“I’m not; he has opted to move out because he has problems following rules.” Lucius chuckled. “We tried to tell you that electing him wasn’t the best idea that we knew the boy and he wasn’t ready for this but most of you wouldn’t listen.”

“Headmaster Snape thinks that he’s …” Burbage looked at the court recorder “How did he put it?”

The court recorder leafed through the parchment and said “according to this statement from Headmaster Snape ‘It is a very important position which you are remarkably well suited’.”

“Yes, you seem to believe that he is remarkably well suited for the position, however, you voted against giving him the position which you think he’s well suited for. Why was that?” Auror Burbage said sounding suspicious.

“Because I know Mr. Potter fairly well, he is very suited for this position. However, this position isn’t ready for him; it isn’t ready for his style of problem solving. I can almost guarantee, that tomorrow morning he will be late for the meeting, but he will come in with a plan on how to deal with the muggleborn children. It will most likely be an even plan, where it’s both good and bad, but he will expect us to adopt it without question. He’ll give us all the information probably written out
so that we can examine it later. Then he’ll move onto another topic with the idea that we should revisit his plan in a day or two to vote it into action. That’s just how he does things. I don’t really think that you are all ready for him to take action like that and some of you will argue with him for the sake of arguing. He will see right through that and be angry about it.”

Lucius frowned and said “and you don’t want to see him angry. I’ve been in the presence of the Dark Lord himself and even I am a little intimidated by Mr. Potter’s anger.”

“He has to learn to control that side of him before he hurts someone.” Arthur said remembering his anger at the burrow.

“Yes, he does.” Severus admitted and added “he’s very aware of it and has been working to rein it in. It’s another reason why I didn’t want to elect him and I said as much.”

Most of the council nodded remembering Snape telling them that he had a bad temper. “He needs to learn the rules of the Wizengamot. Someone should sit down with him and go over them.” Another of the council suggested.

“Someone should write them down and send an owl to him tonight so he knows how we expect him to obey tomorrow.”

Lucius chuckled and said “I don’t think writing them down will do any good, he’s going to obey however he wishes.”

“By all means write them down send the owl and then tomorrow we will see if he chooses to obey them.” Severus added. “This could be fun.”

Shacklebolt scowled and said “I don’t think any of this sounds like fun. I’ll have someone send him an owl. If nobody has anything else to add then I’ll dismiss this session.” When no one spoke he banged the gavel and everyone started to rise “Headmaster Snape, Lord Malfoy, I’d like to speak to you both for a moment if you wouldn’t mind.”

Lucius groaned and said quietly to Severus “I was hoping to get home in time to speak to him before he took off and Hermione goes with him. I’m afraid these delays will keep me from doing that.”

Severus nodded in understanding. They joined Shacklebolt on the floor of the assembly area “Kingsley, we really need to get home before Harry moves out.”

“I understand and I won’t keep you. I only wanted to say that I think it would be better if he stayed at the Manor. He could use the advice of two other Wizengamot members. If you can persuade him to stay, I think you should.”

“You heard about the trip to muggle London, he knows that he broke a rule and once he finds out about Ms. Granger he probably won’t want to stay anyway.” Severus added with annoyance.

“Ms. Granger? What happened to Hermione?” Shacklebolt asked concerned

“I released her, as she didn’t seem to want to follow our way of life. We are all really upset by it, but I think it’s for the best. She can decide what she really wants now that I cut her loose.”

“What about the binding spell?”

Lucius shrugged and said “I don’t know any way to reverse it, so it’s still in place.”

“I think that she will want to return to us anyway, we’re not terribly concerned about it, but if she
doesn’t we really should find a way to reverse it.” Severus added.

“I’ll be interested to hear what comes of that but for now I won’t hold you any longer.”

Lucius and Severus stepped through the floo into the receiving room at the Manor. “Did Mr. Potter leave yet?” He asked seeing Narcissa and Draco sitting in the receiving room.

“Leave? He hasn’t come home yet?” Draco said concerned.

Severus scowled and said “he said he was coming here after the Wizengamot meeting to move his things to Grimmauld place. We rushed home to speak to him.”

“He hasn’t returned yet. Did you say he was at the Wizengamot meeting?” Narcissa asked.

“Yes. I was as surprised as you are” Lucius said. “I had thought, from what we heard last night, that his injury would lay him up for a day or two.”

Draco frowned and said “father, he was shot in the chest, right near his heart. I think it could have killed him if it were just an inch one way or the other.”

“I don’t know what to tell you, Draco. We never got a chance to ask him about it.”

“Did he message Herm… I mean Ms. Granger?” Severus asked.

“She’s been locked up in the blue room all day.” Draco said angrily. “Tecks reported that she hasn’t eaten and that she’s just been lying in bed crying.”

“Draco, don’t be angry with your father. He has his reasons for releasing her, we must respect his wishes.”

Draco crossed his arms and flopped back down on to the couch grumbling under his breath. Lucius scowled at him but didn’t reprimand him further. “Severus, do you mind checking with Ms. Granger and seeing if Potter contacted her?”

“Lucius, how did the Wizengamot meeting go?” Narcissa asked out of curiosity.

The morning session was crazy all we did was argue about muggleborn rights. The main topic was tracing children with a secondary topic of whose children they were? Are they children of the magical world or are they muggles born with magic? Who has the right to police them or control them?” He poured himself a drink and another for Severus for when he came back from talking with Ms. Granger. “Then at 10am Shacklebolt called for a recess because Harry Potter showed up to give his statement. We reconvened at 11am then spent three hours going over the details of his statement.”

Lucius chuckled and said “Mr. Potter got bored of listening to us argue. He stood and said he was done and left. The older members of the council ones that have been there for years couldn’t believe what they just saw. Once they got over the shock of being dismissed by Mr. Potter, Mrs. Honass, nominated him for a seat.”

“Honass, she’s a pureblood. I’m sure she would have been one of Voldemort’s supporters.”

“I’m pretty sure she was too. She still holds a seat so she must not have done anything really bad. I was shocked when she said that they needed young blood to sit on the council. Severus was the
youngest person on the council.”

“I was the youngest person on the council, until Honass nominated Potter. They discussed the pros and cons regarding someone so young and even asked our opinions on the matter, but completely ignored them after we gave them. Then the majority voted for him to be offered a seat. 22 of the 28 members voted for him” Severus said coming back into the room and jumping into the conversation.

“What did Ms. Granger have to say?” Lucius asked anxious to hear if she heard anything and about her wellbeing.

“She wouldn’t open the door. When I demanded that she open it, she said that I didn’t have the right to do that anymore. So I asked her, through the door, if she had heard from Potter. She asked if he was alright. I told her we were expecting him here and he didn’t show up. She started crying again. I don’t think she has heard from him.” Severus took the offered drink and said. “I wonder where he went.”
Harry came rushing out of the floo at the Ministry of Magic. He headed straight for the elevators calling for them to hold the car. The car was crowded for a Saturday morning and he was feeling flustered as he was running late. The occupants looked at him questioningly waiting for him to say where he was going. Harry scowled and said defensively “what is everyone looking at?”

“What floor do you need Mr. Potter?” one of the occupants said wondering why he was acting so strangely.

“Oh, sorry the Wizengamot.” He said still feeling flustered. He cast a nonverbal tempus and revealed to those in the elevator that it was 8:05am. He groaned when he saw the time. The elevator door slid open on his floor and he bolted from the car.

The meanwhile, Wizengamot council was discussing the topic of how long they would wait for Mr. Potter. Headmaster Snape had assured them that he would attend, that he was going to be late as usual. The door to the assembly room burst open and a flustered looking Potter stumbled into the room. He looked around the room for a place to sit, seeing that the chair from yesterday was gone, but he figured that it would make sense. “Minister Shacklebolt, where would you like me to sit so we can get this session started.”

Severus covered his mouth hiding his smile finding the infuriating behavior from his potions class room more entertaining here than it ever was there. Shacklebolt frowned and said “Mr. Potter, are you aware of the time? We started nearly ten minutes ago.”

Harry nodded and said “yes, I am aware of the time. It’s something I struggle with like some people struggle with alcoholism I struggle with chronically late syndrome. Can we get this started or would you rather take more time reminding me of my one weakness.”

Shacklebolt paled and motioned to the seats. “You may sit where you like.”

Harry went up the small flight of steps and took the first empty seat. He cleared his throat, and said “I’ll apologize for the paper that this proposal is written on. I went to a muggle hotel last night to work on this problem. I had no parchment or ink. I used their paper and pen. Then I had to ask them to use their copy machine to make copies for me.” He said chuckling.

“Mr. Potter, why didn’t you just use your magic to make copies?” Lucius asked annoyed that Potter admitted to being in a muggle hotel overnight and not safely at the Manor.

He shook his head. “I tried, but I think the paper and ink couldn’t be copied with magic.” He tapped the stack of papers making them fly about the room with a copy going to each council member. “As you can see, I worked out a plan for dealing with the muggleborn children. I’ve thought of the all positive and negatives. The plan can be put into action as soon as it accepted by the council. In my plan, a tracing spell will be placed on all muggleborn children under the age of eleven. After that age, they fall into Hogwarts hands and from there their health and wellbeing can be tracked by the staff at Hogwarts.” He turned to Severus, and said “I trust the new Headmaster won’t put the lives of children at risk as the old headmaster did.”

Severus smiled and nodded, saying “Hogwarts would be happy to provide a safe environment for the children of the magical world.”

Harry nodded, and said “Good, I thought that would be the case. Furthermore, if a child is having a
problem at home then the staff will report the problem to the newly established Ministry Department of Children and not keep it a secret. The children of both muggleborn and magic born should be able to seek refuge at Hogwarts and not be sent home to abusive families. I don’t think that there will be a lot of those children, but Hogwarts can handle them should the need arise.” He paused turning the page of his copy. “Children born to muggles will have dual citizenship, with the magical citizenship being the dominant one. If a muggleborn child is mistreated, the muggles will be handled as though they have committed a crime against a foreign dignitary. Mistreatment can come in the form of physical, emotional, mental, or neglectful abuse. They will also be condemned for refusing to educate the child of their heritage. If need be the child will be removed from muggle care and placed in a foster home.”

Shacklebolt interrupted him, and said “the muggle authorities will never go for that, Mr. Potter. They won’t recognize us as a country that has citizenship. Nor, will they allow us to take their children from them.”

Harry looked at Shacklebolt, and said angrily “are you or are you not a wizard, Minister Shacklebolt?”

Shacklebolt stood up, becoming defensive, and said “what do you mean by that, Mr. Potter?”

Harry stood up and faced off with Shacklebolt, accidently letting his magic slip around him. He took a deep breath trying to bring his anger under control. He began counting to ten trying to rein in his temper and regain control of his magic. When he felt he had some semblance of control, he said, through clenched teeth. “They are muggles. They don’t get to dictate to us whether or not we can take one of our own into protection. If they try to stop us, we will stop them. These are our children and we must protect them.”

Shacklebolt looked shocked at Harry. He had never seen him lose his temper like that before and now he was getting the feeling for what Percy had been telling him. “Mr. Potter, we cannot bully the muggle authorities into letting us control their children.”

Potter chuckled, and said “we can and we will. They are our children and if it becomes a problem, we can just make that problem go away. We are wizard and witches after all.” He turned to the last page of his paper, ending the discussion on that part of the topic. “The muggle authorities will be given a liaison that they can report to if they feel that one of our children is being mistreated, or if they feel that child is becoming a discipline problem. I don’t want them to ever feel that they are stuck with a child that likes to set things on fire or calls dangerous snakes to a playground.”

Several of the wizengamot frowned at that statement. One of them asked “Mr. Potter, who did you expect would be setting things on fire and calling snakes?”

“Tom Riddle would do that all the time when he was at the orphanage. They didn’t understand what he was so they considered him a discipline problem. I, myself, would find snakes, or the snakes would find me, at the school playground. I thought I had a really good imagination, but now I know different. I know several muggleborns that never played with the muggle children, as they were thought to be trouble makers. Things happen around magical children, that muggles don’t always understand.” He set his copy down, and said “I know some of you will want to argue about this for the sake of arguing about it. I’d appreciate it if you did that on your own time. We can go over the details in a few days, after you’ve had a chance to look over my proposal, and maybe even rewrite it so that it looks more legal. I don’t care; I don’t need to be involved in that process. I’ll come back and vote on it when the time comes to vote. So, now that that is done, I’d like to bring up another topic that should be fairly quick and it will make it look like we actually accomplished something today…”
“Mr. Potter, Auror Burbage interrupted, that is not how a council meeting works. There are rules that you must follow. Didn’t you get the rules that were sent to you last night?”

Harry shrugged, and said “I was in muggle London, I’m pretty sure no owls deliver mail to the twenty third floor executive suite. I didn’t get anything if they do.”

“Well, there are rules that must be followed.” He stated gruffly.

Harry smiled, and said “fine, we’ll follow your rules. Where would you like to start?” He sat looking pointedly at the head of the Auror department.

The auror spluttered out “It’s not my place to decide where we start. The head of the Wizengamot decides what will be discussed and what won’t be discussed.”

Harry turned his gaze to Shacklebolt waiting for him to say something. Shacklebolt sighed shaking his head, and said “Mr. Potter, you have something else that you say will be quick?”

Harry nodded, and said “It has come to my attention, that several muggleborn witches and wizards have had their wands taken from them. Hopefully, the Auror Department kept a list of them, and it will be as simple as sending out an owl and telling them that they can come in and retrieve them.”

Auror Burbage began choking as Harry put his department on the line. “We were forced to remove the wands of muggleborns by the Wizengamot. They would have a record of whose wands were taken.”

“But I thought you were a member of the Wizengamot at that time? You didn’t keep records of the wands?” Harry asked incredulously. “Surely, someone, must have been keeping track?” The other members of the Wizengamot looked around nervously. “I can’t tell you, how disgusted I am feeling right now.” He said looking around at the older members of the council barely containing his anger.

“You don’t know what it was like. We had multiple cases a day, the death eaters were just dragging muggleborn witches and wizards in here interrogating them. We were forced to remove their wands. The lucky ones were sent home wandless, but some of them weren’t so lucky.”

Harry held up his hands, and said “I don’t want to hear any more excuses. I was here, I saw you interrogate a muggleborn woman who had magical children, as her husband watched helplessly. This is something that should have been fixed right away. Unless of course you are of the frame of mind that they don’t deserve to have their wands, that maybe they aren’t worthy of their birth right?” He looked around trying to determine what the wizengamot’s position was on people born with magic. Finally, he asked the question. “What is the position of the Wizengamot about people that are born with magic? Do you believe that muggles are somehow stealing their gifts from people with magic? I’ve heard quite a few ridiculous theories regarding that.”

Lucius spoke. “Not all of the theories are ridiculous; Mr. Potter. The dark Lord’s position was that muggles took the magic unknowingly but still they were thieves. He believed that they were the reason for the pureblood decline in numbers. I’m sure that is why their wands were taken from them. I can’t say that I disagree with at least some part of that theory. Somehow the magic went to them and not to us. Now that they have the gift they should be bringing it to our world.”

Several of the council nodded in agreement but a few others began arguing that it wasn’t right. They shouldn’t be dictating how a person used their gift. Arthur Weasley stood, and said “we can’t expect people to want to stay in the magical world when there is so much to offer in the muggle world.”

Lucius groaned, and said “There is nothing to offer in the muggle world, only violence and sickness.
They will bring about another plague and our numbers will decrease even further. Not to mention how we will be sought after once they discover what we can do. We can’t live amongst them without causing a great deal of problems. Do you even know how dangerous they can be?"

Arguments broke out around the room debating the dangers of muggles and their diseases. The assembly was totally out of control. Harry looked at Shacklebolt and briefly felt sorry for him, before realizing that he shouldn’t be letting them argue like they were. Shacklebolt was banging his gavel, trying to bring them under control but no one was listening. Harry, having had enough of the council, stood and went down the stairs. He started for the door but noticed one of the older members drawing their wand. Harry wasn’t sure who he was planning on cursing, but figured he should step in before things got too crazy. He held out his hand and silently called for the wizard’s wand to come to him. It went flying through the air and into his hand. He then used the wand to cast a silencing charm about the room. All that could be heard was Shacklebolt’s gavel hammering down trying to bring attention to him. The members were still speaking loudly to each other but no sound was coming from their mouths slowly they went silent as their attention turned to Shacklebolt who stood looking at Harry in shock. Harry said, “I think you’ve got their attention now. Maybe you should try only recognizing one person at a time. Silence the others, and let just one person talk.” He held the wand up that he took from the council man. “I didn’t get a list of the so called rules, but I don’t think you are supposed to draw your wand in here, are you?”

Shacklebolt turned to the man that was standing behind him, and said “Mr. Blarmy did you draw your wand? What were you planning on doing with it?”

Blarmy looked around shiftily and tried to speak. Harry released him and he said “Potter was leaving, again. He started this fight, to pit us against each other and then he was going to leave.”

Harry darkened and let his power slip. Blarmy was flung backwards into his seat. “So you thought you would draw your wand against me?” He said as he stalked closer to him his anger roiling about the room. He looked around the room and said “I didn’t pit you against each other. This is your own doing for not being reasonable wizards and witches. You should be ashamed of yourselves for letting this get this far” he said as his anger cooled. “Muggles are very dangerous, Mr. Blarmy, but so are witches and wizards. The sooner we come to realize that the better off we will be. Muggles have had to adapt to life without magic and they are very good at adapting better than we are. They have a lot of fantastic devices some of which won’t even work for us because of our gifts. Their devices they can do things that we can’t even with magic. They can light up whole cities and we are lucky if we can light up a room. They have the advantage over us in that sense. They also have superior weapons. We have wands, but wands can’t stop a bullet from piercing your chest and nearly hitting your heart. We can’t stop their bombs from blowing up Azkaban. We can’t stop them from destroying us entirely, if they really tried, but we can increase our numbers and part of that is to embrace all that are born with the gift, regardless of their heredity.”

“Mr. Potter, if you would please release Mr. Blarmy, and retake your seat we will continue.” Shacklebolt said, regaining some of his composure.

Harry let up on Blarmy, who remained seated afraid to make a move, and bring the attention from Mr. Potter back to him. “Minister Shacklebolt, I respectfully request a recess. I think we all could use a few minutes to cool off. Then we can come back and figure out how to go back over the records and find wands and wrongly imprisoned witches and wizards.”

Shacklebolt called for a one hour recess and banged the gavel. Harry handed him Blarmy’s wand and stormed out of the council room. He wanted nothing more than some fresh air and maybe a cup of tea but he had no idea where to get it. He went straight for the elevator and began pacing outside of the door as if it were the room of requirement. He looked down the hall as the other members
started flooding out of the room. They crowded together in their little clicks glancing at him and
speaking quietly. He was sure they were talking about him and that made him feel even more
frustrated. He didn’t have anything in common with these people, not even morally. The elevator
door finally beeped and slid open; he stepped inside and was just about clear of the other
Wizengamot members when Lucius Malfoy’s cane stopped the door from closing. Harry cursed
under his breath as the four men he least wanted to talk too stepped into the elevator with him.

“Mr. Potter, we’d like to speak to you for a moment.” The elevator doors slid closed as Shacklebolt
spoke. He pulled his wand out and paused its progress.

“My head really needs some space.” He said rubbing at the scar that hadn’t bothered him in days.

“Yes, well, we’ll make this quick.” Arthur said knowing that look to mean he was getting a
headache.

“We’d all like to know where you went last night.” Shacklebolt asked him.

“As I said I went to a muggle hotel. You can tell which one it was by their letter head.”

“Why didn’t you come back to the Manor?” Lucius asked, clearly annoyed with the boy.

Harry sighed and leaned back against the elevator wall still feeling magically drained. He was putting
a lot of energy into healing his wound and then he let his power out to play in the assembly. “I
needed to get out of the meeting yesterday because I was bleeding again. I could feel the blood
draining from my body. That’s why I was in such a rush. I left here and went right back to St.
Mungo’s.” He laughed, and said “news really travels fast. When I got to St. Mungo’s, I didn’t have
just any healer, I had My Healer. Apparently Wizengamot members have their own healers assigned
to them. It doesn’t matter who else they are treating, that Healer is to drop everything and come when
their Wizengamot charges come in. My healer had just come off of a two day shift but was called in
to fix my shoulder back up. Healer Relic, made his anger clear to me. So, I took his advice and left
the hospital went into muggle London and got a room. I slept and then worked on that proposal and
slept some more. Kreacher came and woke me up but it was difficult to wash without magic and not
get the bandage wet.” He pulled his shirt aside showing the top of the bandage.

“Why didn’t you contact someone? We were worried about you.” Severus said.

Harry shrugged and said “I didn’t have anyone to contact.”

“You could have come to the Burrow or at least sent a message.” Arthur said accusingly.

Harry smirked and said “I didn’t think that you would even know to worry.”

“We expected you back at the Manor, when you didn’t show we contacted Mr. Weasley and then
Minister Shacklebolt. I was going to offer you to stay with us for a few more days.” Lucius said.

“I didn’t realize that. I’m sorry to have worried all of you. The last we spoke you said you wanted
me out and I agreed that I should move out of your home. What has changed your mind?”

“You have changed my mind. You clearly need some support as you don’t seem to have anyone.”

Harry groaned, and said “I’ve got Kreacher. He hasn’t abandoned me.”

We’ll make room for you at the Burrow. At least you will be amongst friends.”
Lucius scowled at Arthur but didn’t say what was on his mind. “Mr. Potter, I will not fight over you. We have not abandoned you either. You are welcome to return to the Manor, till you can get settled into Grimmald Place.”

Harry chuckled, and said “Kingsley, aren’t you going to offer to take me in, too?” He shook his head. “Ah well, it’s just as well, that you don’t, since I wouldn’t take you up on the offer anyway. I don’t need handouts. I have plenty of money according to the goblins at Gringotts. What I need is time. I just don’t seem to have enough of that.”

“Harry, I’d like to offer you my advice, I think you should take Lucius or Arthur up on their offers to stay with their families. You could use the companionship and I know for a fact that Draco and Ms. Granger are missing you at the Manor.” Severus said to him.

“Ms. Granger? What has happened that you are calling her Ms. Granger again?” Arthur asked.

“It’s none of your concern, Arthur.” Severus said to him.

Harry scowled, and said to Lucius “You released her, didn’t you? You released her, because I talked her into going into London.”

Shacklebolt tapped on the control panel again making the elevator start moving again. “Mr. Potter, I think you should take Severus’ advice and stay with friends until you are more settled.”

“Do you mean that you’ve given her her freedom? You are no longer holding her as your slave.” Arthur asked incredulously.

“I wasn’t holding her as my slave, she chose to stay but she has chosen to disobey my rules and I have released her because of that.”

“She’s probably really upset over it, and I wasn’t even there for her. Dammit.” He cursed and banged his head on the wall. “I didn’t realize that you would do that to her. I didn’t realize that us going into London would upset you so much.” He sighed and said “I’m sorry, Lucius. I really didn’t think about how that would affect your family.”

“Harry, you have a lot to learn if you plan on entering into the Purist wizarding lifestyle.” Lucius said to him as the elevator door slid open to the lobby. A crowd of people stood waiting for the car.

“I Know.” He said, frowning, as he stepped from the car, pushing past the crowd. “I didn’t eat breakfast and I need some fresh air.”

“I’ll see you back in an hour gentlemen.” Shacklebolt said leaving them in the lobby.

“There’s a place across the street from the front entrance that serves coffee, tea and breakfast items.” Arthur said smiling and motioning for Harry to precede him.

“Thanks Arthur. I should have eaten the breakfast offered at the hotel but it didn’t look appealing.” Lucius frowned. “You didn’t eat before you came in?”

Harry shook his head, and said “I was in a rush, and the eggs looked dried out by the time I got to them. It’s probably why I’ve got this terrible headache coming on. If I didn’t know better I’d think Voldemort was up to his mind tricks again,” he said laughing.

“That’s not something I’d like to joke about.” Lucius said, thinking about the Dark Lord once again coming back from the dead.
Harry stopped mid step and turned to him. “He’s never coming back. You have my word on it. He’s dead.” He said more seriously than his normal manner.

Lucius paled, and said “and I can’t thank you enough for that.”

“I never would have been so successful if it weren’t for those helping from the inside. So for that I can’t thank you enough.” He started for the door again. “Are you joining us?” he asked as he held the door for Arthur.

“No, we’ll catch up with you later.” Severus said, knowing that spending any more time than necessary with Arthur wasn’t a good idea for Lucius.

Harry nodded suspecting that Severus was trying to save Lucius from spending time with Arthur. “Since you have offered, and I want to see Ms. Granger and Draco, I would like to come back to the Manor, at least for the night, maybe longer, if you will have me.”

“You would be welcome.” Lucius told him.

Harry sat eating a muffin and drinking a cup of tea. His headache immediately subsided once he had started eating. “Arthur, I don’t want you to be disappointed in my choice to return to Malfoy Manor. I really need some space and it’s very crowded at the Burrow.”

“I know Harry, we don’t consider it crowded, but cozy. My family is very tight. We are very warm and loving. I can’t imagine how cold it must be in the Malfoy household. I have trouble understanding how someone like you or even Hermione could prefer such cold environment over our warm and loving one.”

“I think you’d be surprised with the Malfoy family. I’d rather you didn’t let anyone know I’m telling you this, but their outwardly cold appearance isn’t how they are in Private. When Severus was sick after the battle they all gathered around him giving him support. It was very strange to see having only ever seen them in public.”

Arthur thought on that for a moment and said, “the purists consider emotions to be weakness. I still can’t imagine them being loving or caring.”

Harry shrugged, and said “it’s probably better that way. We better get back. I don’t want to be late again today.”

Arthur and Harry stepped off the elevator a few minutes early. Harry wanted to get back inside and have a chance to relax before the rest of the council reconvened, but was surprised to see several aurors in the hall standing near the entrance to the assembly room. He noticed Auror Malone talking to Percy Weasley and figured that it wouldn’t be a good thing. He paused mid stride with the intentions of turning back for the elevator.

“Mr. Potter, just the man I wanted to see,” Auror Malone said to him when he noticed him down the hall.

Harry groaned, and said to Arthur, under his breath, “this can’t be good.” Arthur frowned not knowing what Harry was referring too. “Auror Malone, what can I do for you?” Harry asked, hoping it was nothing.

“It seems that the head of the Auror department has resigned and that puts me in charge as I’m the next highest ranking Auror.”

Arthur asked, in shock, “Burbage resigned? Why would he do that?”
Malone shrugged, and said “he didn’t say. Just that he was resigning and that I was in charge.”

“Congratulations on your promotion.” Harry said feeling genuinely happy for him.

“Thanks, but right after he resigned, I had this huge project dropped in my lap.”

Harry nodded, and said “court records from the past year to find wands and wrongly imprisoned wizards and witches.”

Malone nodded, and said “I suppose that was your doing.”

“I thought it would be a quick and easy project but it seems that Burbage didn’t make his people do any record keeping.”

“I don’t think he ever expected to have to return the wands or pardon any of the prisoners sent to Azkaban.”

“He was wrong, any idea how we can go about fixing this problem?” Harry asked.

Malone shrugged, and said “I’ve sent to Azkaban for a list of those that were imprisoned and what they were sent there for. That should give us at least some idea.”

Harry nodded, and said “that’s a start.”

“Could we put an ad in the daily prophet, stating that we are trying to clean up this Voldemort mess, and ask those that have had their wands taken from them to come in?” Arthur asked.

“I’m afraid we’d be flooded with people. I’m not sure how many people have been affected. Voldemort’s Auror department was going out in the field and doing random interviews. Wands were taken on site. Not everyone came into the ministry only those that were considered a threat.”

“That’s insane. Didn’t anyone think that what they were doing was wrong?” Harry asked, feeling frustrated with the whole situation.

“If they did they didn’t voice it.” Author added.

“I didn’t do it, but I know some of the auror’s that went out would break the wands in front of the mudbloods.”

Harry frowned, and said “I’m liking the idea of having the people come to us. Maybe, they can ask for a meeting to retrieve their wands. They could write to the auror department and request a meeting to pick it up. It would be slow but we could control the numbers that show up.”

Malone nodded, and said “that might work.”

“What happened to the wands at Ollivander’s I wonder.” Harry said.

Arthur said, “you could probably ask Lord Malfoy what happened, weren’t they holding him prisoner for a while?”

Harry nodded, “yeah, I think you are right. I’ll ask him later.” Other council members started arriving and filing into the assembly hall. “Auror Malone, I guess I’ll see you inside.” Harry entered the hall and found a seat. Arthur went to the other side of the room sitting with some people that Harry didn’t know yet. He thought it was just as well as he wasn’t sure he wanted to be tied to Arthur. Severus and Lucius arrived and took the seats directly behind him. Harry was relieved that they had taken seats close but not with him as he wasn’t sure if they wanted to be tied to him.
Shacklebolt entered the room as the last of the council filed in. He banged his gavel and started the meeting. “Thank you all for coming. There’s been a change in our ranks, Auror Burbage, has resigned.” Murmurs went up around the room. “I can’t say why he has chosen to resign his position but the next highest ranking auror is, Auror Francis Malone. Auror Malone, please take a seat.”

Frank looked around the room. Seeing Harry, he smiled, and took the seat next to him. Harry leaned over to him and whispered “I’m afraid I’m not very popular at the moment.”

Frank whispered back and said “I don’t think you’ve ever been real popular here Mr. Potter.”

Harry shrugged, and said “it’s the story of my life.”

Severus leaned forward and said “it’s not a popularity contest.”

Harry nodded, and said “he’s right, but they could have fooled me.”

Shacklebolt continued “Auror Malone, before the break we were discussing the returning of wands to the people that Voldemort’s wizengamot took.”

Malone stood, and said “Auror Burbage informed me of what you would need before he took off. I’ve gathered some information, but the department didn’t keep records. I gather, from Burbage’s statement, he didn’t expect to ever have to return their wands or pardon them from Azkaban. Our department was over worked and understaffed; over half of the aurors that were on staff before Voldemort took over were either muggleborns or halfbloods. A lot of people have returned to their post, now that he’s gone, but many that were on staff during his reign were weeded out as death eaters, an arrested for recorded crimes.”

One of the council members stood up, and asked “but weren’t you a death eater, I could swear that you were. How is that you have avoided being arrested?”

Malone smiled, and said proudly “The Death Eater oath, is an oath you take for life. I was working as an auror before Voldemort took over. I haven’t committed any crimes that weren’t in the keeping with the laws set forth by the Wizengamot. Many of the aurors that took the death eater oath, took the law into their own hands and committed crimes that they were later arrested for.”

“Thank you, Auror Malone, please be seated.” Shacklebolt said before he went on and said, “As you can see this problem isn’t as quick and easy as Mr. Potter thought it would be.” Harry grumbled about all the stupidity in the ministry but kept it mostly to himself. “I do think it is an important topic and I would like to suggest we assign a few people to work on the problem.”

“Minister Shacklebolt,” A woman who was sitting next to Arthur stood and said “The human resources department might be able to go back to the time in which He Who Must Not Be Named took over and find those that stopped coming into work. We could do that fairly easily and then send missives out offering them their jobs back. We could use those that come back to go over court records and clean up some of this mess.”

“Thank you, Mrs. Femmel.” Shacklebolt said, “that’s a good start.”

Frank raised his hand again waiting for Shacklebolt to acknowledge him. Once he had the floor he said “before we got started, I sent a missive to Azkaban asking for a list of prisoners that have been sent to them over the past two years. I expect that to be fairly easy for them to do. I think we will have that in a few days.”

“Thank you, Mr. Malone.” Shacklebolt looked around the room looking to see if anybody else had anything to say. “If no one has anything to add, I’d like to propose, that we revisit this in a few days
and see how our progress is coming.” Several people seconded the proposal and Shacklebolt banged the gavel again. “Our next topic, was actually what was scheduled for today, the sentencing of war crimes. As many of you may know, our holding area here at the ministry is over flowing with death eaters and others that have committed crimes against wizards and witches during Voldemort’s reign. Mrs. Hossan put forth that most of the prisoners could be spared the trial and sent right to Azkaban. It would speed our process up. However, the Wizengamots former laws stated that everyone gets a trial. This would be a major change in our laws if we made this move. By a show of hands who is in favor of this move.” Only a few hands went up but most of the council was looking at Harry to see how he would vote on this action. Shacklebolt noticed and inwardly groaned. “Mr. Potter, did you wish to weigh in on this topic.”

Harry was a little surprised to be singled out. He glanced around the room, just now noticing that everyone was looking toward him. He stood up, and said “Thank you, but I really have no idea what the judicial process is, so I have nothing to add on this topic.”

Shacklebolt chuckled, and said “I think we’d like to hear your thoughts on it, anyway. There are nearly 300 prisoners being held here awaiting trial. It would take us well over a year to hear each case.”

“The number doesn’t matter. They deserve to be heard. Most of the cases would be fairly quick. I’ve heard of some of the crimes. Frankly those that dragged innocent muggles out of their homes, and tortured and rape them, and not under direct orders from Voldemort should be given the kiss. There’s not much to trial there, but I’m sure crimes were committed under direct orders from Voldemort. In that case, they should be treated as imperious cases. They were in fear of their lives, so they did things to save themselves. If they didn’t do what they were ordered to do, they’d be killed and Voldemort would have just found someone else to do it for him. No, everyone deserves a trial or at the very least a review.” Harry sat back down having stated his feelings on the matter.

“Thank you, Mr. Potter, so again, all those in favor of forgoing the trials raise your hands.” This time not one hand went up around the room. Shacklebolt looked around the room and said “Now that that is settled, I’d like to suggest that we decide who will be trialed first. I was initially thinking first come first serve, but we have several older people sitting in our cells. I’d like to suggest that we start with old or sick. A show of hands please.” Harry put his hand up and then most of the Wizengamot followed.

The court assistant remarked “let the record show that 25 hands have elected this option.”

Shacklebolt smiled and said “Again, I’d like to thank you all for coming in today. I know it’s Saturday, and normally we don’t hold council on Saturday, but seeing as this past week’s advents have changed things, I thought it important to work out a few things. I’d like to reconvene in three days’ time. That will give us Sunday off and then Monday and Tuesday to work on these projects. On Wednesday, we’ll take a second look at Mr. Potter’s proposal for the tracing spell, see where things stand on returning wands and pardoning the wrongly accused, and if there is time we’ll start looking at the sentencing of the prisoners. I already have someone rewriting the proposal, as soon as that it complete, a copy will be sent to each of you for review. If there is nothing else that anyone wants to add, then I’ll dismiss the assembly and look forward to seeing each of you promptly at 8am Wednesday morning.” Shacklebolt looked directly at Harry when he said the last part. He banged his gavel one last time and left the assembly hall.

Harry leaned back in his chair, and groaned “why does it have to start so early.” Then he had a thought, “hey, what if you already have a job? Do you have to drop everything and attend?”

“Some of the meetings are mandatory, but others aren’t. They can vote on things as long as 75% of
the council is here. Or you can owl your vote in for somethings.” Severus informed him. “I have a lot of work to do at Hogwarts, so it’s likely that I won’t be here for most of the sentencing trials. Albus would often come in time to vote and leave. He rarely stayed for the whole meeting.”

Harry sneered, and said “We can all agree that that probably wasn’t the best thing for him to do.”

“What proposal did you put forth, Mr. Potter?” Frank asked.

Lucius handed him his copy of the proposal, and said “it’s actually quite good, even if it is on muggle paper.”

Severus smiled, and said “didn’t I tell you that he would do well at writing it. It’s better then what Phoebe Culver had proposed and it was her idea.”

Lucius frowned, and said “they won’t vote it in because it proposes that we strong arm the muggles into accepting us a legitimate nation, giving our people a citizenship.”

Frank frowned, and said “that sounds brilliant. You have no idea how hard it is to convince the muggles that we have diplomatic immunity. Thursday night, your mudblood slave, did the most brilliant piece of magic. She cast a memory spell over the muggles. It made anyone who touched them think that the shooter had a heart attack and the other guy hit his head. Even now, speaking to my partner, Clarence Bright, he doesn’t even remember Mr. Potter, Mr. Malfoy or your slave being there. Nor does he remember why we were there.”

Lucius smiled. “She is brilliant isn’t she?” He said proudly.

“If we could all cast spells like that it would be easy to swoop in and handle any problems our citizens had and get out before anything happened.”

Harry nodded. “I hesitated doing anything to stop the muggers, because I knew we weren’t allowed to do magic against muggles. It nearly cost me my life. I won’t make that mistake again.”

Severus frowned, and said “hopefully you won’t be putting yourself in a position where you will be in contact with them.”

“I doubt I’ll be able to avoid it entirely,” Harry said sadly. “Auror Malone, again congratulations on your promotion. I’ll probably be staying at the Malfoy Manor again if you need me for anything. Now, I’m anxious to see my friends. I haven’t seen them since I was shot in the alley. I’ll see you Wednesday at 8am.” Harry stood, Severus and Lucius followed.

“Good day, Auror Malone.” Lucius and Severus both bid him goodbye.

As they were leaving, Arthur stopped them in the hall. “Lord Malfoy, I was thinking about Ms. Granger, and wondered if she’s no longer your slave, if that meant that she was free to move out?”

“Yes, of course, I suggested that she ask Harry if she could move in with him at Grimmauld place, but now it seems that Harry will be staying on with us, at least a little while. She is free to do as she wishes. She has been free to do that since Voldemort died, but she chose to stay. If you would like to see her just send her a message. I’m sure she would welcome it.” Lucius said even though he inwardly hated the idea that she might chose to go to the Burrow.

“Thank you, I will do that.” Arthur said.
Conversations at Malfoy Manor

Harry followed Lucius threw the floo at the Manor with Severus right behind him. “You don’t mind if I go and look in on Hermione, do you?” He asked as he started for the door.

Lucius followed him out of the room saying “no, not at all. As a matter of fact I had hoped you would do so.”

Harry started up the steps and smiled when he saw Draco rounding the corneed coming down. “Hi.”

Draco’s eyes lit up. “Harry, you are here! I thought for sure I was mistaken.” He said, excited to see his new friend.

“Draco, I’d like to speak to you for a moment before you talk with Mr. Potter.” Lucius said, to his son.

Harry stopped in front of him on the steps. “I’ll see you later, okay?” He said, smiling at him.

“Yeah, Okay.” Draco said, having the feeling that Harry meant what he was saying.

Harry reached the second floor and headed to the blue room. He knocked on the door “Hermione, can I come in?”

The door was flung open as Hermione threw herself into his arms. “Harry, I was so worried about you.” Lucius and Severus stood in the hall watching her as she hugged her friend tightly. She opened her eyes and saw them staring at her, scowling she quickly released him and dragged him into the blue room shutting the door loudly behind her.

“She’s angry with us still?” Lucius asked, in surprise.

“She has the right to be. You really hurt her. She may act mature but deep down she’s still very young.” Severus sighed, and said “I think we are doing the right thing by making her take some time on her own to explore what she really wants. She’ll forgive you, eventually.”

Draco sighed, and asked, “was there something you wanted to talk to me about, father?”

“Yes, Draco, I wanted to tell you that I’ve had a change of mind. After discussing things with Mr. Potter today, I have decided that I would like for you to stay at the Manor. I understand your need to explore your world and I don’t want to crush your enthusiasm.”

Draco narrowed his eyes at him. “So, if I wanted to go to a muggle town again you’d allow it?”

Lucius frowned, and said, “I would hope that you would want to avoid dangerous situations like that. You’re nearly a grown man and eventually you are going to have to leave the house to work.”

“I don’t really want to go into muggle London again, but I want to feel free to do things like that, and not in fear that I’ll be disowned for doing something that normal wizards and witches do. Father, you must realize by this point where my values lie, I’ll be true to our family.”

“I do realize that Draco, That’s why I’m recanting on my decision that I want you to find a place of your own.”

Draco nodded, and said, “Thank you, Father. I will attempt to not worry mother and you in the future.”
“I also wanted to tell you, I’ve invited Mr. Potter to stay with us again. He needs family support, and we should be helping him with that.”

Draco nodded in agreement. “What about Ms. Granger?”

“I’ll speak to her later, but I’m going to invite her to stay with us also. I am going to suggest that she consider another environment to live in. I was hoping that she would stay with Mr. Potter.”

Draco smiled, and said “I was thinking of asking Harry if I could move in with him, too.”

“Now you don’t have too. I want you to stay here and frankly if you move out your mother will not be happy with me.”

Draco chuckled, and said “She’s not happy with you now, that is for sure. She went to visit Andromeda. She said she’d be back in time for dinner.”

“Fine, I’ll speak to her when she gets back. You are free to go and visit with Ms. Granger now.”

Draco nodded, and went to her door. He knocked, and said “Hermione, can I come in?” The door opened enough to let him in and then closed shut again.

Lucius groaned and said to Severus, “she probably won’t even speak to me, if that’s how she’s going to act.”

Draco was surprised to find Harry sitting on the settee without his shirt on. He could clearly see scars all over his. He wondered where he got them from, but what was more shocking was the open wound on his shoulder where the bullet entered his body. “Hey, Draco. How you doing?” Harry asked him casually.

“What the hell? Harry why hasn’t that wound healed yet?” Draco asked, in concern.

Harry shrugged, and said “My personal Healer, Healer Relic, told me that bullet wounds heal slower than knife wounds for some reason. Something about the heat and gun powder not reacting well with our magical core. It’s gonna take some time to heal. Meanwhile he gave me a healing spell to cast over myself but it takes a lot out of me. Hermione’s going to work on it some once she gets the bandage changed.” Draco glanced down at the old bandage and paled when he saw how much blood was on it. Harry saw him and reached over to cover it up so that he didn’t have to look at it. “Sorry.” He said, “and I’m sorry I got you both in so much trouble with your family. I didn’t realize that Lucius would react that way. I’ve apologized to him too, and I think we are good, but I wanted to say that I’m sorry to both of you, too.”

“We were so worried, last night.” Hermione said, as she cleaned away some of the dried blood from the wound.

“My mother got word from St. Mungo’s that you checked yourself out, but no one seemed to know where you went. Then my father and Severus came home, from the Wizegamot meeting, and said they were expecting you here. When you didn’t show up, we started asking around for you.”

“Where did you go?” Hermione asked.

“I had to go back to St. Mungo’s, because I reopened the surgery area. My healer told me to get some rest and only use my magic to work on healing the wound. So, I went to a muggle hotel to work on Wizegamot stuff.”
“Wizengamot stuff?” Hermione asked. “What has been happening while I’ve been locked in this room?”

Harry went into a recounting of the past few days events including the prophecy.

“Wow, that’s a crazy prophecy. I wonder how you would fix the veil?” Hermione asked

“Actually, I was hoping you’d be willing to do research work on that for me since you are free now.”

Hermione frowned, and said “I don’t want to be free. Severus told me that Lucius wanted me to explore my options for a month before I asked for my collar back.”

Draco nodded, and said “he wants to speak to you later, probably before dinner.”

“I’m not sure I want to speak to him.” She said huffing. “Harry, what spell did the healer give you?”

Harry recited the spell for her. She tried it out and saw that the incision area was trying to knit together as she said the spell but as soon as she stopped it returned to the open wound. She frowned, and said “I can see what he means by not healing properly.”

“He wanted me to lay in bad all day and just recast the spell every ten minutes and sleep.” Harry said, chuckling. “I probably would have been better off in a muggle hospital. St. Mungo’s wasn’t equipped to deal with this kind of injury at all.”

“I’ll put the bandage back on and you can lie in my bed. I’ll recast the spell while you sleep.”

“Thanks Hermione. And I think that you should speak to Lucius. I have spoken to him, and he’s clearly upset by this whole thing. He really wants you to be happy.”

“It’s true, he’s really attached to you, as is my mother. They want you to be happy here, but because of your heritage they will hold you to a higher standard and expect you to conform to their rules.”

Hermione finished placing the bandage on his shoulder and cast another healing spell. Harry could feel the wound stitching together again only to reopen. “I want to be happy here, but I don’t know if I can meet their standards. I’m going to want to do things, like go out with friends and shop, even if it’s in a muggle area. I don’t want to be held back from living my life.” She helped him put his shirt back on. “What kind of research did you want me to do?”

“I need to know as much as possible about wards from the eighth century.”

“The eighth century? Whatever for?”

“I believe the veil was created in the eighth century, and I think it’s a kind of ward. I think it’s weakening for some reason. I have this theory that the reason more muggles are being born with magic is because the veil is failing somehow.”

Draco grimaced, and said “that would make sense if it’s true. In other countries, where there is no veil, and there isn’t such a high concentration of Purebloods, muggleborns are more common. The magic blood lines are thinned greatly, too. There's something special about England and its has something to do with the veil.”

“I’d be happy to help research for you, Harry.” She cast another healing spell over him. “I think you should lie down until they have dinner. I’ll sit with you and keep doing the spell while you can take a nap.”
Harry shook his head, “No, I really need to speak to Severus. I’ll go right to bed after dinner. Then, when you’re ready for bed, you can come in and sleep with me while you work your magic,” he said smiling.

“Work her magic, huh? Is that what you are calling it?” Draco said snickering.

Harry scrunched his nose, as if disgusted “she’s like a sister to me. I don’t think there will be any more magic then healing going on, so don’t be jealous.” He said teasingly.

Hermione laughed, and said “I’m sure he can remember what it’s like to have me sitting next to his bed casting healing spells all night.”

“Yes, I remember that. It was strangely very comforting.”

“It’s a little irritating to feel the wound knit together and then reopen.” Harry said, frowning. “Draco, I wonder if you can call a house elf to find out where Severus is. I’d rather not run around the Manor looking for him.”

A house elf that Harry didn’t recognize appeared, and bowed to Harry saying, “Master Severus is in the library on the third floor.” He bowed to Hermione, and said “Master Lucius wishes to speak to you in his suite. There is an escort waiting to take you to him.” He handed her a letter. “This just came for you a minute ago. I was on my way up when Master Harry called for an elf.” The elf disappeared with a pop.

“I don’t think I’ve seen that elf before.” Harry said.

“Her name is Deeky, I think, she normally stays in the kitchen.” Hermione said.

“Who’s the letter from, Hermione.” Draco asked.

She popped open the seal, and read it. Then she frowned, and said “It’s from Molly. She heard I’ve been released and wants to have lunch with me. Luna and Ginny will be there also and then they want to go shopping for summer clothes. She wants me to meet her at noon tomorrow, at Guinevere’s in Diagon Alley.”

Harry chuckled, and said “that was fast. Arthur stopped us as we were leaving, and asked if he could send you a message. Lucius told him he could that you were free to do as you like.”

“But that’s not really true, is it? Not as long as I’m living here.”

“Out of respect you should follow their rules until you find another place.” Harry told her. “As soon as I get Grimmauld Place ready, you can stay with me.”

“That’s what I was hoping to do. There’s enough room there, that I don’t think I’ll be in your way.” Hermione said.

“You wouldn’t be in my way even if it was a one room flat.”

“I was going to do the same thing.” Draco said, chuckling. “Hermione, you should tell my father that you are going to lunch tomorrow. He won’t mind but if you don’t tell him it would be rude to worry him.”

“I’m still not sure I want to talk to him.” She said in a huff.

Harry frowned, and said “you are being childish. Talk to him. You will feel better once the air is
clear between the two of you.”

“I’m pretty sure, he’s going to lift this house exile. I bet he gives you permission to roam about again, but this time as a house guest.” Draco told her, not wanting to spoil his father plans.

Harry yawned, and said “I better go see Severus before I get too relaxed.”

Hermione hugged him one more time and cast the spell again. “I’ll see you after dinner” she said then gave him a kiss on the cheek.

Harry stepped out into the hall and noticed Mr. Simmons standing outside the door. “Is Balinchk away with his pack then?” He asked.

“Yes, he should be back tomorrow. I can’t wait, I really miss him and I’m worried sick that something will happen to him while he’s there.”

Harry nodded, in understanding. “I hope he comes back okay.” He reached the library door and looked inside. Severus was sitting in the arm chair with his legs up reading a book. Harry felt bad for interrupting him but knocked anyway. “Severus, can I speak to you for a moment?”

He sat up, and smiled at him “I was wondering if you were planning on talking to me again. Come in.”

Harry stepped into the library and closed the door behind him. “I have something I needed to talk to someone about, and since you’re my secret keeper, I was hoping that you’d let me talk to you again.”

Severus nodded, and said “same thing applies I won’t keep a secret that will harm someone.”

“I know, I don’t think it will harm anyone but me.”

Severus nodded, and said “I won’t keep a secret that will get you harmed either.”

Harry sat down across from him, and said, “I don’t think any harm can come to me. I don’t think death will let me die.”

Severus put his book aside, and said “just because you had a near death experience when you got shot doesn’t make you invincible.”

“It wasn’t a near death experience. I was dead for well over a minute. My heart stopped beating, the mediwizards were breathing for me. I was outside of my body as death held me in his embrace; I watched them trying to restart my heart. One man, who I guess was a muggleborn, was trying to do chest compressions like CPR. Death held me in place but not so much held me but surrounded me. It’s hard to explain. He wouldn’t let me go. I say he. but really death doesn’t have a sex or a body or really anything. it’s just a presence. Like air, you know it’s there but it’s really hard to see. Does that make any sense?”

Severus grimaced, and said “I guess it makes sense. I never really had to think about death being an actual being. It’s always been more like a fairy tale or a thought like heaven and hell.”

Harry nodded. “I know what you mean.”

“What makes you think he won’t let you die?”

“As I said I watched the mediwizards and witches working on my body but I felt a sense of relief knowing that I was dead and that I was done. I embraced the feeling of death around me and I was
ready to go but he or it held me in place and then when to mediwizard got my heart beating again Death pushed me back into my body. It was such a strange feeling to be denied like that. I wanted to cry. It felt like when you are in love with someone, but they don’t return the feeling and you get rejected.” Harry paused, realizing that Severus knew that feeling all too well. “I’m sorry Severus, but you can understand what I mean now, can’t you? My soul cried and then I think I fell asleep. When I woke up, I still felt sick inside about not being wanted, but now that has subsided. What if death never wants me, and I live forever. Just my body won’t live forever eventually it will be shriveled up shell of a man with this soul locked in it.”

Severus paled, and said “I don’t think that will happen, Harry. I don’t think you will live forever.”

He nodded, and said, “what if we are wrong? What if death never takes me from this form?”

“I don’t know, but I don’t think fretting over it will do you any good. Maybe it has a plan for you and it’s making sure you stay alive long enough for you to complete your mission.”

Harry groaned, and said “Merlin, will I ever stop being used for others missions?”

“Whatever it’s reasons for keeping you here, I’m glad that it did. I have to give you praise where it’s due, you handled the Wizengamot beautifully today. I’ll be honest with you, yesterday when Mrs. Hossan nominated you for the seat, I tried to talk the council out of electing you. Lucius and I both tried to tell them that you weren’t ready for it, but now I see it as they weren’t ready for you. I’m glad the rest of the council voted you in.”

“Who else voted against me?” Harry asked out of curiosity.

“Weasley, Shackelbolt, Burbage, and Culver.”

“Only six against me? That’s pretty good.” He said, chuckling. “I wonder what their votes would be now that they’ve seen me action.”

Severus laughed, and said “They’d dare not vote against you, not after what they saw you do to Blarmy.”

“I was happy with myself that I didn’t hurt him. I’m getting better about controlling my outburst.”

“Are you? It didn’t seem that way to me.”

“You don’t have any idea how many times I had to count in my head to stop myself from freaking out on one of them. I can’t believe they didn’t keep records. It’s disturbing that they were that casual about dawanding witches and wizard. At one point I wanted to hex every one of them that was arguing that Voldemort made them do it. He made you do a lot of things yet you kept records of it all.” Harry said, feeling angry all over again.

“Okay, I see your point. I never realized that Voldemort had them doing those things. He had other projects working, that even I didn’t know about.” Harry leaned back in his chair and whispered to himself the healing spell. “What was that?” Severus asked him.

“A healing spell that Healer Relic gave me. My bullet wound isn’t healing right. He said that bullet wounds are harder to heal because of the gun powder and the heat or something like that.”

“Before Lucius left me he told me he could feel Ms. Granger pulling on her gift, was she trying to heal you?”

Harry nodded, and said “I’m exhausted both physically and magically. Healing and dealing with
Blarmy really has drained me. Right after dinner, I’m going to bed and Hermione is going to stay with me overnight and work on my wound. Hopefully, she has more success than I had.”

Severus nodded in understanding, and asked “did she go up to speak with Lucius?”

“She wanted to be difficult, but I convinced her that she should go. She was going to not go, just to spite him.”

Severus sighed, “she’s still a Gryffindor; we’ll never be able to correct that.”

“Correct it, why would you want too? She’s perfect that way. If she were a Slytherin she would never have helped you with Voldemort. She would have left you to your devices and only looked out for herself, maybe even tried to turn you in for her own protection. Hufflepuff would have caved under the pressure and a Ravenclaw would have tried to outwit you, them and Voldemort. As a Gryffindor she had enough courage to take the plunge and trust that you were being honest with her. She was brave enough to stand in the presence of a madman, and talk to him as though she were his equal. I don’t think you want to change her. If she decides to come back and serve you and the Malfoy’s, she will probably get a lot of flak from everyone. She needs to have the courage to stand up for herself and her family.”

“Yes, I suppose you are right. Lucius has been trying to teach her to not show emotions like a purist aristocrat, but she slips up a lot. At the hospital she was a blubbering mess. He would have preferred she saved that display for a more private time. Her show of emotions made it to the paper, as did their lack of emotion.”

“I haven’t read the paper in several days. Did I miss anything important?”

“No not really. There was one story of interest, apparently The Savior of the wizarding was the target of an attempted assignation by the muggles. He might have been setup by the Malfoy family and their slave, being muggleborn, organized the whole thing.” He said chuckling. “Then today’s paper rescinded that story, after you were seen with Lucius and myself at the ministry. Another story, recapped your report to the Wizengamot, even though you were wounded, you still managed to come in to give it. The same story reported that, you were voted a seat, which at first you turned down, but then accepted. After today, I’m sure the newspaper will report that your first day of work was eventful, with a full recounting of how Blarmy tried to attack you, and you didn’t kill him. It will probably speculate that you forced the resignation of Burbage. It might actually give some worthy news of how you are already moving to improve the wizarding.”

Harry sighed, as he cast another spell over himself “I wanted to get more accomplished today, and now we are breaking for four days. How do they get anything done this way?”

“I think it’s slow right now because there are so many new seats, once everyone is settled and organized things will move faster. On Wednesday we’ll vote on your proposal and by Thursday a witch or wizard will start tracking down our children.”

“I hope you are right.” He cast a tempus revealing the time to be 5:28pm. “I’m starving, I’m glad it’s almost time for dinner.”

“We could make our way down for dinner.” Severus said as he rose from his seat. “I just need to take this book to my room.”

“What are you reading?”

He handed the book to Harry, and said “it’s a book about cleansing blood bounds. It’s really about
divorce, but I was hoping to find something I could use for Lucius and Hermione.”

“I asked Hermione to help me with my own research, but maybe I shouldn’t tie her time up with it. She should be trying to find a way out of this binding.”

“What research did you need help with?”

“I wanted to learn more about wards from the eighth century.”

“Wards? You mean like the ones put up at Hogwarts or here at the Manor?” Severus asked.

“Yes.” He handed the book back to him. “I want to know how the veil was created and it was around that time.”

“Did you ask Lucius? He knows a lot of history about wards.”

“No, I didn’t want to bother him with it.”

Severus looked around the library. “What you looking for is probably in here somewhere. I wouldn’t know where to tell you to look, though.”

“I’ll think about asking him. Honestly, I’m not sure he would want to help if he knew why I want to know about it.”

Severus paled, and asked “You’re thinking about doing something to the veil?”

Harry nodded, and said “I’m not sure what but I need to know as much about it as possible before I try anything.”

Hermione followed Mr. Simmons to the door of Lucius Malfoy. She grumbled that she didn’t need an escort but mostly kept it to herself. She was pretty sure that escorting the Malfoy family around was a pretty boring job and that doing this little task was at the least a break from waiting for something more interesting to do. Mr. Simmons knocked on the door for her and waited for a reply. The door swung open revealing Lord Malfoy in a more casual outfit. He had removed his robes and now wore a pale pink dress shirt, and a dark green tie that was undone and lying loosely around his neck. His hair which was normally tied back with a coordinating ribbon was now loose and flowing down his head resting on his shoulders. His cuff links were gone and the sleeves were rolled up at the end. Hermione knew that look from the hours she had spent in his room while he worked at his desk. He was probably working on something really important and now she would be interrupting him. She stammered out, “I’m sorry, I can come back later when you’re not busy,” before she realized her mistake. She corrected herself by saying, “Why would you request that I come and speak with you, when you are clearly busy doing something else?” showing him her annoyance.

Lucius chuckled, and said “I’m not too busy to talk with you Ms. Granger. Please come in.”

Hermione stepped into the room in a huff. She waited for him as he spoke with Mr. Simmons, and then closed the door. “What do you want, Lord Malfoy?” She asked him abruptly.

He laughed, and said “I guess first thing I want is for you to stop acting like that. Let’s discuss why you think you have the right to be annoyed with me, when it was you who knowingly broke the rules. I am the one who should be annoyed with you.”
Hermione crossed her arms, and said “I didn’t knowingly break the rules. I was with your son and Harry. I thought we would be okay going. Draco left you a note saying what we were doing. I have been to London before by myself, with Harry and my parents. It’s not like we were going to a place that was unsafe.”

“But it was unsafe. Mr. Potter had to jump in front of a gun that was being fired at my son. How much more unsafe can it get?”

“Lots and lots of people go to London every day and don’t get shot. We just had a spot of bad luck. If we didn’t have to hide in an alley to disapparate we would have been fine.”

“That’s the point you do have to hide, you were wizards and a witch. You didn’t belong there.” Hermione groaned, and started to argue with him but he held up his hand staying her argument. “I don’t want to hear another argument. Now you know that I don’t want you to be in a muggle city. I was furious with Draco and you for doing something so reckless. I will admit that I may have over reacted by telling my son that he needed to move out. I don’t want him to do that, nor do I want you to do that. I do however, think that you should consider living here, as our guest, until you decide if you want to live here under our rules on a more permanent basis. I wouldn’t discourage you from moving out, if you want to do that, to explore your other options. For now, I’d like you to stay, but I will ask that you follow some basic rules. They would be the same rules that I would expect Draco to follow.”

“What kind of rules?” She asked, being suspicious that they would be too controlling.

“Well, first as common curtsey; I would like for you to tell us when you go out, where you are planning on going, and what time you expect to be home.”

“Is that all? What if I wanted to go to London again?”

Lucius frowned, and said “I would hope that the scare you had two nights ago would discourage that, but if you feel the need to go then I wouldn’t stop you. I would also like for you to arrange to take one of the bodyguards with you if you go out. That way, we would know that someone was looking out for you since you seem to be in the habit of running into trouble.”

“I’m not in the habit of running into trouble.” She said, as though she were insulted.

“Oh really, because it seems to me that this is at least the second time… no make that the third time that you have run into it since I have known you.”

“What do you mean?” She asked, angrily.

“Well, didn’t you tell us that you ran into snatchers in a market and that was why you weren’t eating right?” Hermione frowned, and nodded. She hadn’t considered that as a run in with trouble. “Then, you apparated to a forest and ran into snatchers that I was forced to employ. They brought you here. I never expected that they would actually catch Harry Potter and his friends.”

“You can’t count that. It wasn’t my fault they were in the forest when we arrived and that witch saw me in the market. She called the snatchers in. I couldn’t have known that she would do that.”

“The point is, trouble finds you and you can’t say that it finds Harry because he wasn’t with you at the market. You were the one that ran into the snatchers. If Mr. Potter and Mr. Weasley had run the other way they would have brought you in alone.” Hermione huffed and plopped down on the couch saying that it wasn’t her fault that trouble found her. “Do you see my point?” She grumbled. He chuckled, and said “all I’m asking, is that as long as you are living here under my protection, is that
you take protection with you. Mr. Simmons and Mr. Balinchk could easily go to work for the auror department but they have chosen to work for me. I would like to put them to good use. Take one of them with you when you go out.”

“Is that all.” She asked, still in a huff.

“No, I know you have this urge to express your muggle side. I don’t want to look at it.” He said, turning away from her. "I expect you to dress like a proper witch when you are in my home and behave as such." Hermione looked down at her outfit. She was wearing a new outfit that she had gotten from the London trip. It was pair of blue jeans, a green t-shirt that said 'Try Not. Do or Do Not. There Is No Try', and a pair of Nike sneakers that were mostly purple. She had put on the cloth in the morning, being defiant, but now the outfit felt silly and uncomfortable. "I expect you to use your manners and be polite." He went on saying. "I know that you are a Gryffindor, and that you have the urge to defend everyone, but in my home I expect you to keep with the purist mentality. Conversations with our guest should reflect that idea.”

Hermione sighed, and said “I don’t think that will be a problem. What if I want to go shopping with my friends in a magical village, do I need the escort then.”

“Yes, when out of my home, in public, you will have an escort.”

She scrunched her nose up, and said “that’s going to be awkward to explain. Can’t he just follow us around and not be with us?”

Lucius pondered that idea for a moment, and then said “Yes, I think that would be fine. They can shadow you, but if they see anything suspicious you should expect them to jump in and intervene. You might want to explain that to your friends so that they aren’t surprised.”

“Okay, so how much notice do you want if I’m planning on going out with my friends?”

“As soon as you know, and can tell me, or someone else in my household.” She frowned, and fiddled with her pocket. “I can tell that you have made plans, did you want to tell me about them.”

She sighed, and pulled the letter out of her pocket. “Right before I came up to see you, I got a letter from Molly Weasley. She wants to take me to lunch with Ginny and Luna tomorrow at 12. She’s picked Guinevere’s and then shopping probably in Diagon Alley.”

Lucius sighed, and said “that didn’t take long. Its fine if you want to do that, just let Mr. Simmons know so he can follow you.”

“You don’t care that I’m going with Mrs. Weasley?”

“Well, I wouldn’t say that I don’t care, but as you don’t belong to me anymore, I won’t stop you.”

“But if I did belong to you, you wouldn’t let me go?”

“I would if I was sure that you could handle yourself, but I don’t think that being around Molly Weasley is a good idea for you.”

Hermione frowned, and said “I haven’t accepted her invitation yet. I want to go, but I think you might be right about it not being a good idea for me to be around her.”

“I want you to be free to explore your options, so I won’t stop you from doing anything. I would like to add that we’ll be watching you to see if you are following the purist lifestyle, so your actions may dictate if we want you to be ours again or not. If you are thinking that you might want that again.”
She nodded, and said “I am thinking that I do want that. I really liked being here with you and your family.”

“And we liked having you. Now that you are free we will want you to practice the purist lifestyle.”

She pondered his proposal for a moment, and then said “I’m going to go with Molly tomorrow and let her dictate how I will treat her in the future. I’ll have Mr. Simmons with me so I’ll have back up if I need it.”

“Fine, I’ll see that you get some money to spend tomorrow. I’ll speak to Mr. Simmons today for you, but you will need to communicate with him in the future, if you feel like leaving the house for a public place.” He smiled at her, and added “I’m glad that we were able to work this out.” He cast a tempus spell revealing the time. “Dinner will be in ten minutes. If you are going to reply before dinner you better get started.” He motioned to his desk “use whatever you need.”

“Thank you,” She paused, and asked “what can I call you? Is it still Lord Malfoy or are we on more casual terms?”

“You may use our first names, if you like.”

“Thank you, Lucius. I really do appreciate everything you’ve done for me.”

He chuckled, and said “I appreciate everything you’ve done for us, too. I think it’s been a very fair exchange, Hermione.”

Hermione sat down at his desk while Lucius called in Mr. Simmons. “Mr. Simmons, I wanted to tell you that I have lifted the house ban from Ms. Granger. She is now once again free to roam about the manor. She will require an escort for her trips outside of the Manor. Tomorrow, at noon, she is going to Diagon Alley with friends. You are to follow her from a distance and only interact with her and her friends if there is a problem.”

Mr. Simmons smiled, and said “that sounds great. It will be nice to get out and do some work. I’m sorry that we weren’t told about the London trip, otherwise we would have gone along.”

“I understand and I think I have made it perfectly clear to both my son and Ms. Granger that they are to take you or Mr. Balinchk if they are going someplace public.”

Hermione stood, and said “I’m going to run to the owlery and send this message then, get changed for dinner. I’ll be down for dinner as soon as I can.”
The New and Improved Hogwarts

Harry stood looking at the gates of Hogwarts marveling at the beauty of the wards and the prismatic shifting of colors. Lord Malfoy had agreed to meet him at two in the afternoon. Harry was awakened that morning at 11am by Kreacher. He had slept for 15 hours straight and the term slept like the dead seemed to fit him perfectly. Right after dinner he had gone to his rooms and took a shower using magic to keep the wound dry. Afterwards, he put on a pair of boxer shorts and settled into bed. He only waited a few moments before Hermione joined him in his room. After she was settled he closed his eyes and fell right to sleep. When he was awakened by Kreacher his wound had been completely healed. Hermione had spent the better part of her evening casting the healing spell repeatedly until she decided to try something else. Remembering the spell that Narcissa had cast on her arm after Voldemort forced her to slice it with Severus’ knife, she tried it and the wound slowly knitted closed and stayed closed. She had laid in his bed until early in the morning to keep watch over him and to make sure that the wound stayed healed. Harry had no idea until Kreacher told him that the mudblood had stayed all night. Harry couldn’t remember any of it. He hadn’t shifted or dreamed at all. He woke in the same position that he fell asleep in and felt incredibly well rested.

Now he waited for Lucius to meet him at the gate and was relieved to hear the pop of his apparition. He smiled and said, “I was just about to cast a tempus to see what time it was.”

“Mr. Potter, I can assure you I am not late.” He said.

Harry laughed and said, “tell me what you see then,” getting right to the point of their meeting.

Lucius frowned as he looked around wondering what Harry thought he should see. “I see the gates of Hogwarts. I see a new stone wall that stretches around the school proper. I see a new road way leading down to the train station and up to the school.” He looked around to see if there was anything else.

Harry nodded and asked, “Is it strange that resetting the wards made all these changes?”

Lucius shook his head, “wards, of this nature, make changes as needed to the structure that they are protecting. You’ve given them a much needed boost.”

“What else do you see?” Harry asked as he looked up at the doom of the Hogwarts ward, its creamy opal prism shifting in the sunshine. Lucius looked up trying to see what he was looking at. Harry glanced his way and smiled “It’s beautiful isn’t it.”

Lucius frowned and said, “It’s a beautiful day. The sun is shining and there’s a blue sky.”

Harry looked at him and sighed. “You don’t see it, do you?”

“I’m not sure what I’m supposed to be seeing.”

“The wards, Lucius, the wards. It looks like a colossal opal with beautiful rainbow prisms fluctuating across the surface. I wish you could see them they really are beautiful.”

Lucius looked up, and said, “They do sound beautiful. How is it that you can see them?”

Harry chuckled. “That’s why you are here. You are supposed to tell me why I can see them and you can’t.”

“I don’t really know. I suppose it could be that your magic reset the wards. The magic that goes into
starting a protective shield or ward such as this is usually used to kick start them after that, the wards pull the magic they need from the grounds.”

Harry nodded, and said “What do you know about sacrificial ceremonies?”

“Sacrificial? That hasn’t been practice for over a thousand years.”

“Why?”

“They don’t work any better than regular magic.”

“I’m not so sure that’s true. I think the wards here are so strong because I sacrificed lives two days before I put my magic to resetting them.”

“That’s not how that works and you didn’t sacrifice lives. You fought in a war, people died, it wasn’t your fault.”

“I could have just turned myself over to Voldemort and nobody would have died. Even if it wasn’t my fault people still died and I was in control of items given to man by death himself. I controlled the power over life and death and then I used my power to reset the wards. I think my magic has been enhanced by the Hallows. Even before I destroyed them I could feel a change in my magic and then after Voldemort killed me and I came back it was like a shadow had been lifted.”

Lucius frowned and said “Harry, I can’t explain what is happening to the wards here or you, but I don’t believe that the battle here a week ago was a sacrifice.”

Harry nodded and asked, “Have you ever heard of crop circles?”

Lucius laughed and said, “I have heard of them. Why do you ask?”

“I think crop circles are runes that were made by ancient wizards. There must be some ward or something that recreates them year after year. My question is, what are the wards doing?”

Lucius thought for a moment before saying, “I can’t think what they would be hiding or protecting. They appear on farm land, but who knows, maybe you are right and they have just lost their potency.”

Harry motioned toward the gate. “Try and open it.” Lucius pushed in the gate making it swing open. Harry frowned and said, “Why is it that you can open it?”

Lucius shrugged and said, “I’m the school governor, head of the board of directors. I have always had access to the school even when Dumbledore was the Headmaster.”

“I guess I didn’t realize that that gave you access to the school.”

“I’d like to look around again and maybe see Severus at work.” Lucius said stepping through the gates.

Harry nodded. “I would like to see too.” Harry followed him through and asked, “Did you feel that?”

Lucius sighed and asked, “What did you feel?”

“When I passed through, I can’t really explain it, but it feels as though I’ve been given a full body caress. It’s a very pleasant feeling.” He said smiling.
Lucius looked up at the sky and asked, “Now that you are under the protective wards can you still see them?”

Harry looked up squinting at the sun and said, “I can see them but they are more clear than opaque now.”

“I really can’t explain it. I have some books in my library that might give me some insight into why you can see them.”

“Do you have anything from around the time that the veil was created? I’d like to read up more on that matter.”

“I’m sorry, I don’t. I have searched for that information since I was a young boy. As far as I know it only exists in stories handed down by generations of Purebloods. That is one of the reasons why blood traitors are looked upon so badly. They had the information but didn’t pass it along to their younger generations. Either they didn’t believe in it or they didn’t want anyone to know that it existed but in any case only a few of the Pureblood families still teach the stories to the next generation.”

“Tell me what the stories are maybe there’s clues in them. I bet they were written out at some point like the story of the three brothers.”

“My favorite story was of a witch named Corosa Treeroot. She was a Pureblood witch who had many children. One of her daughters, Genowyn, was born a squib but she loved her anyway. She grew up with her magical brothers and sisters and seemed happy but when she came of age she chose to marry a muggle named Artoris. With Genowyn’s help he became a king. They lived in the time of Merlin when witches and wizards often fought alongside of great leaders so that they could affect the outcome of the muggle leadership. Well Corosa was pretty angry when she learned of her daughter’s betrayal of their kind so she cursed her daughter with infertility. She still loved her daughter but didn’t want her to reproduce with the muggle king. Genowyn, found out about the curse and wanting a child desperately. She took one of her husband’s knights to her bed. She conceived twins both were born with a magical core. Corosa, was furious that she had found a way around her curse so she went to the palace and spoke to the king revealing to him that she was a witch. She claimed that she wanted to apologize to her daughter for cursing her but her real plan was to take her grandchildren back to her home. She wanted to raise them in an environment with magic. What she didn’t realize was that the king would be angry about how the children were conceived. The king of course was furious that his wife had betrayed his trust. Corosa realized that they were in danger but she wasn’t able to do anything to help them. She asked to see her daughter and grand children and the king agreed. He had his wife beheaded and the babies throats slit and their bodies delivered to Corosa at her home. Corosa in her remorse for having lost her daughter and the babies that were born with magic cursed the king and created the veil to lock all of her children behind it so that she would never lose a child with magic again.”

“But how did she create the veil?” Harry asked, as they started up the stair to the grand entrance.

“I don’t know it’s told as a children’s story. It’s a warning that you can’t ever trust a muggle and that your parents might be mad at you but they will always love you.”

Harry thought for a minute trying to see how that might have come about. “I think I know.” He said having a sense of what had happened. “Corosa used the loss of her daughter and her grand babies to create a ward around her family. Later on other families would have learned of her loss and put their magic into the ward stretching it further over the land. I bet they had to make sacrifices to do it. Until they found a way to create the veil; with it the deaths of magical people would filter through it giving strength to the veil.”
Lucius frowned and said, “I don’t think the veil works like that.” Lucius looked at the castle as they approached. "I wonder why the towers haven't been rebuilt. Where will the dorms be if not in the towers?"

Harry had noticed that the towers were no longer there but hadn't considered the dormitory problem. He thought about Hermione's idea to promote school unity by combining all the dorm into one area. This would be the perfect opportunity to make that change. returning to the topic he said, “You saw Sirius get hit by Bellatrix in the Chamber of Death, he was sucked right into it.” They stood in the doorway for the great hall. “Wow, look at this place, it’s beautiful.”

Lucius looked around the hall. The walls were of a white marble with columns reaching from floor to ceiling. Each column had carvings etched into the marble depicting events that had happened during the course of the history of Hogwarts. “Look at this, Harry.” Lucius pointed to the pillars just inside the entrance.

Harry looked closely at the column. The carving depicted two witches and two wizards standing in front of the ward stone. It looked to be the same ward stone that they had uncovered a few days ago but it was surrounded by a garden with fountains all around it. Harry looked at the column to the right side of the entrance and frowned. “Lucius, look at this one.”

He looked at the column directly across the entrance from the first column they looked at. “Oh, it’s us with the same ward stone except the garden is gone.”

Harry looked at the column over one. “This one depicts Salazar Slytherin.”

Lucius went over to the other side and said, “This one is of Godric Gryffindor.” He looked at the column next to it. “And Rowena Ravenclaw.”

“I’ve got Helga Hufflepuff. I guess the table assignments will follow the columns now. I can’t imagine that the Slytherins and Gryffindors will be happy about that.”

“I’m surprised that they aren’t breaking the classes up to promote school unity or some such nonsense.”

“Hermione thought that the loss of classes would have promoted school unity. She had plans for combining classes together so that they would get to know each other better.”

“I’m not sure how well that would work. Let’s find Severus.” Lucius said anxious to see more of the building.

They started for the third floor. The stairs that were once made of plain stone now appeared to be made of a stone that had pink flecks of polished stone dusted through it. The walls were highly polished stone that reflected the light from the outside making the hallway appear brighter than it had before. “I like some of these changes. The castle always seemed so dull and dingy to me. I didn’t mind it so much because it was better than the Dursly’s but I like this new museum look. It’s very clean and bright.”

“I agree, it was very dull here. This new look is really nice. I’m a little jealous that the next generation gets to roam these halls.”

They found Severus in the Headmaster’s office with Professor McGonagall. After exchanging greetings Severus asked “Mr. Potter, was Lord Malfoy able to answer your questions regarding the wards?”

“Is there something wrong with the wards?” Professor McGonagall asked.
“Yes and no. His answers have prompted more questions.” He turned to McGonagall and said, “There’s nothing wrong with them they are better than ever.”

“Well, that’s obvious, Mr. Potter. What questions did you have regarding them?”

Harry sighed and said, “it’s really nothing for you to be concerned about, Professor McGonagall.”

“I’ve lived here for most of my life Mr. Potter. I might be able to give you some insight into the working of the castle wards.” McGonagall stated, indignantly.

Harry considered her for a moment before saying, “Can you see them to tell me that they are working.”

She chuckled. “Of course not. Wards are not meant to be seen. I’m sure you could tell they were working by the fact that you had trouble getting through to gates and just look at all the improvements that the school has gone under.”

Severus frowned and tried to signal Harry that he shouldn’t say anything about the fact that they didn’t have any trouble getting in. Harry noticed and said, “I guess you are right. I thought that a person should be able to see the wards to know that they are in place but as Lucius also explained to me they are not meant to be seen.”

Severus taking the opportunity to change the subject said to Lucius “Lord Malfoy, we were just discussing what we could do about the students that had their education interrupted by the war.”

Lucius smiled and said, “The school board will be voting on the subject Monday night. The proposal is for the students to be able to select an accelerated course starting in July and ending in December with the Newts happening after break in January.”

Severus frowned and said, “I wish you had mentioned that to me.”

“I’m sorry, It didn’t come up. We’ve been so busy with other matters that I never really got to discuss the board meeting. Do you and Professor McGonagall have any objections to that plan or any better ideas?”

McGonagall sighed, “I’m not sure we will have the teachers here to support that plan.”

“We thought of that and if the board accepts the proposal, a few new teachers will be hired for the accelerated students.”

“I suppose that would work. Who would be able to take the accelerated courses?” McGonagall asked.

Lucius shrugged and said, “Headmaster Snape and the current professors would decide that and send the letters inviting the students to return. I’m sure you have a few students in mind that could probably take the NEWT exams now.”

Severus smiled and said, “I can think of a few. Mr. Potter, would you be up to coming back and taking accelerated courses?”

Harry groaned and said, “I wish I didn’t have too but I probably should so that I can get a real job.”

McGonagall snorted. “Mr. Potter, according to the Daily Prophet you have a real job on the Wizengamot.”
“Is that considered a real job? It seems to me it’s a part time job. They only meet a few days a week.”

McGonagall said., “I can’t believe you were voted a seat. You don’t even know the job requirements.”

“I was voted in because I don’t know the job requirements; they wanted a fresh perspective on the decisions that were being made. Of course my popularity helped and my actions over the past ten days but mainly because of my innocents.”

“He’s right. The council decided they wanted a younger view of the things they were voting on. We tried to tell them that Mr. Potter wasn’t what they were looking for, but his popularity swayed the vote 22 to 6 in favor.”

McGonagall scoffed and asked. “22 members of the council voted for him? That’s hard to believe.”

“Trust me we felt the same way when they voted him in. Now that he’s on the council though I see that they made the right decision. I should have voted for him too.” Lucius said smiling at Harry.

“I didn’t realize that it was considered a real job. How does that work? There are people on the council that have real jobs, how do they find the time to do both?”

Severus laughed and said, “We really should discuss this in more detail later but the Wizengamot members that don’t have real jobs are the ones that put time into writing proposals like the one you wrote the other night.”

“What were they debating that you thought it affected you?”

Severus grunted and said “Mr. Potter, it would be better to not discuss what the Wizengamot is discussing in private sessions.”

“Right. I probably shouldn’t tell you.” Harry said then thought about how she probably wouldn’t be supportive of the proposal anyway. “Headmaster Snape, where will those three muggleborn students go now that they don’t have homes to go too?”

McGonagall answered. Harry frowned hoping that she wouldn’t find them the same situation that he had been in. “Two of them are from the same family, both in Hufflepuff a third and fourth year, their uncle doesn’t want anything to do with them. He blames them for his sister’s death. The youngest is a girl in Ravenclaw, her parents actually moved away. Apparently, she got a letter, from her younger brother, saying that people came and threatened them if they tried to make contact with her again. So
they moved but he didn’t say where too. We have the muggle authorities trying to hunt them down but she has no other relatives.”

Severus could tell that this news wasn’t sitting well with Harry. “Mr. Potter, they will not be sent home to anyone that doesn’t want them. We want them here where they are safe. They won’t be forced to return to their homes.”

“Severus, you can’t keep the children here all year around. This isn’t an orphanage.”

“There’s no reason why that can’t stay year round. Right now there is only three but even if there was more they could stay and it wouldn’t be any trouble at all.”

“They need to go home to their families.” She stated indignantly.

Harry groaned. “I don’t want to get into this with her.” He said, motioning to Professor McGonagall. McGonagall bristled and was going to rebut his dismissal but Harry cut her off. “I wanted to check out the dorms. Lord Malfoy and I noticed the Gryffindor tower and Ravenclaw towers haven’t been rebuilt.”

Severus smirked at Harry’s casual treatment of McGonagall and said, “We were just discussing the dorm situation. As you saw the towers haven’t been rebuilt like they were before and the damaged areas in the dungeon have turned into classroom space. A whole new wing has been built that will accommodate all the students based on their years.”

“They are actually quite nice.” Professor McGonagall stated, recovering from Harry’s dismissal of her opinions regarding the displaced children. “There’s a large common room area on the first floor and then a smaller study area on the fifth floor. The extension wing is split up into four sections but it’s clear that the first three floors are for the younger years as there are suites for prefects. The fourth and fifth floors only have one suite each for prefects and the sixth floor has rooms designed for sixth and seventh year students. There are ten joined live in style suites, four bedrooms each joined together that share a kitchenette, a bathroom and a sitting room. They are in the corridor that leads to the new wing. At the entrance to the new wing is a library area, that doesn’t have any books yet, on one side and on the other side a training room with enough space for students to duel in.”

Harry smiled and said, “I’ve seen that layout before. It was something the Hermione was working on while we were camping. She won’t believe her eyes when she sees it.”

“I’m sure it’s just a coincidence, there’s no way Hogwarts could have known that she had that design mapped out.”

Harry smiled and said, “You are probably right. Still I want to go check it out.” He started for the door. “It’s alright isn’t it?” He asked Headmaster Snape, before he took off.

Severus waved him on. “Go ahead.” Harry practically ran for the door.

“I’ll go with him” Lucius said. “I want to see them too.”

Severus waved to him. “We’ll talk more later.” He stated.

Lucius walked fast to catch up with Harry. They reached the dormitory together and looked around. “This is just how Hermione sketched it out. I wonder if this was pulled from my head or hers.”

Lucius looked round and said, “It’s a brilliant putting everyone together but still giving them their own space. It’s a nice layout.”
“Hermione is brilliant. I can’t wait till she sees this place.” He frowned and said, “I really hope she’s having a good time with Molly, Ginny and Luna.”

“Why wouldn’t she?” Lucius asked wondering what Harry thought might happen on their shopping trip.

Harry shrugged and said, “I’m concerned that Hermione is a very public target. I’m glad that you convinced her to take an extra pair of eyes.”

Lucius narrowed his eyes at him and asked, “Have you seen something that I should know about.”

Harry stared into space for a moment before he said, “She can handle herself and everyone around her but it’s good that you sent Mr. Simmons along.”

“What is going to happen?” Lucius asked, worriedly.

“Supremacists will attack Molly Weasley because of what she did to Bellatrix. Hermione and Luna will defend them while Ginny goes for help. By the time the aurors arrive Hermione and Luna will have two of the three men subdued and, with the help of Mr. Simmons, the third man will be identified and arrested by the aurors later.”

“And you say that you aren’t having visions?”

Harry laughed and said, “I don’t really know if that’s going to happen but I kind of hope it does just to teach Molly Weasley a lesson.”

“So you don’t know what will happen?”

“No, they are going to run into trouble of some sort but I don’t know what it will be. I’m pretty sure everyone will be fine including Hermione.” He laughed and said, “I hope they make it to the book store before the trouble finds them. Hermione is going to look for a book for me.”

Lucius sighed, thinking about the trouble that was coming. “I’d go to Diagon ally but Hermione really needs to fight her own battles. She doesn’t belong to me anymore.”

“She’s still bond to you, Lucius. Technically she is until you figure out how to break the bond.”

Lucius nodded and said, “Unfortunately, even the Ministry will see it that way. At some point I’ll have to take it up with the legal department and see if she can’t be emancipated even though she is bond to me.”

Harry nodded and said, “You don’t really want to do that, though, do you?”

“No, I don’t. I want to be selfish and greedy and keep her, but I won’t do that to her. If she decides she doesn’t want to stay then I’ll do that for her.” He laughed and added, “she risked her life for us on several occasions while Voldemort was around and not because of the bond. No, she did it because she was brave. She’s a good witch even if she was born from muggles.”

Harry smiled thinking about how different the war had made Lord Malfoy and how happy he was for Hermione to be recognized for what she really was, a witch, and a good one at that. “I’ve got some things I need to do, Lucius. I’m going to get back to the Manor to try and get them done before dinner.”

“I’ll go with you.” Lucius said, following Harry down the corridor to the entrance.
Treeroot gate.

Harry sat in the library at the study table writing letters to his friends. Hermione knocked on the open door and said, "Hi Harry, am I interrupting anything?"

He looked up and smiled. "No, not at all. I’m glad to see that you’re back from your adventure. How was your shopping trip?"

"Lucius told me that you knew something was going to happen. I wish you had told me before I went."

"You were gone by the time I was up and about. Plus, I didn’t really know what was going to happen." He smiled at her and said, "My shoulder feels great, by the way. I’m sending a note to my Healer offering him to take a look at it tomorrow. I was hoping that you’d come along and tell him what you did."

"I’d be happy to go with you. I was leaving the book store when we were stopped by three men. I found a few history books that reference wards that were used during the middle ages."

"I knew you’d find something. What happened when the men stopped you?"

She sighed, and sat down on the couch, opening her bag. "They were supremacists that supported Voldemort’s cleansing plans." She pulled the books out. "Here are the books. I want to look at this one first." She handed the other two to Harry and went on with her story. "When they saw me with blood traitors they decided that they would harass us. They started by being verbally abusive, which we could have just ignored, but Molly drew her wand to defend us, so they drew theirs. They fired first though, stunning Molly. Luna and I managed to fight back. Mr. Simmons came up from behind them and got the drop on them. The three of us managed to get them all tied up in time for the aurors to show up, while Ginny saw to Molly."

"I’m glad that you agreed to take him. Was Lucius okay when you spoke to him? I know he was really concerned when I told him that something was going to happen."

"He was. He said he could feel me pulling on my magic and it was driving him a little crazy not to run out and help me. Do you know that he thinks that I attract trouble?" Hermione said as though she was affronted.

Harry nodded. "He told me. I don’t think he’s wrong," he said laughing. "Trouble finds you almost as often as I take life threatening risks."

She laughed. "I don’t think it’s my fault, though, do you?"

"No, but that doesn’t mean it doesn’t happen that way."

She opened her book. "This book has a small section on runes from that period that I thought might be interesting” she said getting lost in its pages.

Harry picked up one of the other books and read the title. Magical Crops Through the Ages. He quickly leafed through the pages of the book, as he did so, he paged past a drawing of a field with a crop circles in it. He turned back to the page and read the caption. "Hermione, this is it. It’s the gate." He said excitedly.

"The gate? The gate to what?"
Hermione stood behind Harry looking over his shoulder. “Those are crop circles, Harry. What gate are you talking about?”

“Look at the drawing. That’s the gate to the veil in the Death Chamber. Look, it was part of a wall that went around a field once.”

Hermione looked at the drawing and read the caption. Stone wall at the Treeroot farm fortified by the witch, Corsa Treeroot and family. Field runes can be seen in the picture providing additional protection to the crops. “Who’s Corsa Treeroot? Why did she build a stone wall around her property?”

“She was a witch that had an urge to protect her children so she created a ward around them. I think she and her neighbors made it so large that they created the veil. That’s what I’m trying to research.”

Hermione looked at the drawing closer and said, “I didn’t study the veil in the Death Chamber, did it have that writing around it?”

“I didn’t study it either but I intend too.” He pulled a piece of parchment out. “Can you copy this drawing for me? You do it better than me.”

Hermione tapped the picture with her wand and then the parchment creating an exact copy. “Here you go Harry. When are you going to do that?” she asked him.

“As soon as possible, maybe tomorrow.” He said looking for more drawings of the Treeroot farm. Here’s another he said pointing to the book and a drawing of crop circles if a field with sheep. The caption read ‘Woolen sheep at the Malfoy farm. These sheep are grazing on four leaf clover grass that has been enhanced by Irish luck runes’.

“I wonder where that drawing was done.” Hermione said.

Harry grunted and said out loud, “I wonder when it was done.” He scanned over the text looking for a date and sighed saying, “I’m gonna have to read this whole book to figure it out.”

Hermione smiled and said, “A little lite reading won’t hurt you.”

Harry hefted the book and said, “I wouldn’t call this lite reading.”

Hermione chuckled and picked up the other book. The title read The Magical History of Scotland from the Picts to Present. “I thought this one might have something about Hogwarts in it.”

Harry looked up from the book he was reading. “I’ll look at it once I’m done with this book.” He stretched and said, “It must be close to dinner time. I’m getting hungry.”

“I don’t think I could eat anymore today. Lunch was delicious but I feel like I ate too much.”

“I think they will be disappointed if you don’t join them for dinner.”

She sighed, as she sat down. “I know, I’ll have to show up and eat something. It will be a quiet dinner tonight. Draco is with Narcissa calling on the Greengrass family. Apparently, Mr. Greengrass is in holding at the Ministry and Mrs. Greengrass escaped after the battle with one of Voldemort’s Wizengamot members. The girls have been alone since the battle.”

“It’s hard to believe that it was only a little over a week ago.” Harry said shaking his head. “They should be able to handle themselves though, they are both old enough.”
“Draco mentioned that they don’t have any house elves and their mother took the servant girl that they had working for them. They have been having to cook and clean for themselves. It’s something that neither of them are used to.” Hermione said, frowning. “I kind of feel bad for them; even though I think they might be spoiled brats. They will probably be here for dinner one night this week too.” She added.

“Daphne was never that nice to you. I wonder how she will treat you now.”

"I don’t know, but she better not start in with her dirty mudblood shit.” Hermione said, getting angry thinking about all the insults she suffered through in school. Shaking off the angry feeling she added, “So dinner tonight will just be Lucius, you and myself.”

“Where’s Severus?” Harry asked.

“Oh, he’s at Hogwarts. Now that he’s been reinstated, he’ll be spending time there getting things lined up for the new school year.”

“Oh, I didn’t realize that he would be there that long. We saw him today, after we checked the wards at Hogwarts, and he didn’t mention anything about working late.” He smiled and asked, “Did Lucius tell you about the changes at Hogwarts?”

“No, but he did say that Severus was excited to show me them. He said he didn’t want to spoil the surprise.”

“Ah, then I won’t say anything further. I’ll let Severus show them to you. I think you’ll get a kick out of some of them, though.”

After dinner Sunday, Harry spent most of the evening studying the three books that Hermione had found plus a couple of other books that Lucius had provided from their Library. Lucius had offered to look for books about the crop circles once he had seen the drawing of the Sheep on a Malfoy farm. They were both shocked to find a lot of information regarding crop circles and even a few references to the Treeroot farm being near the Malfoy farm. Lucius had known that his family had lived in England for a very long time but not that long. Lucius was now doing his own bit of research to see if he could find the actual date that they had settled in England.

Monday afternoon Harry arrived at the ministry. He made his way down to the ninth level where the arch way was stored in the Death Chamber. He was amazed that he wasn’t stopped by anyone even though several people waved to him and almost everyone stared. Once he reached the room, he found that there wasn’t even a guard posted or locks on the door. Shaking his head about the strangeness of the Ministry and how they did things he entered the chamber.

The room hadn’t changed at all since they had battled Lucius and his team of death eaters several years ago. There were still scorch marks from the curses that had been thrown around the room that night. He stood looking at the archway not far from where Sirius had been thrown into the veil. He couldn’t see any writing on the arch from where he stood but he could hear the whispers from the other side of the veil. He walked around to the other side of the arch and noticed that from where he was standing now he couldn’t hear the whispers. He circled back to the front of the arch and the
voices could be heard again. Thinking that that was strange he circled back to what he was considering the back side of the arch to look at it again. From this side the air seemed very still and the shadowy veil lay still and flaccid. He walked back around to the front to see if he was correct in thinking that it looked like it was fluttering in a breeze. He was correct but now that he was thinking about it he thought he could almost hear words in the whispers. Circling around to the back of the arch he listened closely for the voices but still couldn’t hear them.

Harry looked around the room for a lighting source. Seeing that there were torches on the walls he cast a spell lighting them. Looking at the arch again he still couldn’t see the writing on them. He reached out and touched the stone of the arch way feeling for writing that maybe couldn’t be seen. The stone felt warm to the touch as though it was heated by the sun. Harry looked around the room again half expecting the sun to be shining on the arch way. He circled back around the front of the arch and listened to the voices. He thought for sure he could hear his name being called now. Shaking off the urge to call back to the voices he reached out and touched the front of the arch. He pulled his hand back surprised when he felt how the stone was cold. It felt like ice to him. He placed his hand on the stone again feeling for writing carved into the stone. He pulled out the drawing of the arch at the Treeroot farm. It definitely looked like the same arch minus the writing. On the back side he could see a crack in the keystone in the same area there was a crack on the arch in the drawing.

He sat down listening to the voices. He realized that they weren’t really calling his name. It reminded him of the voices of the healers at St. Mungo’s when he was watching them work on his body while death held him. It wasn’t an unpleasant feeling so he focused on the arch trying to figure out its meaning or purpose, the sound of the voices lulling him into a meditative trance.

“There he is.” Hermione said, in relief. “I told you he came here after we visited with his healer.” She entered the room and stood next to him looking at the arch. “Did you find what you were looking for, Harry?”

Lucius and Shacklebolt entered the room behind her. “We should have listened to you in the first place.” Lucius said. “Mr. Potter, are you planning on staying down here all night?”

Hermione frowned, when he still didn’t answer and asked, “Harry, are you okay?” When he still didn’t answer she became more concerned. “Harry.” She said shaking his shoulder. “Harry, what’s wrong with you.” Harry was staring at the archway entranced. The voices calling his name had become louder and more insistent. He was trying to ignore them but it was becoming increasingly harder to do so. Finally he felt them actually pulling on him snapping him out of his meditation. He jumped to his feet pulling his wand out and firing at the archway. Hermione jumped back in surprise. “Harry, it’s us!” She exclaimed falling backwards to get away from him.

Harry held his wand pointed at the archway, the spell he cast still firing from his wand. He blinked clearing his head and looked down at Hermione. “Hermione?” He asked, in confusion. “Is that really you?”

She nodded and asked, “Are you okay, Harry? What were you doing?”

“I was listening to the voices. Trying to determine where they were coming from and whose voices they were. I’m sorry, I thought something came out of the arch and grabbed me. Are you okay?” He said reaching down to help her up.

“What voices were you listening to, Mr. Potter.” Shacklebolt asked.

Harry frowned and asked, “You don’t hear them? If you don’t hear them, I can’t explain it to you.” He added, shaking his head.
Lucius looked at the arch way trying to hear the voices. At first he didn’t hear anything but then he thought he could hear a strange hissing sound that he supposed could be voices of some sort. “Mr. Potter, are you aware of the time?”

Harry shook his head no and cast the tempus charm revealing the time to be 12:31am. He frowned “I had no idea I was down here so long.”

“When you didn’t come to dinner, as you said you would, I became worried. Then you usually get in around 9pm when you didn’t, I had to wait for Lord Malfoy to get home from the school board meeting before we could come and look for you. I wanted to look here first but Lord Malfoy didn’t think you’d be allowed to stay down here this long. First we went to Grimmauld place, then the Burrow, and St. Mungo’s. I even took Mr. Simmons to the hotel that you stayed in a few days ago to see if you checked in there again.”

“I’m sorry, Hermione. I guess the time just got away from me.

“I’d like to know how you got in here. This is supposed to be a high security room. No one is allowed in without permission from the Ministers department and an escort.” Shacklebolt said.

“There was no guard at the door when I came in. There wasn’t even a lock on the door.”

“There should have been.” He said frowning. “When Hermione first said that you came down here, I didn’t believe her because you never filed for an escort.”

“I really didn’t need one” Harry said chuckling.

“Did you learn anything?” Lucius asked him.

“Yes. I learned a lot, but I’m not sure if any of it is of any use to me.”

“What were you trying to learn, Mr. Potter?” Shacklebolt asked.

“I was trying to learn more about this gate or arch.”

“What did you want to know about it? It’s a portal to the world of the dead. It’s very dangerous and that’s why it’s down here.”

“How is it dangerous, Minister Shacklebolt? What does it do that makes it dangerous?”

Shacklebolt thought about the question for a moment before saying, “It must hold the world of the dead back from the world of the living.”

Harry chuckled and said, “I don’t believe that’s what it does. Those voices aren’t of dead people. They are alive just on the other side of the veil. They’ve been locked out of the magical world somehow. I just haven’t figured out how.”

Shacklebolt scoffed, “I don’t believe you are correct, Mr. Potter. It’s not possible to lock someone out of the magical world.”

Harry shrugged and said, “You’re probably right,” agreeing with him so that he didn’t have to explain his theories further. “I’m sorry to have worried everyone.” Sighing he added, “I don’t think I can learn anymore from sitting down here. I need to be able to see the writing on the arch and so far I haven’t been able to activate it.”

Hermione said, “Maybe this isn’t the same arch, Harry.”
Harry handed her the picture and began gathering his things. “It’s almost identical to the picture down to the crack in the keystone on the back side.” Harry said as he packed.

Hermione walked around to the back side of the veil. “Why doesn’t it look the same from this side?” She glanced down to the picture and back up to the stone and said “I can see what you mean though; the crack in the keystone is the same in this picture.”

Shacklebolt looked over her shoulder and asked, “Where did you get this picture from?”

“We found it in a book about magical crop production.” Hermione stated to him.

“I’m ready to go,” Harry said.

Lucius frowned and asked, “What side do you expect the writing to be on?”

“According to the picture, there should be writing on the back side. We don’t have a picture of the front side so there’s no way to know if there is writing on it.”

Hermione handed him the picture for Lucius to look at. “I find it all very strange. I can only find a little bit of information from before the 1352AD. I found references to the Malfoy family owning a large portion of property and being appointed the lordship over the property by King Gwynned in 1152AD but there’s very little before that time and only a few references to trading agreements. Then the history scrolls pick up again in 1404. There’s a two hundred and fifty two year gap. I know there were several wars and then the Black Plague but not the reason why no one made any records.”

“Maybe the records were destroyed somehow, in a fire or something.” Hermione suggested.

Lucius nodded and said, “I thought something like that too, but wouldn’t there be mention of a fire and the fact that things were destroyed?”

“It probably happened during the plague period.” Harry suggested. “I bet if you looked for history of the Manor there would be mention of the new building being built because of whatever happened to the old building.”

“I hadn’t thought of that. It would make sense though. If our family suffered losses like everyone else did then those fifty some years would be time for one generation to grow up and reorganize themselves and start recording again.”

“Did you find any more references to the Treeroot farm?”

Lucius frowned and said, “I did and I’m afraid it isn’t good. Apparently the Treeroot farm was on the estate that was given to the Malfoy family as part of the Lordship. It seems my ancestors might have forcibly evicted the family.”

“I wonder why.” Hermione said.

“Let’s go, we can talk about this tomorrow. I’m sure everyone has better things to do then stand around and speculate about the Treeroot gate.” Harry said, motioning them towards the door.

“Mr. Potter, in the future you will need to request permission to gain access to the Death Chamber.” Shacklebolt stated.

Harry rolled his eyes and said, “I’m probably going to come down here again after the Wizengamot session on Wednesday.”
Shacklebolt frowned, and said, “You’ll need to submit a request and have an escort with you.” Even as he said it he knew that Harry probably wasn’t going to file the appropriate paperwork. “I’ll have an unspeakable waiting for you after the council meeting.” He added shaking his head.

“I’d appreciate that.” Harry said smiling, thinking about the fact that he wasn’t going to wait for the paperwork to be approved.
Hermione and Lucius sat in the receiving room of Malfoy Manor. They were playing their third game of wizards chess that day. Hermione had lost the first two games and was now, happily, winning the third game. Harry was at the desk making notes from one of the books that Lucius had found in the library while Draco read the latest edition of Quidditch Today. It was turning out to be a lazy Tuesday afternoon with nothing really going on. Harry finally had time off to just relax and not really do anything at all.

“Knight to E5.” Lucius said. The piece slid the board coming to rest at the tile in front of one of one Hermione’s pawns.

Hermione study the board looking for her next move. “Pawn to E5.” She said after deciding that no harm would come to her pawn. “I’ve got another of you knight’s, Lucius.” She said, happily.

Lucius smirked and said “I see that. I didn’t think you’d take my knight considering is exposes your bishop.”

Hermione frowned and studied the board again. “I didn’t even see that.”

“Rook to E3.” Lucius said just as the floo flared to life making Hermione and him turn away from the chess board. Severus stepped through the fireplace into the receiving room. “Severus, we weren’t expecting you till dinner time.” Lucius said smiling.

“I had an important matter I needed to take care of before dinner.” He said, as he pulled his rob from his shoulders and handed it to a house elf that appeared. “Lucius, you don’t mind if I speak to Hermione, in private, for a moment do you?”

“Of course not. Is everything okay?” He asked in concern.

“Yes, I think it should be fine. Hermione, would you mind joining me in my quarters for a moment? I have something I wish to discuss with you.”

Hermione frowned and said, “Could it wait a few minutes? I’m finally winning against Lucius.” She motioned to the chess board.

Harry glanced at the board and said, “Hermione, Lucius has at least three moves where he could be in position to take your king. He’s being nice letting you win.”

Hermione looked at Lucius angrily. “Is that true?” She asked him.

He shrugged his shoulders and said, “You really wanted to win against me.”

Draco chuckled and said, “Don’t feel bad, Hermione. I can’t beat him either. What I don’t understand is how you can be so smart but not grasp the concept of chess.”

She huffed out, “I never studied the game strategies. I should really get a book on it.”

“Hermione, it’s very important that I speak to you, now.” Severus said to her, impatiently offering her his hand.

She stood from the table and took his hand allowing herself to be lead from the room.
“Severus, what is this all about?” She asked, growing concerned as he lead her up the steps.

“There’s an important matter I wish to discuss with you in private.” Once inside of his rooms he closed the door and pulled her to him kissing her deeply.

Hermione was surprised at first but then she recovered and began kissing him back. Since she had been released she had been given her own rooms and hadn’t been asked to join anyone in their beds at night. The first night, after Lucius released her, she hadn’t slept at all. Then Severus had come and spoke to her in the morning, saying that Lucius was rethinking his decision and if she wanted to wait to go to the Ministry she could. That day she had taken several long naps after crying about her predicament. Then Harry disappeared and she hadn’t slept well that night, as she was too worried about him. Once Lucius had spoken to her on Saturday, she had been moved into a room on the family floor but found it difficult to sleep. She had grown accustomed to sleeping with another person. Since then she hadn’t had any physical contact with any of the Malfoy family and Severus had barely looked her way. She was starting to wonder if she was ever going to be able to make love with them again. She knew she would miss that contact now that she knew how good it could feel.

Severus broke away from their kiss and said, “I’m sorry, Hermione. That was terribly inappropriate of me to take advantage of you like that.”

Hermione frowned. “Severus, I don’t understand what you mean. You only kissed me.”

He shook his head. “A purist shouldn’t be so forward, or allow someone to be so forward, with them when they aren’t in a committed relationship.”

Hermione nodded. “Yes, I suppose you are correct. I should probably hex your balls off for doing so.” She said, laughing. “I won’t though, because I liked it and I would really like if you did it again.”

Severus sighed, taking her hand and leading her over to the sitting area. “Please, sit down.” He motioned to the love seat. Hermione took the offered seat wondering what he had on his mind. “As I’m sure you know, Hermione, I have had great affection for you. When you first started as one of my students I found you to be very annoying, but as I watched you grow and blossom into a young woman, I found that I was attracted to you. I never dreamed that you would return my affections until that night at Grimmauld place when you allowed me to be so forward as to kiss you and then you returned the kiss.”

Hermione smiled and said, “I had a crush on you. I probably would have let you do more than kiss me if Harry hadn’t interrupted.”

Severus cleared his throat and said, “Yes, well, thank Merlin for small favors. I wasn’t in a good place at the time, spying for Albus and keeping Voldemort happy. I was under a lot of pressure. It wasn’t easy and I had a moment of weakness. If Harry hadn’t interrupted us, I probably would have gone a lot further than just a kiss.” He sat down next to her and took her hand. “I won’t be as lenient as Albus was. He should have fired me for taking advantage of a student.” He said becoming more serious. “I won’t allow student, teacher relationships to happen and it would be hypocritical for me to continue mine.”

Hermione shook her head saying, “Severus, I’m not a student anymore. You won’t be a hypocrite.”

“I want to be very clear on my intentions with you, Hermione. You must realize that one of the reasons that Lucius tried to protect you from Voldemort was for me. He knew that I had affection for you and because of my relationship with him and his family they did what they could for you. This binding thing wasn’t meant to be like this. It should have been broken when Voldemort died. I want
you to know that I don’t care that you are bound to another person, I would still want you. I know that we can’t be married because of the binding but I wish to have a relationship with you.”

Hermione starred at him as she tried to process everything he just said. “Severus, are you proposing to me?”

“I would if I could, Hermione. But in a very short while you will be off limits to me. I want you to know that I want you.”

“How will I be off limits to you?” She asked, not fully comprehending what he was saying.

“You will receive your letter from Hogwarts inviting you to come back and take your NEWT exams. You’ll be a student again.”

Hermione smiled and said, “Lucius, mentioned that there was something in the works for the students that had their school year interrupted.”

Severus nodded. “I signed the letter myself just a few hours ago. Draco, Harry, and yourself will probably get the letter at dinner tonight.”

“I get to go back to school.” She said excitedly.

“Yes, and you be with all the other boys of your age that will want to court you themselves.” Severus said frowning.

Hermione paled when she realized what he was getting at. “Oh, you don’t want me to except the invitation, do you?”

“No, I want you to except it.” He said. “But I also wanted you to know how I feel about you. I can wait for you to be done with school but I really would like for you to consider me as an option.” He sighed, “I’m not young or terribly handsome but I know I can make you happy.”

“I know you can, too. I had thought that, if I stayed on with the Malfoy’s, it would be like staying on with you, also.” She said.

Severus smiled. “I had hoped that you would feel that way, but if you change your mind about staying with them, I would still pursue you for myself.”

Hermione frowned and said, “I don’t think anyone would want me now that I’m bond to another man. It would be hard for someone else to accept that I couldn’t take marriage vowels with them.”

“You could, but they wouldn’t be binding and I’m perfectly happy to accept that.” He said to her.

“But you won’t pursue me while I’m a student. I’m supposed to act as though we haven’t had any kind of relationship for the past two months.”

“It would be improper of me to do so. Even if you were to take a collar from Lucius again and fall under his family’s protection, I feel it would be improper of me to have any relations with you as long as you are a student, under my care at Hogwarts.”

Hermione thought about that for a moment before saying, “I want to finish my schooling just so that I can say I did. I have an idea of what I want to do with my life.”

Severus smiled and asked, “What do you think you want to do?”

“I want to be part of the muggleborn protection and recruiting act that Harry proposed. I was
thinking that I would make a really good liaison.”

Severus thought about that for a moment and said, “I agree you would make a good liaison but I hate to think about you endangering yourself by dealing with them.”

“I’m sure I can handle myself. I just want to do something important with my life and I think that that would be something worth doing. I was hoping that I could still stay here but I’m not sure how that would work. I may be bond to Lucius for a long time and I know that you want to stay here, also. I already decided that I wanted to live as a Purist and do things to elevate their cause and here is probably the best platform to do that from.”

Severus nodded. “The relationship I have with Lucius and Narcissa is very important to me. I’d rather not lose it, but if you asked me too, I would consider leaving them for you. However, I want you to know that Lucius also has great affection for you and has confided in me that he hopes that you decide to stay with us. Lucius wants my relationship with you to be my primary and him the secondary.”

“Is that what you want?” Hermione asked him.

“Yes, it is. I don’t really know how it would work out, but even if you decided to take a collar from him again our relationship would still be primary.”

“As much as I enjoyed being collared to him, I’m not sure I could be if I’m going to school and working on something like the muggle liaison program.” Hermione said.

“If that’s what you wanted, we would work something out.” Severus told her. “I’m glad to have gotten this off my chest. I was worried that you wouldn’t feel the same way as I did.”

Hermione smiled and said, “It’s going to be hard for me to hide my crush on the Headmaster from all my friends.”

He laughed. “It will be hard for me to treat you like just another student.”

Hermione scoffed and said, “You hid things from Voldemort, I’m sure you can hide those feelings from your professors.”

“Some of them have speculated about how you served here. Rumors have spread that you were used like a sex slave and a few of the professors have asked me if they were true. Of course, I told them it wasn’t any of their business, but I’m sure they have in their minds that that is what happened here.”

Hermione nodded and said, “I’m sure the first few weeks will be difficult. There will be people staring and whispering about it. I’ll probably even get a few flat out questions.” Hermione said shaking her head. “I’ve dealt with worse. I can handle it.” She perked up and said, “I can’t wait to get back to school.”

He smiled at her and said, “I know you can handle it. I’m so glad we had this talk.”

“So the reason you haven’t been intimate with me is because I’ve been released from Lucius.” He nodded. “I was starting to think that maybe you didn’t want me anymore because of the London thing and the fact that I wasn’t collared anymore.”

“I want you more than anything, but a Purist female doesn’t sleep around without some kind of commitment being made to them. Even though you are not a virgin you should still try to be pure until you are committed to someone. Taking the collar from Lucius would open that up for you again but so would a committed relationship with me.”
She smirked at him. “Yes, but then we’d have to wait a year before we could do that again. I don’t think either of us wants to wait that long.”

“I will have to wait anyway. I won’t have sexual relations with a student. I doesn’t matter who that student is.” He said, firmly.

She frowned and said, “That means I’d have to call Lucius up here right now and beg him for the collar and permission to be with you one last time before I get my letter.”

He laughed and said, “I’m afraid that we don’t have time enough to do that, but that fact that you want to is really nice.”

She smiled at him and asked. “We can’t even kiss?” He shook his head. “Not even here?”

“No, it wouldn’t be right to be intimate with you. Holding hands is even stretching it.” He said, vehemently. “I shouldn’t have been as forward as I was but we’ll have to be even more careful when you are a student again.”

“I see. Well, I’m kind of sad about that, but it’s only for a year and a year goes by really fast.” Hermione said.

He nodded. “It does and once the year is over we can make it known in public that we are in a relationship.”

Hermione chuckled. “We should probably get back down stairs before your family starts to speculate about what we’ve been up to in here.”

Harry watched Severus lead Hermione from the room. Once he was sure they were out of hearing range he said, “Severus will make Hermione happy.”

Lucius turned to Harry and asked. “Is that a vision or are you guessing?”

“I have the feeling that they will be happy together.” Harry stated before he went back to reading.

Lucius frowned. “I’m going to miss them if they decide to setup house somewhere else.”

Harry responded, without looking up, “Severus will spend most of his time at Hogwarts and Hermione will be working with him. They won’t setup house anywhere else.”

Draco laughed. “I’ll bet you that he’s right.” He said challenging his father.

“No. I won’t take that bet. Harry has been gifted with foresight, even if he doesn’t see it that way.”

“Hey Harry, we should go to the next quidditch match and place bets.” Draco suggested.

“Draco, a Malfoy doesn’t place bets on sporting events.” Lucius said, indignantly.

“Father, a little harmless wagering amongst friends won’t hurt anyone.”

“I wouldn’t bet on my foresight anyway. It wouldn’t be right to take advantage of someone like that and I wouldn’t want it to get around that I took part in that kind of activity.” He said to him.
“Oh, you’re no fun.” Draco said, teasingly.

“I’m plenty of fun, just my foresight isn’t all that good. I never saw those muggers coming so it’s not real accurate.”

Lucius shook his head and said “No gambling, Draco.”

Draco sighed and went back to reading his magazine.

“Lucius, care for another game of chess?” Harry asked him.

“I doubt I could win against you, Harry. You will be able to see my next move and counter it.”

“Yeah, I suppose you’re right. I wonder if I could beat Ron, now.”

“Weasly, Ronald Weasley?” Lucius asked in surprise.

Harry nodded. “He’s really good at this game. He wins everytime. He’s even played against Dumbledore twice and won.”

“They played that game in the library one night. I remember the library was packed with students and professors watching the game. It was very annoying.”

“That was the rematch.” Harry told them.

“Rematch?” Lucius said, in surprise. “I had no idea that Ronald Weasley would have that kind of talent.”

Harry shrugged. “He’s really got a knack for strategy. I told you that he planned the Ministry job and Gringotts. He’s planned quidditch plays and he taught the DA dueling strategy.”

“He’s not really good at school work but he’ll probably make a really good auror if he can get through the training.” Draco added.

Harry smiled at him. “It’s nice to hear you say something nice about him for a change.”

Draco shrugged. “It’s about all I can say that’s nice about him.”
An Invitation

Chapter Notes

So here's the long awaited next chapter. Sorry it took so long. I went through it a few times now and all the words are blending together. I can't see any errors but I'm sure tomorrow I'll look and find a whole bunch. I hope you all enjoy it.

“Ron! Wake up.” Ginny exclaimed as she ran up the step of the burrow. “We’ve got letters from Hogwarts.” She said, excitedly as she banged on his door before she opened it.

“Blimey, Ginny.” Ron said, as he quickly pulled the blankets up to cover himself. “You nearly gave me a heart attack. Why are you so excited? Mom told you we’d be getting letters.” He said, recovering from his scare.

“I know, I just didn’t expect them so soon.” She said, as she plopped down on his bed, completely ignoring the fact the he wasn’t dressed.

“Gin. I’m not even dressed. Get out.”

“Pfpth.” She said, waving off his concerns. “I’ve seen you naked before, Ron. Open your letter. I want to see what it says,”

He sighed, taking the letter from her hand. “I’ll read it, and then you can read it, in your own room.”

“Fine, I just want to find out what they have planned for us.”

“I really don’t care what they have planned for us. I’m not going back. It just wouldn’t be the same without Harry and Hermione there with me.”

“Maybe they will go back too. Have you talked to him about it?” Ginny asked.

Ron shook his head. “He wrote me a letter, Ginny, a freaking letter.” Ron said angrily.

Ginny frowned and said, “He’s got a lot going on, Ron. Maybe he felt a letter would be easier.”

Ron ripped open the Hogwarts letter and read it aloud.

Dear Mr. Ronald Weasley,

Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry would like to invite you to return to complete your education. Due to the interruption of your schooling during your seventh year, you are being offered a rare opportunity to return in our accelerated program. The program starts July 1st and will primarily focus on preparing you for the NEWTs exams. The exam will be administered by a ministry official, in January after the return from the winter holiday. If you do not wish to partake in the accelerated program you are still able to attend the school as a Seventh year student. We look forward to receiving your response no later than June 15.

Sincerely,
Severus Snape, Headmaster Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry.

“An accelerated program? What the hell is that supposed to mean?” Ron asked angrily.

Ginny shrugged. “I don’t know.” She said as she opened her own letter and read it aloud.

Dear Ms. Ginerva Weasley,

Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry would like to invite you to return to complete your education. You and a select few students are being offered the opportunity to return and partake in an accelerated seventh year program. This offer is being made based on your grades from your sixth year and your life experiences. The accelerated session will begin July 1. However, if you wish to return for the standard seventh year you are welcome to do so. We look forward to receiving your response by no later than June 15th.

Sincerely,


Ginny smiled and said “I get to finish a whole year early.”

Ron scowled. “That’s not fair. I wonder why they are doing that.” He handed her his letter. “I’m not going back so it doesn’t matter.” He pulled the blankets back up around his shoulders and kicked at Ginny trying to get her off his bed. “Get out now, will you.” He said to her, as he lay back down.

“Ron, it’s the middle of the day why are you in bed anyway?”

“I’m tired. I’m not sleeping well.” He said as he tried to snuggle further down into his bed.

Ginny shrugged. “Mom saved you some dinner. You should get up and come down and eat something.” She said as she left his room.

Ron groaned. He hadn’t been sleeping well since the battle. Harry, his best friend, who he had worked so hard to be there for, only slipping once or twice during their whole relationship, was turning his back on him. Harry had changed somehow during the battle and was now walking around acting as though he was the new Dark Lord. Trelawney had even told him as much when he went to see her. Ron sat up shaking his head trying to rid himself of the memory of his visit with the seer. She had been manipulating Harry most of his life and for her to suggest that he could become something as evil as Voldemort really pissed him off.

Then he got a letter from Harry, a fucking letter. Ron stood and pulled his pants back on. Harry asked him why he didn’t like purists. He wanted to know how Harry could sympathize with them. The purists were evil bastards that wanted everyone to live in the dark ages. They want to ignore all the advances that the muggles had made and keep everyone hidden from the muggle world. They would be happy if the muggles would all just die off and let them continue to live their out-of-date lifestyle with all their crazy rules and traditions. How could Harry embrace such a life after living in the muggle world for so long? His mother was a muggleborn and he was raised by muggles. He knew that Harry’s aunt and uncle hadn’t treated him well. He had seen the evidence of their abuse himself but that didn’t mean all muggles were bad. Hermione’s mother and father had seemed to be nice enough; she was never treated badly by them. How could she turn her back on them and embrace the purist’s way knowing that they wanted people like her parents to be dead. How could Harry? He didn’t understand this at all and he wanted to speak to Harry to get answers but Harry was held up at the mansion and sending fucking letters rather than speak to him in person.
Ron left his room and stomped down the stairs, angrily. He made the decision that he would get to the bottom of whatever the Malfoy’s were doing to his friends. He went into the kitchen and grabbed a handful of floo powder.

“Ron, are you going somewhere?” Molly asked, surprised at his behavior.

Ron paused, powder in hand. He turned to her and snapped, “I’m going to see Harry and I don’t care what you say about it.” He tossed the powder into the fire calling out Harry Potter. The green flames sprung to life and a few seconds later Harry was looking through the floo at Ron.

“Ron!” Harry said, happily. Ron hadn’t expected Harry to be happy to get a floo call from him so he hesitated in replying. “Is everything all right, Ron? You look upset.” Harry asked in concern.

Ron stuttered “Yes, everything is fine, I think.” He said trying to find his voice again.

“What’s up then?” Harry asked.

“I wanted to see you.” Ron said, not really sure what he wanted to say now that he had Harry’s attention.

Draco looked through the floo at Ron. “You see him. Was there something else?” He said smiling at Ron.

Ron scowled and said “I wanted to see you in person Harry. I wanted to talk to you.”

Harry smiled and said “Yeah, that sounds great. When did you want to get together? We were just finishing dinner, did you want to come over here now or maybe get together sometime tomorrow?”

Ron was shocked that it would be that easy to see Harry. He had thought that Harry would make up some excuse as to why they couldn’t get together. “It doesn’t have to be now. Tomorrow would be fine.” He said thinking he should get his thoughts together before he sat down with Harry and had their talk.

“Okay, tomorrow I have the Wisengamot meeting in the morning. I did have something planned for the afternoon but it can wait till later or we could maybe get together for dinner or something like that.”

Ron frowned and said, “I don’t want you to change your plans for me so dinner somewhere where we can talk sounds good.”

“That sounds perfect. You pick the place and I’ll treat. We can meet at the ministry. How’s 4:00 sound?” Harry asked happily.

“Yeah 4:00 sounds fine. I’ll meet you in the lobby.”

“I’m glad you called. I can’t wait to hang with you tomorrow.”

Ron smiled, “I’m really looking forward to it too.” He said, then closed the floo.

Molly frowned and said “I told you I didn’t want you around him until we figured out what was going on.”

“He’s my best friend, mom. I need to speak to him and see if I can help him. I’m sure he’s feeling as though I abandoned him when he got this new power. I just need him to know that I’m still here for him.”
“I don’t like it, Ron. He’s not right in the head right now. He’s too emotional.”

Ron shrugged and said “you haven’t had to put up with him for the last seven years. You don’t know him like I do.”

“Put up with him?” Ginny asked from the doorway. “What do you mean by that, Ron?”

“Were you listening in on my conversation?” He asked angrily.

Ginny nodded. “I don’t think you were the one to put up with the other. It’s clear to me that Harry put up with you.”

“I was the best friend he could ever have. No one else would ever have followed him through all the shit he put me through. If Dumbledore hadn’t asked me to befriend him I would never even had bothered but since he did, I stayed his friend and now he’s dumping me.”

Molly gasped. “Ron, how could you say that? Harry needed a friend and you were perfect for him.”

Ron threw his hands up in frustration. “I’m not saying that I didn’t like being his friend but it would have been easier if he wasn’t doing all those dangerous things. Do you even know how many times Hermione and I nearly got killed because we were helping Harry do something stupid?”

Molly shook her head and said “Dumbledore would never have let anything happen to you. He would have saved you.”

Ginny frowned and said “I don’t think he had any intentions of saving me from Tom Riddle. I showed him the diary and he let me keep it.” She covered her mouth in surprise. “I didn’t even remember that till just now. I did show him the diary. How could I have forgotten that? Why would he let me keep it?”

“I’m sure Dumbledore didn’t realize what the diary was. He wouldn’t put children in harm’s way.” Molly stated emphatically.

Ron shook his head and said “I’m starting to think that maybe Harry was right about Dumbledore not being everything we were made to believe.”

“Did Harry doubt Dumbledore?” Molly asked.

Ron nodded. “He thought that maybe Dumbledore was nearly as bad as Voldemort. He said he felt sad that he thought that way but when he looked at everything he could see some things weren’t adding up.” Ron frowned. “I know whatever memories he saw from Snape must have convinced him that he was right because now he’s telling everyone that Dumbledore wasn’t as good as they all thought. I wish I knew what he saw.” Ron added.

“I still don’t like you seeing him. I don’t care what he’s going through right now, he threatened me and has upset your sister.” Molly said.

Ron shrugged. “I’m going to see him. I’ll decide if I want to be friends with him still. We’ve been through a lot together, even if it wasn’t what I wanted, I still feel as though I should be supportive.”

“Well, be careful. Don’t say anything to upset him.” Molly said, worriedly.

“I’m not sure what I’m going to say but I want to talk to him. I want to know what the Malfoy’s have been telling him that all of the sudden has him sympathetic to the Purists.”
Harry turned away from the floo and smiled at Draco. “I’m having dinner with Ron tomorrow night.”

“I know, I heard.” Draco said. “Daphne and Astoria are coming for dinner; I was hoping you would be here.”

“I completely forgot about that. I can floo him back and reschedule.” Harry offered.

Draco shook his head. “You don’t have to do that. He seemed pretty excited. I wonder what took him so long to contact you.”

Harry shrugged and said “I sent him a letter asking him about his opinions of Purists. I haven’t talked to him since I found out about the spell used on Bellatrix. I was pretty mad at the burrow and I think Molly told them not to contact me. I sent him a letter so he could decide if he wanted to talk to me or not.” Harry sighed as he sat down on the couch. “I miss him, even though he was a jerk sometimes. I want to talk to him about everything that has happened.”

Draco sat down next to him. “I understand.” he said “We’ll miss you at dinner.”

Harry turned toward Draco. “You’ll be busy with you future fiancé.” He said feeling a little jealous.

Draco smiled and said “don’t be jealous, Harry. I have to get married and have a heir. It’s my family’s tradition but it doesn’t mean that we can’t have a relationship.”

Harry groaned. “I really don’t want to get more involved then I already am.”

Draco moved closer to him. “I really want you to get more involved.” He said as he placed his hand on Harry’s lap. “I wish you could see that we can still have a relationship even if I marry Astoria.”

“I’m not sure I want to be the ‘Severus’ in your marriage with Astoria. He will always be the secondary, never the primary. I want to be someone’s primary. I want to be the main in a relationship and I just can’t have that with you.”

Draco nodded. “I understand but couldn’t you have this relationship now until you find your primary. Look at Hermione and Severus, they found each other. Did you see how happy they both seemed at dinner? Did you see the way his eyes lit up when she read her letter from the school? Hermione couldn’t stop smiling at him.” He said laughing. “I’ve never seen my uncle like that. He was practically giddy with happiness. It was a little creepy.”

Harry nodded. “Wait till he holds his daughter for the first time.”

“Really? A daughter.” Draco asked in surprise.

“Anything can happen and that’s so far away things that I can’t see might change it before that happens.” Harry said trying to dispel Draco’s curiosity.

“What else can you see?” Draco asked his curiosity being peeked.
Harry stared off into the distance. He could clearly see what Draco was asking him about but he thought that he should keep his observations to himself. He couldn’t explain to himself why he could see himself kissing Astoria like they were in love. He could clearly see Draco holding a little boy that looked just like him while they looked at Severus holding his new born daughter. Harry shook his head and sighed “I really can’t see much more than that. Like I said it’s not an accurate talent. I really can’t rely on it.”

“You’re lying.” Draco said. “I can tell.”

Harry laughed. “I’m not lying.” He said but his voice squeaked a little.

“When you lie, you try to keep eye contact. I’ve seen you lie before. You deliberately make eye contact but when you aren’t lying you don’t bother.”

“I never realized that I do that.” Harry said frowning. He sighed. “What I can see isn’t really important. As I said, it could change. Just knowing could change the future. It’s not a prophecy that can’t be changed.”

“I’d like to know what you saw anyway.” Draco said inching closer to Harry.

Harry smiled and moved closer to Draco. He looked Draco in the eyes and said, “I’m not going to tell you.”

Draco smirked and said “You’re lying again,” but before Harry could respond Draco pulled Harry into him and kissed him. Harry returned the kiss, his vision still clear in his head. He wasn’t sure how he knew but he was certain that they would be together anyway and no longer wanted to fight it. Draco pulled back and smiled at him. “So tell me what you saw.”

Harry smiled and said “This. I saw this.” He placed his hands on Draco’s shoulders and pushed him back on the couch reclaiming his mouth in a passionate kiss. Draco wrapped his arms around Harry’s neck allowing him to take over. They remained in their passionate embrace, nibbling and teasing each other for several minutes before they heard someone clearing their throat in the room. They paused in their kissing. Harry said quietly, as he stroked Draco’s slightly swollen lips, “I think we might have an audience.”

Draco lifted his head and looked over Harry’s shoulder. He groaned “my whole family is watching you molest me.”

“Molest you?” Harry asked, laughing. He moved so that Draco could sit up feeling very embarrassed to have been caught making out with him. He cleared his throat and said “Ah, yeah sorry about that.” He was trying to avoid looking at any of them but he couldn’t help glancing their way.

“Sorry to have interrupted.” Hermione said feeling bad for her friend and wondering why it seems that they could have non committed relationships but it was frowned upon for her. She’d have to remember to ask Narcissa about that later. “We were wondering if that was Ron.”

“Yeah, he wanted to invite me to dinner. I’m meeting him tomorrow after I take care of somethings at the ministry.” Harry said as he settled into his seat on the couch next to Draco.

“I believe you had a previous engagement, Harry.” Lucius reminded him.

“Yes, but it’s important for me to meet with Ron so I’m going to have to cancel dinner with your family and the Greengrass.”

Lucius nodded in understanding. “We will miss you.”
Hermione frowned and said “I’d like to go with you, Harry.” She looked to Lucius and Severus to see what they thought about that idea.

Harry answered before they could “I figured you’d want to, Hermione, but I think it would be best if you had dinner here. I need to speak to Ron about his hatred of purist. I need him to focus on that topic and not on how he thinks you turned your back on him.”

“I didn’t turn my back on him. He abandoned me in a pit of death eaters.” She retorted angrily.

“I know, Hermione and for that very reason I think it would be best if I met with him alone this time. I want to speak to him about all of this. So much has happened and I’m sure he’s the one feeling abandoned. I need to find out what he truly believes and what he’s been taught to believe by Dumbledore.” Harry said trying to appease her.

Hermione nodded and said “You’re right; of course, I don’t know why I get so emotional about that. I know he’s been taught that the purists are bad people but he has never had the chance to get to know them.”

“And that’s why I need to speak to him, just to satisfy my curiosity.”

“I’m not really looking forward to dinner with the Greengrass sisters.” Hermione confessed. “I never really had much interaction with Astoria but Daphne was so mean to me every chance she got. I can’t imagine that the war ending will change that any.”

“They will be guests in my house, they wouldn’t dare say or do anything offensive to another one of my guest let alone someone who we have taken in as family.” Lucius said firmly.

Severus sighed “Lucius, you don’t know what these children have been doing at school on their parents behest.”

“I beg to differ on that uncle. My father knows exactly what we were told to do to non-purists and their supporters. It was made quite clear to us that we were to make them feel lesser then we were to the extent that they wouldn’t want to stay in the magical world. Even though we didn’t always agree with that sentiment that is what we were forced to portray. Some of us have taken it more to heart then others. Daphne, for instance, has always had a hatred for Hermione. That first day when she was sorted into Gryffindor she made comments about how the bloody Gryffindor’s were trying to change everything and how she could see that mudblood was going to be a problem. She even believed that Hermione somehow brought the troll into the school.”

“How did she think I could do that?” Hermione asked in shock.

“She suggested that you were somehow related to the troll.” Draco said laughing.

Hermione sat down on the couch next to Harry. “I really wish I could get out of this somehow. Maybe I could go and visit someone else.”

Lucius took the arm chair across from them. “I really want…” He paused and corrected himself “We really want you here, Hermione. If all goes as planned Astoria will be a member of the Malfoy family. It would be best if you and her were friends or at the very least able to stand each other’s company.”

Harry took her hand, “Hermione, you’ll do fine. Stop worrying about it. I’ve heard that you were more than able to handle yourself in a house full of people that hated you, I’m sure you can handle one class mate.”
Severus frowned as Harry took her hand. He settled into the seat next to Lucius but inwardly he was seething thinking about how Harry could so casually touch her yet he wouldn’t even be able to speak to her without raising suspicions. Harry noticed the slight change in Severus’ posture and glanced at him only long enough to see that he was staring at Hermione’s hand in his. He gave her hand one last squeeze before he released it and put his arm on the back of the couch behind her knowing that Severus wasn’t comfortable with anyone else touching her. Later he would discuss that with him to find out exactly what was up.

Hermione smiled at him and placed her hands in her lap. She glanced at Severus and noted he seemed to exhale as she did so. She remembered their conversation about physical contact and what would be considered acceptable. Surely holding a friend’s hand wouldn’t be considered unacceptable. Add that to the list of things to speak to Narcissa about.

“You are right about that, Harry. Hermione was more than capable of handling herself but remember she had escorts assigned to her by Voldemort himself. No one would dare touch her after that.” Lucius added seeing the strange posture of his lover.

Hermione sighed “I paid for those escorts with my blood though, if you will remember that strange breakfast.”

Severus nodded “you were so brave. I knew you could handle yourself. I must confess that I didn’t know exactly what he had planned for you but I was certain that you could handle whatever it was. I’m just glad that you did. If you had displeased him I’m sure he would have let you bleed to death while we were all powerless to help.”

“I’m so glad that we are rid of him.” Draco said as he sat back getting comfortable next to Harry.

Narcissa swept into the room. “Ah good, I was hoping that I would catch you before you returned to Hogwarts, Severus. We never discussed if you would be joining us for dinner tomorrow night.”

Severus nodded “I had hoped to get away from my duties and join you, however, with the letters going out today, I’m fairly certain there will be complaints to deal with tomorrow.”

“Complaints?” Harry asked.

Severus nodded “not everyone was offered the opportunity to return for the accelerated program. The majority of Slytherin and Gryffindor sixth and seventh years were extended the offer. Only a few students in Ravenclaw and Hufflepuff really qualified. I’m sure we’ll be getting owls asking why.”

“Why wouldn’t it be offered to all the students?” Hermione asked.

“Many of the Hufflepuff students weren’t really excelling in their studies to begin with offering an accelerated program wouldn’t really be beneficial for them. The Ravenclaw students have always been studious and steady learners and their Head of house felt that they would want to complete the year as normally as possible. Several students were selected based on their involvement in the war and the fact that their family life may have been disrupted. For instance, one of the muggleborns in Ravenclaw lost her family to deatheaters during the war. She is a sixth year and her sister is a third year in Hufflepuff. She has been offered the program as she wants to get herself established so that she can help care for her sister.”

Harry nodded “I met that girl in the infirmary. I don’t recall ever seeing her around the school though.”

“She has always been very quiet and when things started to get bad for the muggleborns her, her
sister and a few others started traveling in packs between classes. They even found a few secret corridors they could travel in and not be caught.”

“I didn’t know about muggleborns traveling in secret corridors.” Hermione said indignantly.

“You didn’t need secret corridors, Hermione.” Draco added. “You traveled with Harry Potter and could more than handle yourself in a fight. Some of the Sytherins even made it a game by seeing if they could find you by yourself. They would play tricks on you but we all knew that if anything happened to one of the golden trio we’d be in a lot of trouble.”

Severus chuckled “on more than one occasion I caught my Slytherins trying to sneak up on you on your way back from the library. It was exhausting following you around when Potter was off doing who knows what while you studied.”

“I had no idea that anyone was following her around.” Harry said in surprise. “I always wondered how she was able to get from one place to another with hardly any trouble even though it seemed many of the other muggleborns were terrified to walk around.”

Draco nodded “I never got caught but the other Professors caught my house mates all the time and gave out detentions for attacking the other students. It’s one of the reasons why you were hated so much. If we got caught playing tricks on you the punishments would be doubled.”

“You never got caught? Does that mean you were doing it too?” Hermione asked.

“Well, yeah! Of course I was. You were a symbol of everything that was going wrong with our society. Now that you are merging into our society and not trying to change it I wouldn’t try anything on you but back then we were all thinking that if we could be rid of the brains of the trio we might have a chance to be rid of Potter and the anti-purist.”

Hermione frowned “I’m glad the war is over but I’m not sure if the prejudice will ever end.”

“Something major will have to change in order for that to happen” said Draco.

“How do they handle muggleborns in other countries?” Harry asked. “I never really understood how that worked.”

“In most other countries wizards and witches are only born to magical people. If a child is muggleborn they are usually identified at a young age and either taken away or taken care of by some other means.” Narcissa said as she settled on the arm of Lucius chair. “The other means aren’t that nice.” She said sadly. “Countries that have strong boundaries between the magical world and the muggle world have higher concentrations of witches and wizards but countries that have no boundaries have very few magical people.”

“Other means? Like murder? They would kill the child just because it was born from muggles” Harry asked incredulously.

Lucius nodded and said “what you are proposing we do here if the children aren’t being treated properly is similar to what they do in other countries. In England and other civilized countries it was decided that stealing magical children was a bad idea. Which reminds me did you look at the rewritten proposal?”

“Yeah I read over it earlier. I should probably take a class on reading legal jargon but what I got from it sounds like exactly what I wanted from it.”

“It is very well written and I believe it says exactly what you wanted it to say.” Lucius told him.
“You know Harry; once you finish school you could probably go to a muggle university for law.” Hermione suggested.

“I hadn’t ever considered schooling after Hogwarts. For a while there I was thinking I’d be joining the auror program. How do wizards learn about wizarding laws? Surely they don’t attend muggle schools.”

“I believe they learn through apprenticeship in the ministry.” Lucius said “A position like that of Percy Weasley would eventually lead to a higher position and then eventually Wizengamot or even minister.”

“I see. I still have a lot to learn.” Harry said falling silent as he thought about all that he needed to know.

“You do.” Severus agreed “but what you need to know you will pick up fast enough. You should consider taking history classes when you return to Hogwarts.”

“I’m not sure I’m going to return to Hogwarts.” Harry said sheepishly.

Hermione turned to look at him. “Harry, we just talked about this. What do you mean you’re not going back. We discussed sharing one of the suites.”

“You talked about it almost nonstop at dinner, Hermione. I’m not really sure I want to go back. Plus how will I manage school and the Wizengamot. I don’t think I can do both.”

Draco frowned and said “I hadn’t thought about that. I was hoping we’d have a chance to room together at school.”

“You and Hermione can room together but I don’t think I’ll be there.”

“The Wizengamot doesn’t meet daily, Harry. Arrangements will be made for you to attend classes around the meetings.” Severus suggested.

“I guess I didn’t realize that the Wizengamot wouldn’t meet daily.”

Lucius added “The Wizengamot has always met as little as possible before. The council members don’t want to put time into it. They just wanted the prestige of saying they were a Wizengamot member and only went when they absolutely had too.”

“They’ve been more active the past few years but only because of Albus saying that the prophecy was coming to fruition and then because Voldemort made them take part in the muggleborn hunts.” Severus said.

“We’ve a lot of work to do sorting deatheaters and the wrongly accused. I hope they don’t plan on going back to being inactive.” Harry said frowning.

“Tomorrow we’ll vote on your proposal and then find out how sorting out the wand problem is going.”

“I hope we start on sorting the imprisoned, too. It’s been over a week since most of them were arrested.” Harry said.

Severus sighed and said “I’m not sure how much time we’ll have. There are some who will want to argue different parts of the proposal before they vote it in to action.”
Harry frowned and said angrily “I hope they don’t plan on arguing for the sake of arguing. It’s a good plan and they know it. It’s a waste of everyone’s time for them to bicker about things that they don’t want to change anyway.” Groaning pinched the bridge of his nose and leaned back on the couch. “I hope I can manage some patience and not blast them from their seats.”

Lucius paled “I hope so too. I won’t do any of us any good if you lose your temper.”

Draco seeing the need for a change of subject asked, “What else do you plan on doing there tomorrow?”

“I wanted to go to the library and find information on the ministry building. I want to know what was there before the ministry. I suspect it was the Treeroot farm but I want to find out for sure.”

“Harry, that kind of research could take days to find. You won’t have enough time to do that tomorrow.” Hermione said sounding slightly exasperated.

“I had hoped there would be a librarian there to help me find the information.”

Narcissa shook her head “there hasn’t been a librarian in the ministry since the first war. He was a muggleborn and one of the first people Riddle had murdered. I remember that being the first time I thought that maybe his methods weren’t so great.”

Lucius nodded and said “my father thought that it was a great loss but still supported Riddle. He hadn’t liked the man but thought that he was really good at his job.”

“I was there the night they killed him.” Severus said sadly. “It was right around the time that Tom had started to show affection toward me.” He visibly shivered. “Shortly after that Dumbledore reported to me that the new librarian couldn’t find a book if you hit him in the head with it. In retrospect I think he probably knew that I was a deatheater at that point and was probably pumping me for information”

“Well I’ve got to go and try and find the information before I do anything else with the arch.”

“Maybe I could go over with you in the morning and start looking. I’ve never been to the ministry library.” Hermione offered, hopefully.

“You’re calling it a library but it’s more of an archive storage vault. I’ve been in it before searching for runes and protection charms. It’s very disorganized and hard to find anything.” Lucius said and then added “It’s not very safe either. No one ever goes down there and the documents are stacked precariously high.”

“I could take one of the bodyguards with me. It’s in the ministry so I’d be safe enough from attacker but just to have someone to look out for me and maybe even help search a little.”

“I think that sounds like an excellent idea, Hermione.” Narcissa said. “The men have been kind of bored around the manor. It would be good for them to get out even if it’s to a dusty archive hall. I don’t have any plans on going anywhere tomorrow.”

Lucius pondered the idea for a moment before he spoke “I think it seems safe enough. I would advise that you remain in the archive hall and not wonder around the ministry. They’re still bringing deatheaters in and there are still some supremacists around that might want to cause you trouble.”

“I would really appreciate the help. I’ll come and look with you after the Wizengamot meeting is over.” Harry said smiling.
“You would have to come home in enough time that you can change for dinner with Astoria and Daphne.” Narcissa added.

“I could walk her to the floos when I go to meet with Ron. Actually, Ron would probably like to see her.”

Severus scrunched his nose “I don’t know what you ever saw in that boy.”

“He has a lot of good qualities. He’s funny. He has strong family values and he can be very charming. I did find him attractive but when we were hiding from Voldemort and the snatchers we were under a lot of stress his behavior was less attractive. I think he showed his true colors then.” Hermione said sadly.

Harry nodded and said “he made a lot of the difficult decisions. It was easy to let him take over and decide when we broke camp and when we went into towns to get food and then again when we were captured and Hermione was left behind. He was the one who decided trying to rescue her was impossible.” Harry sighed “he made making that decision seem too easy. I was really upset about that even though I agreed with him I was still angry with him that he made the decision to leave her.”

“He was good at making the hard choices. I didn’t always agree with them but that was one of things that was attractive, he took command. It became less attractive when he accused us of having an affair and then took off for a few weeks.”

“He would never tell me what made him come back. He said that he was playing with the light Dumbledore gave him and he followed that to us but I don’t know if I ever really believed that story.”

Hermione sighed “I don’t think he was telling us the whole truth. I’m sure that was part of the story but he was holding something back.”

“I never imagined that he could be that cunning.” Draco said shaking his head. “He always seemed so dull and dimwitted to me.”

“He’s not dull or dimwitted. He may not excel in school but he’s pretty smart about other things.” Hermione said defensively.

Draco held his hands up in surrender “I didn’t mean to upset you, Hermione.”

“I know I just don’t like people saying bad things about my friends.” She crossed her arms and sat back on the couch grumpily.

Lucius chuckled and said “and your defense of your so called friends is what makes you so special. I’m glad to call you a friend and more.”

Narcissa smiled and said “We’re lucky to know you.” She stood and spoke to Lucius. “Lucius, I’m just going to speak to the security men then I’m going to retire for the evening. It’s been a busy day for me.”

“Fine, my darling. I’ll join you shortly.” He said beaming at her, his love for her clearly evident.

Once Narcissa exited the room Harry turned to Lucius “It’s really nice to see this side of your family and you. Every time I saw the Malfoy’s in public they were always cold and formal. To see you show affection well it’s a nice change. It wouldn’t hurt to let others see you like this, it would help the purists cause too. Arthur thinks that purists strive to have no emotions at all not even in their personal relationships. When I told him it wasn’t like that in private he said he couldn’t imagine it.”
Lucius scoffed “I’m not going to show any weakness in public.

“I’m not suggesting that you show weakness, Lucius. All I’m saying is that you show your human and not a cold hearted monster. Most witches and wizards probably think you’re an evil monster even to your family.”

“I saw Draco and you once in Diagon alley. I don’t know what Draco did but you were speaking harshly to him.” Hermione added, shaking her head. “I actually felt sorry for Draco that his father didn’t have any love for him. Then Draco saw me watching and sneered at me. I almost hoped that he would get punished when he got home for whatever he did that had you so upset.”

“Hmmmm, I can’t remember what it was that he might have done.” Lucius said.

“I remember Father. We were on our way home after visiting the owlry. You were angry because they wouldn’t sell us a new owl after they found out the last owl hadn’t come home from delivering its message to Lord Voldemort. You weren’t angry at me. I saw Hermione watching us as though she pitied us so I gave her an angry mind your own business look. If you had seen her you would have wanted to hex her so I didn’t point her out to you.”

“Oh yes, I remember that. I never did find out what happened to that owl. I was pretty mad. I probably would have wanted to us her for target practice.” Lucius said motioning to Hermione.

“My point is,” Harry added, “your public persona is very cold and calculated. If others saw just a glimpse that you can be more human, and that purist aren’t all loveless monsters, then maybe more people would be open to moving toward the purist lifestyle.”

“Harry has a point, Lucius. I have told you what some of the children think of the purists and how they gossip about how babies are made.” Severus added.

“In my third year the girls in Gryffindor all speculated that you made Draco in a caldron.” Hermione said laughing.

“I remember that.” Harry laughed. “They thought that Severus probably found the potion in the restricted section of the library.”

“Why would they think I was made in a caldron?”

“I think it was the first year many of us noticed things like muscle and looks. They all thought you were the perfect specimen of a man.” Hermione said, blushing. “And I didn’t disagree. Although, I was pretty sure that you weren’t made in a caldron.”

“In my third year I wasn’t really looking at anyone as a prospective partner. I was more concerned with the dementors flying around and how the school was locked down. Oh, and making life difficult for the non purists.”

“I will consider your advice, Harry.” He stood and said, “Draco, I’m sure I don’t need to remind you of proper behavior for a purist. You are in our home but your relationships should be kept private.” He turned to Severus, “would you care to retire with me, Severus?”

Severus glanced at Hermione and smiled at her before saying, “No Lucius, I think I will hold off on that for a while.”

Lucius nodded “I understand. Good night to you all.” He glanced at Hermione and gave her a little nod of approval before leaving the four of them for the night.
“I’m going to start sleeping at Hogwarts since the new school year is fast approaching.” He stood
“Hermione, would you be as kind as to walk me to the floo?”

Hermione and Severus left the room leaving Harry and Draco alone once again. “Sorry about that
Draco.” Harry said feeling a little embarrassed that Lucius said something to him about their
snogging session.

Draco laughed and said “don’t be sorry I was enjoying it and I’m the one who started it. My father is
right though, we really do need to keep a more private about our interest in one another.”

“I agree,” he said as he stretched and yawned. “It’s been a very lazy day but even so I’m feeling
exhausted. I think I’ll retire early myself.”

Draco hopped up and took his hand pulling Harry to his feet. “It’s still early let’s find something fun
to do.”

Harry groaned “I really should get some rest I have the wizengamot meeting tomorrow; I don’t want
to be tired and cranky for that.”

“Really? It’s still pretty early we could find something relaxing to do if you don’t want to do
something exciting.”

“Hmm, relaxing you say. What did you have in mind, Dra?” Harry said as he pulled Draco back to
him.

Draco smiled coyly at him “I can think of a few things.” He said pulling Harry to him and kissing
him again.

“I think your father said that kind of thing should be done in private.” Hermione said from the door
way as she entered the room. “And why is it ok for the two of you to be intimate but not for me and
Severus?” She said huffing. “He wouldn’t even give me a kiss good bye.” Hermione plopped back
down on the sofa crossing her arms angrily. “I don’t like this one bit. I think when we are in private
we should be able to do as we like. Do you have any idea how hard this is going to be?”

Harry smirked at her “a few months ago you weren’t even the slightest bit interested in sex now
you’re afraid you can’t be without it. You’ll graduate in January then Severus can make it known in
public that he is courting you, after that marriage and then you can have him to your hearts content.”

Hermione groaned “I want him now. I miss it ya know. I’m still mad at myself for going to London
with you, Harry. I was happy here.”

“What do you mean you were happy here? Aren’t you still happy?” Draco asked in concern.

Hermione looked up surprised “Yes, of course I’m still happy. It’s just different now but in a good
way.”

“You’re better off now, Hermione. I know you enjoyed serving the Malfoys but I just couldn’t see
you being their slave for the rest of your life.”

“I could see myself doing that but I wonder if that spell didn’t have something to do with that. I still
feel compelled to obey Lucius. Thankfully he has not been abusing that ability. He hasn’t asked me
to do anything.”

“He told me that he was having a hard time not asking you to do things knowing that you would feel
compelled to do them.” Draco confessed. “You however, are very good at knowing when to do
things. Like the other day you brought him letters that were delivered to the manor up to his study. You weren’t asked to do that but you anticipated that he would want them and rather than asking an elf to do it you did it yourself. That is considered a sign of a good servant, knowing when your master will need things and making it available without being asked.”

Hermione beamed at his praise and said “I do like serving. I enjoy making people happy and doing a good job. I like the praise I get when I’ve done something to make their lives easier.”

“I’m sure you’ll find something rewarding enough once you’ve graduated and start working.” Harry said then yawned again. “I am going to bed. I’ll see you all at breakfast.”

Draco sat back down on the sofa next to Hermione. “He’s got a lot on his mind.” He said to her.

“I know. I hope he finds some answers tomorrow at the ministry.” Hermione sighed and said “maybe I’ll get lucky and get stuck at the ministry and won’t have to endure dinner with the Greengrasses.”

“I hope you find some answers for him but you will still have to come home for dinner. I’m pretty sure my father will command that.” He leaned back putting his hands behind his head and smiled “So you thought I was the perfect specimen of a man back in third grade.” He said with a smirk.

Hermione elbowed him in the ribs making him flinch. “You weren’t the only guy the girls were ogling over. I agreed with them that you were cute but I wouldn’t say you were perfect. You were a prick far from perfect in my book.”

He wrapped his arm around her shoulders. “You thought I was a prick?” She nodded as she leaned into his side. “but you don’t think I’m a prick anymore?”

“I know you’re not a prick.”

He kissed her head “and I know you’re not an annoying know it all hell bent on destroying everything I believe in.” He paused and added “well, at least I don’t think you are hell bent on destroying everything I believe in but you are still a bit of an annoying know it all.” He squeezed her shoulders. “But I like you anyway.”

Hermione pulled away from him and said, “Maybe I was wrong you are still a prick.”

He put his hand behind his head and leaned back saying, “right. I’m your perfectly cute prick and you love me for it.” Chuckling, she sat back with him on the sofa. After a few minutes of thought Draco said “snogging with Harry has me all sorts of worked up.”

Hermione smiled “I know what you mean. I can’t get all the times I was with Severus out of my head and thinking about having to wait so long has me worked up.”

Draco stroked the braids in her hair and said “it’s a shame we can’t do anything about it.”

Hermione nodded and said “it is a shame but if Severus is going to wait so am I.”

Draco groaned and said “I miss fucking you.”

Hermione quickly stood and said “I miss being with you too but I better get to bed before I make any bad decisions.”

Draco nodded in agreement. “You better get to bed before I make a bad decision for you.” He said winking at her. Draco sat thinking about everything that had happened that day and decided that today had been a good day.
Dinner Dates

Chapter Notes

Sorry it has taken me this long to get back to writing this story. I have a clear idea of where its going and think about it everyday but never seem to find that time to sit down and write it out. I'm currently snowed in as my little part of the world has found its self buried under 22 inches of snow. Not much by some standards but for us its a lot. Plus I really hate snow. I hope to wrap Harry's story up in the next few chapters. Ron's story will be much more difficult for me as he's my least favorite Harry Potter character. I also have his story mapped out in my head but I've got to write it. Hope you enjoy this update.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

“Can I get you another cup of coffee or a muffin or something else to eat?” The waitress asked Ron startling him from his thoughts.

“Ah, no. I’m good for now.” He said thinking about the muggle money in his pocket and not wishing to jip the pretty blonde that was serving him.

“Okay, let me know if you need anything else.” She added, wondering why he had been sitting in the little café for nearly two hours now drinking one cup of coffee and picking at a muffin. She left him alone with his thoughts.

Ron had spent the better part of his morning at the ministry looking into the auror department requirements. He hadn’t told anyone that he was headed there especially not his father or brother as he didn’t want them trying to pull any strings for him. This was something he wanted to do for himself. He had sat nervously in the lobby waiting to speak to someone in that department for several hours and was surprised when the Head of the Department himself met with him. Auror Malone had patiently explained to him that they would be happy to have someone with his experiences in their department. However, even though he had a lot of experience battling dark wizards he would need to have passed his NEWTS exam or the equivalent to get into the training program. Ron had hoped that since he was a war hero they might overlook that requirement but now it seems as though that wasn’t going to be the case. He was now pondering if he should have let his father or brother pull strings for him.

He knew he’d make a good auror. His experiences in the war had proved to him that he could make the decisions that would need to be made in the line of duty. What he couldn’t understand is how Harry had decided so vehemently against that career in such a short period of time. Before the final battle it was what they had both wanted but afterwards Harry had changed his mind. He knew Harry would be good at it, too. He still couldn’t fathom how Harry survived that battle and the confrontation with Voldemort, the most powerful dark wizard that ever lived. So many other people had died trying to defeat him but yet Harry had done so rather easily in his opinion. Then he corrected himself and said to himself, he had help. We all helped him. We destroyed little bits of Voldemort along the way and in the end Neville killed the last piece of Voldemort, Nagini. All Harry really did was deliver the killing blow.

Harry, was a killer, like Ron was a killer. Ron had known that Harry had that ability all along just
like he did but Harry was blatant about it. He killed Voldemort with no remorse, as he should have, but now that Harry knew how easy it was he’d be able to do it again just as easily. Ron smirked to himself remembering the first person he had killed. It was right after he left Hermione and Harry in the forest. He went to a little wizarding village that he knew and ran into a snatcher. The snatcher had identified him as a Weasley and tried to attack him. Ron had retaliated by casting a few of his own spells but in the end he got a clear shot and fired a shrinking spell at the man’s head. It was that easy. He didn’t even have to use an Avada Kedavra. He watched the man struggle at reversing the spell but eventually he had gone still. Ron was a little surprised at himself, finding that he had enjoyed killing the man and shrugged it off as feeling like he was justified and ridding the world of a bad wizard. He would make a good auror he thought to himself at that time.

The next time he was caught in a duel was at Gringotts bank he had fired a few curses when they were trying to escape that he meant to kill with but with all the excitement he never knew if he had hit any of his targets. At the battle of Hogwarts he had cast quite a few curses that the intended targets but again he had no knowledge of whether or not they had hit theirs marks. He found it frustrating and anti-climatic not knowing if he had hit his marks. It was much more satisfying to watch the person die rather then wonder about it later.

Then there was Professor Trelawney, he thought angrily. He hadn't felt the same rush when she had died but he also hadn't felt any remorse having seen her meet her end. The first time he had met her out of school had been in a pub when he was feeling down about leaving Harry and Hermione in the forest. They had a long talk about her visions and what she could see of their futures. She was clearly drunk but he listened to her anyway. During a lull in the conversation she suddenly became alert told him that Harry needed him. That it was urgent and that he had to leave immediately. She had know about the deluminator and showed him how he could use it. He was shocked that he could hear Hermione's voice which he was able to follow back to their camp.

A few days after the battle he received an owl from her saying that it was urgent that she speak to him. He had gone at once to Hogwarts to see her thinking that she had more information similar to what she had offered him in the pub. When he had arrived she quickly lead him to the astronomy tower still dressed in her night clothes. She repeated the new prophecy to Ron. Ron was shocked that she would say anything to him after he had heard what Harry had said to her just the day before. He told her that she needed to keep that prophecy to herself and not tell another living soul. She confided that she had already given the prophecy to the court reporter but that she needed Ron to know so that he could stop Harry from becoming an evil Dark lord. Ron had laughed at her asking her if she really believed that Harry could ever become like Voldemort. Sybill began begging him to believe her pulling at his robes saying that he had to be stopped before he fixed the veil. Ron had looked behind him trying to see who was there with them but he still couldn’t see anyone. He looked back at Sybill and was horrified to
see that she had backed further towards the edge. He stepped towards her and said “Sybill, you’re too close to the edge you’ll fall.” She glanced back and saw the edge and looked back to him and started speaking again: “...The new dark lord has come from the arms of death and will bring new life to the magical world. The one that is marked will be the savior of those that are thusly marked. The new dark lord approaches from the light and will rule in darkness with love and compassion. She held up her hands as she spoke as though she was blocking a hit to her stomach. Even as she held her hands out she flew backwards as though she had been shoved. Ron ran to the edge and watched as she fell to the ground with a sickening thud. He looked around to see if anyone had seen what had happened. He knew that even though he hadn’t done anything wrong, he hadn’t pushed her after all, he would probably be in trouble if anyone found out about their exchange. He pulled his wand out and quickly disapparated away. He had returned to the burrow and not said a word to anyone about where he had been or the fact that he knew what the newest prophetic rantings of Sybill Trewlawny had been. He vowed to never speak of it to anyone not even Harry.

Shaking himself from his thoughts he looked around the café again. Right after that meeting he had left the ministry and walked thinking about what he was going to do with his life. He had come upon to this café and ordered a cup of coffee and a muffin. He had been sitting there so long that the coffee was cold and the muffin was going stale. He discreetly cast the tempus charm and saw that the time was 2:30. He still had some time to kill.

Sipping at the cold coffee he looked around the café and spotted the waitress watching him from behind the counter. He gave her a sheepish smile then turned to look out the window. She was pretty but not pretty as Lavernder had been or even Hermione. They had both been pretty in a hometown girl sort of way. This girl was pretty like maybe she was a model or actress. He glanced at her again to confirm his opinion. She saw him looking and smiled broadly at him, flashing her dazzling white teeth at him. He smiled back thinking that he was right she was super model pretty but standing behind the counter he couldn’t see her figure and hadn’t paid enough attention to it when she was asking to serve him.

As though she were reading his mind she poured a cup of coffee and brought it to his table, setting it down she said “this one is on me.”

Ron smiled at her and said, “thanks.”

She held out her hand and said “My name is Dana.”

Ron glanced at her perfectly manicured hand before taking it and saying “my name’s Ron.”

“Ron?” She laughed “I would have thought you’d have a name more like Bill or Charlie.”

“Ah, you were hoping to meet one of my brothers.” She eased herself down into the chair across from him.

“How many brothers do you have?” She asked as though he was suddenly the most interesting person she had ever met. Ron frowned, the memory of Fred’s death surfacing anew in his mind. “I had five but recently one my Brothers, Fred, was killed.”

“Oh, I’m sorry to hear that you lost a loved one.” She scooted her seat in further and leaned over the table. “Was it during the war?” She asked.

Ron was surprised that she would ask him something like that and suddenly wished he knew more about what was going on in the muggle world so that he could answer that question. He nodded to her and said “it was during a war but I’d rather not talk about that.”
She nodded and said quietly “I understand. My uncle told me that the wizarding war was over and that he was going to come and visit as soon as everything was settled.” Ron frowned at her not knowing how to respond or how much he should say to this obviously muggle girl who apparently had some knowledge of the wizarding world. “I know you’re not supposed to talk about it too much.” She added.

Ron looked at her puzzled trying to find words finally he said “what makes you think I know anything about a wizarding world?” He tried to play it as though she was crazy for thinking there was such a thing.

She laughed and said “I saw your wand when you paid for the coffee and a few minutes ago you cast a spell to see the time.” She continued laughing and added “you were trying to be discreet but I’m a good spy.” She winked at him.

Ron suddenly felt very uncomfortable. Her laugh was light and happy with an almost musical sound to it and when she winked at him his heart fluttered. She knew he was a wizard and didn’t think he was a freak as most muggles would. He smiled at her and said “you are right I’m not supposed to talk about the wizarding world to muggles or non-magical people.”

She nodded and said “Ron, I get off at 3:30 would you like to go someplace and get a bite to eat with me?”

Ron thought for a minute about her offer and his dinner date with Harry. He really wanted to see Harry but somehow he wanted to learn more about the beautiful girl who was asking him to dinner. He glanced out the window thinking about how he could make his plans work.

She stood “I’m sorry.” She said, apologizing thinking that she had somehow upset him. “I didn’t mean to make you uncomfortable. I know it must be weird for you, a perfect stranger coming to you, confronting you with knowledge of your secret.”

Ron smirked at her and said firmly, “Sit down.” She eased back into the seat. He added, “I had plans tonight. I was just killing time here till my buddy gets done at work. I was considering if he’d understand if I stood him up.” He paused thinking about his decision and said “I would like to get to know you better. Let me go and tell him I’m canceling dinner tonight and I’ll come back here to meet with you.”

She glanced at her watch and looked around the café then called to the kitchen area, “Margaret, is it cool if I leave a little early?”

An older women poked her head out the kitchen door and looked around the deserted café. “Yeah, we’re all cleaned up go ahead and go. I’ll see you tomorrow.” Dana hopped up and said “just let me get my things.”

Ron began thinking about how he was going to message Harry if Dana was at his side. He knew he couldn’t use magic in front of her. He also wouldn’t be able to take her to the ministry building. He looked around the little café and thought he could slip into the bathroom and send his patronus to Harry but that might cause Harry alarm if the message wasn’t delivered correctly.

Dana rejoined him with her bag and a light jacket. “Ready?” She asked. Ron knew, at that moment, that he wouldn’t be sending Harry any message but he didn’t really care.
“Harry, I’m sure something has gone wrong. Ron knows how important your time is. He asked you for this meeting. Where could he be?” Hermione said as she tried to appear calm even though she was really getting worried. Mr. Simmons and her had spent most of the day in the archives of the ministry looking for information on the building itself. They had some luck finding a few references to additions that were built on to the original building but nothing on the original building or where it had been built or who owned the property it was built on. The most promising thing they had found was a reference to the property being gifted to Noblemen by one of the kings of England. Hermione had been excited about the prospect of going to the muggle library to further research that possibility. Her excitement had been overshadowed by their current position. It was past 4:30 and Ron was really late. She was exhausted and still dreading dinner that evening with Daphne and Astoria. Her hair was a frazzled mess and she had a layer of dirt covering her tired body.

Harry stood and began pacing, his mind churning trying to think about how he should handle being stood up by Ron. It was getting pretty late, Hermione was right. He stopped and looked at her. She looked terrible and he knew she needed to get home so she would have time to clean up before their evening with the Greengrass sisters. He shook his head and began pacing again. He’d have to send her home soon whether or not Ron showed up. He couldn’t understand why Ron wasn’t there. He had seemed genuine when he asked to see him tonight. He had seemed excited to be getting together with him. Now, him not showing up didn’t seem like Ron at all. He turned and was surprised to see Lucius coming out of floo in the lobby looking as though he was angry about something. He could feel his own anger over the situation accelerating and the continued surprises were starting to make him feel like he was losing his control. He had come to rely on his new ability and when he couldn’t see what was going to come next he felt flustered and out of control. Now, Lucius was walking towards them scowling. “Lucius, what are you doing here?” He asked with more anger in his voice than he would have liked to have.

Lucius replied just as angrily, “I expected that Hermione would have come home directly after seeing you and Mr. Weasley off. It’s very late.” He snapped.

“Lucius, I would have come home as soon as I saw them off as I promised but Ron hasn’t showed up yet. Something must be wrong. We are really worried about him.” Hermione said trying to defend them.

Lucius turned to her and said “I would have thought you’d be more responsible and have sent a message when you realized you were going to be delayed.” He sighed and pinched the bridge of his nose. “I was worried that you changed your mind about coming to dinner with us tonight. I came to find out why you were delayed.” He took a deep breath to calm his emotions and bring himself under control. “Hermione, you need to get yourself ready for the dinner party. Go home now.” He stated firmly.

Hermione started to argue with him that she wanted to wait for Ron when she felt her stomach flip making her feel ill as the binding spell activated. “Yes, Master.” She bit out angrily before turning and stomping away.

Lucius clenched his jaw stopping himself from reprimanding her. Once she was through the floo he turned to Harry. “We have had a very trying afternoon, Mr. Potter. After Wizengamot dismissed I went home to find the curse breakers at the manor. They were working on the Throne and asking Draco and Narcissa a lot of questions regarding it. Then I was interrogated by the lead Curse Breaker, Stephanie Clark. She is an older woman who is muggle born and her dislike for my family and I was quite evident by her tone.” He eased himself down on to the bench where Hermione had been sitting. Harry thought that he looked as though he was in pain and wondered why. Lucius went on “She examined the binding spell that we used on Hermione. I’m afraid she did not have good news for me regarding it. She didn’t say it out right but I think she feels as though we are hiding
something regarding how it was cast. She kept asking is if there was anyone else who could have
cast the spell and if I was sure Voldemort cast it himself. Then she examined my wand and said that
she didn’t believe my wand was the wand used to cast the spell.”

Harry frowned and asked, “Whose wand does she think was used?”

Lucuis shrugged and said “I’ve gone over that night a hundred times today in my head and with Mrs.
Clark and I can’t see how anyone else could have cast the spell and Voldemort held my wand when
he did it. She believes that the spell should have ended when the caster passed as we believed. It
seems as though Hermione will bound to me for a very long time.”

“She must be wrong. There’s has to be another way.” Harry said. Lucius nodded in agreement and
leaned back trying to not show his pain. “Why are you having so much pain, Lucius?” Harry asked
letting his curiosity get the better of him.

He let out a little half chuckle half grunt and said, “when you’ve been tortured by the cruciatus curse
as much as I have been some days are more painful than others. It’s raining at the manor today so I’m
feeling the effects more so today than normal. It’s also been a very stressful day. Between the
wizengamot and the interrogations, let’s just say that I’m not looking forward to Dinner this evening
with the Greengrass girls.”

Harry frowned but didn’t comment. “Did they say anything about the throne?” He asked.

“Only that whoever made it must still be alive as their magic is still keeping it firmly in place. They
went to speak to Severus about it and examine his wand next.”

Harry could feel his anger rising at the thought that they thought Voldemort could still be alive.
“He’s dead.” He stated firmly as his magic swirled around him making the lobby crackle and pop
with his power. Witches and wizards paused to see what was happening then quickly made their
way. “I used his own spell to kill him. He’s never coming back. Why can’t they understand that?”

Lucius had a brief spike of fear that Harry might strikeout at him. He was truly terrifying when he
was really angry. “Mr. Potter, please calm yourself. I know he’s dead. I can feel that his power is
gone. They have no idea what it felt like to have that mad man’s power presiding over you. They
can’t feel that it is gone but we can. Every deatheater that held his mark can feel that he is gone.”

Harry took a deep breath trying to calm himself. He focused on the wall behind where Lucius sat and
started to count. As his mind cleared so did his vision. He could clearly see Ron speaking to a blond
woman on a bridge overlooking a river. Ron had a goofy look on his face as he laughed at whatever
the woman had said to him. Harry smiled as he realized that Ron was clearly in love with this
woman and that’s why he had stood Harry up. He met someone. Someone who took his cares away,
someone who loved him for him not because he was friends with Harry Potter.

Lucius didn’t know what to make of Harry staring at the wall and having gone from ‘I’ll destroy the
world’ to smiling and happy. He steadied his nerves and asked “Mr. Potter, are you feeling better
now.”

Harry blinked and smiled at Lucius as he came out of his trance. “I suddenly find myself free for
dinner tonight.” He said casually. “Ron has found himself another date.”

“You don’t want to track him down and make sure he’s okay?” Lucius asked, concerned.

He shook he head and said “No. I can see clearly what has happened to him. I don’t know why I
couldn’t see it before.”
Lucius stood pulling himself up with his cane “Well, if that’s the case, you are more than welcome to join us at the dinner party. I’m sure you’d like to get cleaned up a little first though.”

Harry entered the receiving room fashionably late. He had planned on wearing something more casual to the dinner party with The Greengrass sisters but Kreacher had intervened and chose a completely different outfit than what Harry had planned for himself. Harry had wanted to wear a casual dress shirt and pants. He even chose a Slytherin green color thinking that this would please all who attended, except maybe Hermione. Kreacher chose a Gryffindor Red dress robe with a gold colored dress shirt. Harry stood in the mirror looking at himself but feeling slightly skeptical about the robe colors. “Are you sure about this, Kreacher?”

Kreacher fussed about straightening his robes, magically pressing out any signs of wrinkles from it being in storage. “Yes, Master Harry, Kreacher would not trick you. We house elves have excellent intuition when it comes to clothing.” Kreacher said then added when Harry still seemed reluctant. “I have seen what the others are wearing. You are not overdressed. Although this is not a formal dinner party the Greengrass sisters are still dressed in their finest robes. They wish to impress the Malfoy’s. Lord Malfoy is dress as a proper wizard in a robe that reflects his status. He is wearing almost the same color green that you wanted to wear. It would be considered an insult for you to arrive in matching attire. Lady Malfoy is in a matching set of robes. She looks very elegant. Young Master Draco is wearing a blue robe set trimmed in the Slytherin green and he has chosen a set for their Slave to wear. It’s a gold set with Gryffindor red trim.”

“Why did Draco pick out clothes for Hermione?” He asked concerned about what that may mean for Hermione after hearing about Lord Malfoy’s afternoon with the curse breaker.

Kreacher looked at him angrily and said “Young Master Draco chose an outfit for their slave as she was late and did not have to ability to properly dress herself. And your mistrust has made you very late. Now get moving.” He ordered.

Harry had relented and left his rooms in the dress robes that Kreacher had chosen. When he entered the receiving room he was finally able relax seeing that everyone was dressed as Kreacher had said and that he hadn’t played a trick on him. Lucius rose to his feet and greeted him making everyone else rise also. Harry noted that he was able to do so with seemingly very little effort. All signs of the stress from just a short while ago seemed to be gone.

“Ah, here he is now,” Lucius said by way of announcement, “Mr. Potter, so good of you to join us this evening.”

Harry smiled at the formal greeting and responded “Lord Malfoy, it was very kind of you to extend the invitation on such short notice.” Harry bowed slightly showing his recognition of Lucius status but not enough to show that Lucius was superior to him in anyway. Lucius continued with the introductions. He swept his arm to the side to bring forward Daphne and Astoria “I’m sure you recall from you time at Hogwarts Daphne and Astoria Greengrass.” Harry greeted Daphne first as she was the eldest and he was familiar with her. “Miss Greengrass, It’s a pleasure to see you again.” He said politely and was hoping it would be true. Daphne looked at his extended hand with distaste. After a long pause she reached out and took it quickly and then released as if he might burn her. She rubbed her hand on her robes. Harry wanted to roll his eyes at her ridiculous behavior. He wondered if she had done the same thing to Hermione when she had greeted her. Harry turned to Astoria. He had never paid much attention to her in school. She was two grades behind him and he had other slytherins to worry about then her. Now he really looked at her for the first time. She was quite
beautiful. She had reddish brown hair that fell about shoulder length which she had pinned back with
two combs that had little green jeweled snakes weaving in and out of the teeth. Her face was thin and
her eyes were the color of the jeweled snakes that adorned her hair. Her dress was form fitting and
hugged all the curves of her slender body and accented the green of her eyes perfectly. The trim of
the dress was gold with red embroidery pattern running through it. Harry was momentarily
mesmerized as he studied the pattern trying to make out exactly what it was. He caught himself and
realized that he was staring at her. He extended his hand with an apology. “Sorry, Miss Greengrass,
it’s a pleasure to make your acquaintance. I can’t help but note how stunning you look this evening.”

Astoria giggled and readily took his hand. “I look stunning every evening, Mr. Potter, but I thank
you for the compliment. And it’s a pleasure to meet you also. I’ve heard so much about you from Mr.
Longbottom”

Harry blushed and tried to recover his composure as she continued to hold his hand. “Of course,” he
said “I didn’t mean to imply that you don’t always look stunning.” He stammered out.

Hermione was surprised to hear that Astoria would have had any contact with Neville. “How do you
know Neville Longbottom?” She asked interrupting their conversation.

She smiled at him and gave his hand one last caress before releasing it. She glanced at Hermione and
then back to Harry before answering her question “I met Mr. Longbottom at Hogwarts of course. He
was the leader of the DA and the Carrows were always trying to find their hide out. I was telling Mr.
Logbottom when and where the Carrows would be so that he and the other DA members could get
around safely.”

Daphne gasped and said “Astoria, you were not working for those blood traitors.”

Astoria winked at Harry. “I was.” She said. Then she turned to Daphne. “I told you, Daphne, I
didn’t want Voldemort to win and he didn’t thanks to Harry Potter.” She motioned to Harry.

“Of all the stupid things you have done that has got to be the dumbest of all of them.” Daphne
angrily yelled at her. Astoria turned to her giving her full attention. “Daphne, I’m not stupid for not
wanting daddy to marry me off to some middle aged death eater.” She yelled back at her. “and
frankly my grades are far better than yours. I’m not the stupid one in our family.”

Daphne face turned red with anger and she looked like she might attack Astoria. Narcissa seeing that
the argument would escalate even further intervened. “Now that Mr. Potter has join us we can be
seated for our meal. Daphne my dear would you care to walk with me?” Narcissa motioned for
Daphne to join her. Daphne clenched her fist as she reined in her temper. “I would be honored, Lady
Malfoy.” She said then briskly turned and joined Narcissa. The others watched Narcissa lead
Daphne towards the dining room.

“Astoria,” Lucius said with a smile, “would you do this middle aged Deatheater the honor of
allowing me to escort you to our dining room?” As he offered her his arm.

Astoria blushed bright red “Lord Malfoy, I meant no disrespect.” She said as she linked her hand
around his arm.

“None taken my dear. I can only imagine what your father might have told you in regards to
marriage after the war.”

“He thought that Darco and you wouldn’t survive the war. He told me that you kept making
mistakes and that one day Draco would probably be killed for it ending the Malfoy line.” She looked
sympathetically at Draco. “I’m sorry, Draco, I never expected to be in a position where this
prearranged marriage would come to fruition. I wanted more than anything to marry for love and yet I prayed every day that this war would end.”

Lucius patted her hand saying “My marriage with Narcissa was pre-arranged by our parents I barely knew her at the time and yet I love her very much now.”

Astoria fell silent thinking about what Lord Malfoy had just said to her. She had thought that they were just married and hadn’t realized that they were actually in love. She had seen them together at social functions and never once imagined that what they felt for each other was love. They never seemed to show affection but neither did her parents. However, she had known, from a very young age that her parents hated each other. They gathered around the dining room table taking their places. Astoria was relieved to see that she didn’t have to sit right next to Daphne but surprised to see that Hermione was seated to Lord Malfoys left hand side. That position was usually reserved for a trusted friend or advisor. She recalled that Headmaster Snape was supposed to be joining them tonight and there was an extra seat. She would have thought that Snape would have taken the position to Lord Malfoys left. On his right sat Draco with her next to him and then Harry Potter on her other side. Lady Narcissa at the other end of the table with Daphne on her left then the empty seat and Hermione. As they took their seats her curiosity about the empty seat finally got the better of her and she asked “Will the Headmaster be joining us this evening?”

Daphne having been involved in a conversation with Lady Malfoy finally looked at the seating arrangement and scowled at the empty seat and then disgustedly at Hermione. “You certainly don’t expect us to eat at the same table as the mudblood do you?” She asked as though she were offended.

“Miss Greengrass, I would ask you to refrain from using that word in my home.” Lucius stated angrily. “Hermione has more than compensated for her unfortunate parentage. She is a true witch and a guest in our home. You will refrain from speaking to her in such a manner.” Hermione couldn’t help but smile with pride at Lucius defending her from Daphne.

Daphne saw her smiling and scoffed “You can’t be serious. I heard reports from my father that you were treating her like a trained dog, feeding her from your plates and dressing her up. I bet she didn’t even pick that dress out for herself. She never had a lick of fashion sense at Hogwarts....”

“Daphne, would you please just shut up.” Astoria said interrupting her tirade.

“I won’t, Astoria. I said I’d come here and see the Grand Malfoy family…” She said gesturing to those gathered around the table. “… and I see them. They’ve turned. They’ve clearly been persuaded to be blood traitors if even half of what the papers say is true.”

“Blood Traitors?” Draco blurted out angrily as he began to rise from his seat. Lucius held his hand up signaling Draco to let Daphne go on.

“Yes! Blood traitors, Draco. I don’t know what happened to you but you would never have sat at a table enjoying a meal with a dirty mudblood or that half breed, Harry Potter. Somewhere along the line you’ve lost your way.” She turned to Astoria and said “I’ve seen enough, Astoria, let’s go. You won’t be marrying into this family.”

Astoria stood and looked around the table feeling terribly embarrassed by her sister’s outburst. “Daphne, I’m not going with you.” She said more calmly then she felt.

“What do you mean you aren’t going? You said you’d honor your family and marry whoever we chose for you. That’s been the plan all along. Well we aren’t choosing the Malfoy’s. Just wait till I give Mother my report about how far they’ve fallen.”
“I’m not going.” She stated again. “Mother left us and ran off to France. She doesn’t care about us and father would have married me off to whoever would have given him the best position in Voldemort’s army, even Voldemort himself if he wanted me. I won’t be marrying any one that my family choses for me. I’ve changed my mind.”

“Astoria, you are coming with me now.” Daphne said as she rounded the table.

Harry stepped in her way and said “I believe Astoria said she wasn’t going with you right now.” “Get out of my way Potter.” Daphne snapped as she tried to push past him. Draco pulled Astoria back and stood in front of her blocking her further from Daphne and said “I think you should leave, Daphne. Astoria is staying here.”

“I’m not leaving her here with you and your blood traitor family. Astoria, lets go.” She was still trying to get around Harry without any luck. She kept trying to squeeze past him but he kept stepping in her way so that she’d have to physically move him if she wanted to get to Astoria. “Harry Potter, you get out of my way now or I swear you’ll regret it.”

Harry could feel his anger rising at her behavior. How dare she come into this house and start spluttering her supremacist views and calling them names. “Daphne!” He said slightly louder than he had intended as he felt his control slipping. Lucius and Narcissa jumped to their feet knowing the tone in Harry’s voice meant that he was losing his temper. They had both been a little surprised by the sisters outburst but not at all shocked. They had been called worse and let Daphne go on her rant so they could see her true colors. Clearly in their minds she was not suitable marriage material for Draco but they had known that all along. Astoria however, seemed like she’d be perfect.

“Miss Greengrass,” Narcissa said loud enough to get everyone’s attention. “If I had known that you felt this way about my family I would never have invited you to dinner. Shall I escort you to the floo so that you can find your way home?” Daphne turned her attention towards Narcissa and said “Lady Malfoy, frankly I am shocked that a woman of your standing in the pure bred society would allow such behavior to go in on your household. Tell me how it came to be that you allowed your husband to bed a mudblood. Maybe you weren’t satisfying him in bed so that he felt the need to seek another. Or maybe you’re of the homosexual persuasion like my sister is and your frigid to the attentions of a man.”

“Daphne, you shut your face now!” Astoria screamed as she tried to get past Draco who was physically holding her back. “What did I spoil your little secret? Oh I know all about you and your little girlfriend.” Daphne smirked as she went on. “Oh you all think that she’s some great catch like she’d be the perfect partner for poor little Draco. The truth of it is that she’d prefer to be with a woman. She’s just looking for a sugar daddy to take care of her and hoping that she can still have a girlfriend to fool around with. That’s why she’s still a virgin not because she’s been saving herself for marriage but because she doesn’t like men.” She said chuckling like an evil witch.

Astoria was shaking her head in disbelief “why are you trying to ruin my life, Daphne?” She cried then added “I hate you.” before she ran from the room towards the parlor.

“I’ve heard enough out of you.” Harry barked as his magic swirled about him. “Lucius, I would very much like to remove Miss Greengrass from your home, permanently.”

“That won’t be necessary, Harry. Miss Greengrass was just leaving. Hermione, please see too Astoria. I’d rather her not get lost in the manor.” Hermione followed Astoria from the room hoping to catch her before she found the parlor or the hideous throne in the ball room.

Daphne burst out laughing and said “is Potter your lap boy Lord Malfoy? Maybe you’ve enslaved him too.” Narcissa took Daphne by the shoulders and tried to pull her away from the table and the
confrontation with Harry. She shrugged her off and said “I heard how you defeated the Dark lord. You yourself claim it was luck how lucky do you feel today?” Harry had his wand drawn before Daphne even had a chance to think about drawing hers. His magic crackled about the room but Daphne didn’t even seem to notice.

Tecks appeared at Narcissa’s side wondering what was happening that his Mistress called him in such a panic. “Tecks please see that Miss Greengrass gets home.” Tecks nodded and reached for her hand.

Daphne had managed to pull her wand out and was in a dueling position. “Don’t touch me you disgusting little house elf.” She said momentarily taking her eyes off of Potter. “Miss Greengrass is leaving now!” Tecks said. He grabbed her arm and she was gone in a blink of an eye.

Draco exhaled saying “What has gotten into her? She was never like that at school. Well except for the supremacy thing but she never would have behaved like that before,” He said and then thought better of it ”or maybe she would. I never considered her a friend more of an acquaintance so I guess I wouldn’t know.”

Harry placed his wand back in his pocket. “I can’t believe she would come here and behave like that.” He said angrily.

“I thought she seemed overly sweet when we went to visit them. Not at all like the girl you were describing to us, Draco.” Narcissa said as she settled back into her seat as though nothing had just happened.

“Well, I’m glad that’s over with.” Lucius added. “I didn’t like the way she tensed up when they arrived and the formal introductions were made. I thought she was going to say something then.” He sat back down.

Harry shook his head and asked, “How can you be so calm after what just happened? She challenged me to a duel.”

Lucius laughed and said “Harry, that was really nothing to be alarmed about. When you live in a house with half of Voldemorts army, duels are every day occurrences. I’m just glad you didn’t have to hurt her.”

“Severus has arrived,” Draco said smiling as he settled back into his own seat, “just in time to miss all the excitement as usual.”

Harry looked around the dining room and groaned “I guess I’ll go and let Hermione and Astoria know.”

Narcissa smiled and said “that would be lovely, Harry. Can you ask Hermione to greet Severus. We need a moment to ourselves if you wouldn’t mind.”

Harry looked at the Malfoy’s trying to read what they were thinking but found their calm demeanor disorienting. He left the dining room to find Hermione and Astoria.

Hermione followed Astoria out into the hall. As she suspected Astoria had run to the parlor. It was the room across the hall from the dining and receiving room so it would be her first choice. The doors were open still from when the ministry had been here earlier. She hadn’t been in the room but
a handful of times since her capture. She stepped into the room and looked around. It was much the same as she remembered it. Astoria stood staring at the floor in the center of the room. Hermione joined her and looked at what she was looking at.

After a few minutes Astoria sighed and asked, “Hermione, what is going on here?”

Hermione chuckled and said “well, this is supposed to be a dinner party so that Daphne and you could meet the Malfoy family.”

She groaned and said “I doubt they will care now that they’ve met my family.” Hermione wrapped her arm around her shoulders.

“Trust me, they won’t care about your family.”

“It’s not true, you know.” Astoria said glancing at Hermione’s hand on her shoulder.

“What’s not true?” Hermione asked as she moved her hand off Astoria’s shoulder.

“I do like guys. It’s just that I didn’t want to have a reputation at school that I slept around. I hear what they say about Daphne and I didn’t want to ever have anyone talk about me like that.”

Hermione laughed. “I figured it wasn’t true. I saw how you gushed over the great Harry Potter.” She said waving her hands around.

Astoria blushed “I hope no one else noticed.”

“I’m sure they did but they won’t care.” Hermione said reassuringly. They fell silent again looking at the floor.

“What is this?” Astoria finally asked motioning to the floor.

“It’s kind of a long story but in short that is a blood stain that was left when a witch used magic to torture another witch. It can’t be cleaned away, they’ve tried. They don’t come into this room much anymore because of it.” Astoria stood silent as she thought about all the awful things that happened in this house and whether or not she wanted to be part of it. Hermione stood with her looking at her blood stain on the floor after a few minutes she brightened and said happily “Headmaster Snape has arrived. I’m sure he’ll take care of Daphne.”

“How do you know he’s arrived?” Astoria asked perplexed.

“It’s part of being bound to Lucius. I can feel the wards of the manor through our bond.”

“Hermione.” Harry interrupted just as Astoria was going to ask more about that “Headmaster Snape has arrived, would you go and greet him in the receiving room, please.”

“I thought he’d be speaking to Daphne about her outburst.” Hermione said wondering why they’d want her in the room with Daphne again.

“Daphne is gone. Narcissa asked a house elf to escort her home right after she challenged me to a duel.”

“A duel?” Astoria asked in shock. “I don’t understand what she is thinking. I knew she had strong opinions but she’s acting crazy tonight. And she’s about as powerful as a muggle’s little finger. She wouldn’t stand a chance dueling a real wizard.” Harry and Hermione laughed at her funny metaphor.

“Hermione, Severus is waiting.” Harry reminded her. Hermione hurried from the room. “I never
thought I’d see a day where the Gryffindor Princess was taking orders from Purebloods and acting happy about it.” Astoria said after she watched Hermione hurry from the room.

Harry frowned and said “she’s happy here. They treat her well and now that she understands the Purist traditions better she wants to support that way of life.”

Astoria shook her head and said. “When the DA heard she had been captured there was a lot of tears. Then again when they heard she was alive and well. They all loved her. I wonder how they would feel about her change of heart.”

Harry Shrugged “I’ve talked to a few of them and some think she’s been brainwashed or cursed but she hasn’t. I know her well enough to know that this is really her.”

Astoria Sighed, “So are you and her a thing, then?” She asked looking disappointed.

Harry broke out in laughter “No.” He said through his laughs. “Hermione likes a more intellectual man.”

Astoria looked perplexed at first then it dawned on her how excited she had been when she felt their former professor arrive. "Headmaster Snape?" She asked in shock.

Harry held his finger to his lips “Shhh, no one is supposed to know.” He said giving her a little wink.

“I thought they hated each other.” She said in amazement. “I heard that he would take points off when she’d answer too many questions correctly and that he gave her impossibly difficult tasks just so that she’d fail.”

“Yeah, he did do that.” He said chuckling. He looked around the room and said “I haven’t been in here but a few times.”

Astoria nodded and said “Hermione was telling me a little bit about it. She said the Malfoy’s don’t come in here anymore because of that blood stain.” She said motioning to the floor. “I wonder whose blood it is.”

“It’s Hermione’s blood.” Harry said simply. “Bellatrix LeStrange tortured her in this room when Ron, Hermione and I were captured. Ron and I escaped but Hermione got left behind and we had no way of coming back for her.”

Astoria studied the stain more closely again thinking about her future with the Malfoy family and their awful past. “I’ve read in the papers that Hermione was bond to Lucius as a slave. Is that true?” Harry nodded. “Honestly, I don’t know if want to be involved with the Malfoy family's sorted past. Daphne was more concerned about them being mudblood lovers and I was more concerned about them being mudblood haters. And now I find out they’ve enslaved a famous witch after they tortured her.”

Harry continued to stare at the blood stain. He had never had an opportunity to study it as the Malfoy’s never came into this room and he had respected their wishes. He suspected that the door was probably left open from when the people from the ministry were here earlier.

Astoria shuddered and said “I think he might have been a devil, don’t you?”

"Who, Astoria?” Harry asked not following her train of thought.

"Voldemort of course. He must have been some sort of devil to do all the evil things he did and make his follower do them too."
Harry smiled at her and said “He was just a wizard who used his gift improperly and it got away from him.”

“You make it sounds as though he wasn’t all powerful.”

“He wasn’t.”

Astoria looked at Harry in amazement. She didn’t know what to think of him being so casual about a man that many feared and his confidence both thrilled and worried her.

Lucius sighed “I’m glad that we have Daphne sorted out.” He said after Harry had left the dining room.

Narcissa nodded “I’m sure we’ll run into others of the same frame of mind. Astoria seems sane. She would make a good match if she plans on being a purist.”

“I am concerned that she was working with the DA and not the SA. How much influence did they have on her?” Lucius asked.

“I’m not really sure” Draco added “but don’t marriage arrangements say something about how the children are raised?”

Narcissa nodded her confirmation. “I think she might be infatuated with Harry though.” She said thinking about how she was gushing over him earlier.

Draco shrugged and said “It doesn’t matter to me, Mother, as long as she’s willing to marry and have an heir. After that she can be free to pursue who she wants and I can pursue who I want.”

Lucius took a sip of his drink thinking about who Draco might pursue while they waited for Hermione and Severus. Severus and Hermione entered the dining room a moment later. Hermione’s cheeks were flushed and Severus seemed slightly flustered.

“Good evening.” Severus said greeting his family. “Hermione was just telling me about the excitement you had tonight.”

Lucius snickered “is that what she was doing?” he asked suspiciously. Lucius laughed clearing the tension and said “so what do you make of Miss Greengrass’ outburst then?”

“She was always very outspoken at school. I had to give her several detentions for such things. I’m not terribly surprised. I am a little surprised that she would challenge anyone to a duel though. She’s not that powerful a witch.”

Hermione giggled and said “Astoria thinks that muggles have more power in their little fingers then Daphne.”

Draco laughed and said “Daphne probably thinks muggles stole that power and put it in their little fingers just so she couldn’t have it.”

“She probably does. I don’t think she ever took the muggle studies class, she probably doesn’t know the first thing about them.” Severus added.

“Why were you so late, Severus?” Narcissa asked. “We got the message you were held up at school
Severus sighed as he took his seat. “I'm not sure we have time to discuss this now.” He said looking around. “Where is Astoria Greengrass and Mr. Potter?”

Hermione motioned to the hall and said “I left them in the parlor.”

Severus frowned. "In the Parlor? Why was that door even open?"

"The Ministry curse breakers were here today to look at the throne and the cursed stain that appears even when a new carpet is laid down." Draco supplied angrily. "They also spent several hours asking about the binding spell."

Lucius groaned and added "I'm sure you are well aware of how that line of questioning went."

Severus nodded "I was delayed due to spending several hours discussing my part of the binding spell with Mrs. Clarke. My wand was confiscated during the interrogation. In the end Mrs. Clarke determined that my wand wasn't used and I didn't have any part in the magic that was used to inflict this curse on poor Miss Hermione Granger." He took a gulp of the wine that was set before him and went on. "I had to remind her several times that Miss Granger was well aware of the spell that was being used and had even found the spell in the Malfoy library herself."

"I wish I had been here to speak to her. I would have tried to set her straight about everything." Hermione said. Feeling a little frustrated about how they were being treated. "What did they decide could be done about it?"

"I think you are right, Severus. We do not have time for this conversation right now." Narcissa interrupted. "Hermione, please have Harry and Miss Greengrass rejoin us."

Hermione stood having a strange feeling that she wasn't going to like the outcome of that discussion later.

Once she was out of the room Lucius turned to his friend "I'm afraid I don't have good news for you Severus. The curse breakers feel that the spell that binds her to me will extend past our deaths. They fear that if I die before her she will likely follow and if she dies I will feel a loss of my gift as though part or all of my magic will die with her."

"That explains their sense of urgency. I didn't understand their line of questioning. They kept asking if Voldemort somehow change that spell as he was casting it and did he ever threaten to kill you if he for some reason wanted Hermione dead.” He heard Hermione approaching talking cheerfully with Astoria and Harry. "We will discuss this later. She will have to be told of course."

"Told What?" Hermione asked as they entered.
As always I apologize for the writing errors and if anyone wants to volunteer to do editing I'd be happy for the help.

I often have trouble finding good cut off points. That's why my chapters are so incredibly long. LOL.
Ron's True Colors

Chapter Summary

Ron visits with Hermione and it doesn't go so well.

Chapter Notes

A huge thank you to Kit56kat for doing editing work. I apparently suck at commas and other such things.

Hermione sat seething in the receiving room as Harry and Lucius discussed last minute things regarding their trip into the muggle town of Twickenham, United Kingdom. It had been four days since the dinner party and ever since then they had fallen back into the pattern of Hermione being under Lucius command. After discussing the curse breakers findings they had decided that nothing much had changed for them. Lucius didn't have any plans on dying early and Hermione was young and had no interest in a life of adventure. Together they had come to the conclusion that they didn't have anything to fear at the moment. However, the very next day, as they began discussing her findings at the ministry and the need to travel to the national archives she began arguing with Lucius to the point where she was making herself sick. He had ordered her to leave the room until she could calm herself down and she had refused. Harry had been pleading with her, trying to calm her down but eventually the pain from the curse made her pass out. When she came to, Harry was cradling her head in his lap trying to revive her and Lucius had left the room.

She wasn't happy about the decision that she wouldn't be allowed to go with Harry to the archives but she wanted him to be prepared for what to look for so she had helped him compile a list of questions. Lucius had just returned from the ministry with a portkey for them to travel to Twickenham and had received special approval from the muggle authorities to enter the guarded facility. "I was told by Mr. Whittingdale's secretary that we would have a personal assistant to help us find anything we would need."

Hermione harrumphed and said "We wouldn't need a personal assistant if I were coming along."

Harry flinched as he glanced at Lucius. He could visibly see him angrily clenching his jaw. It had been the same argument for the past three days. Harry hoped that it wouldn't escalate to the point where Hermione fell ill again. "We need an assistant because you are not allowed to travel outside of magical England." Lucius said through his clenched teeth.

Hermione crossed her arms angrily and said, "Remember, if they can't find the information in the King’s registry look for the land grants that were made to the Lords of the time. It may fall under a larger grant that was subdivided from their lands."

"Hermione, it's on this list that you gave me." Harry said trying to redirect the conversation. "We won't forget. Your list is very clear and thorough."

Lucius stood and said, "The portkey is programmed for 9:50am. Our meeting is set for 10:30. I have
sent Mr. Simmons ahead to get a muggle car to drive us to the building." He stood and adjusted his muggle suit. "I don't know how muggles wear this type of thing every day. It feels so tight and stiff."

"You look very handsome in it, doesn't he Hermione?" Harry said as he stood and gathered his notes.

Hermione grunted and said "He looks handsome in everything, Harry. A muggle suit won't detract from that."

Lucius frowned and said "I know you're angry with me, Hermione..."

"Oh, do you?" She snapped at him angrily cutting him off from finishing.

"Hermione, don't be rude." Harry admonished.

"I am angry. This is my project. I want to work with muggles as a career. How am I supposed to do that if I'm forbidden from going out into the muggle world."

"You are young still. I don't want you to risk going out without any experience...." Lucius began but was cut off again when Hermione jumped to her feet.

"I am older than Harry!" She said pointing to Harry. "Much older if you consider the time turner I used for almost two years and this would be the perfect opportunity for me to get some experience."

Lucius placed his hands on her arms trying to soothe her. "Hermione, the decision is made. You are not going this time. Please stop this." He said lowering his voice trying to sound seductive.

She tried to wiggle free saying "Please Lucius, don't talk to me like that."

He smirked and asked "Like what, Pet?"

She groaned and said "deep and sexy. I'm angry with you and it's hard to be angry when you're talking to me with that voice."

"I know you are angry. I don't want you to be angry but I have made this decision and it stands. I will venture into the muggle world and research my family's property with Harry. You will stay here and get over your anger with me."

"Fine but you better get the information or I'll still be pissed."

He nodded and said "Agreed."

Harry smiled and said "Well good. I'm glad that's settled. Now, we better get moving. We don't want to be late."

A few hours after Harry and Lucius left for the archive, Hermione was sitting in the receiving room reading a book about muggleborn laws. She was startled to hear the floo flame to life and Ron's voice calling through it.

"Hermione?" Ron said questioningly.

"Ron." Hermione said smiling. "Is everything ok? We were worried about you the other day."
"Yes, everything is fine. It's great in fact." He paused and then asked nervously, "Is Harry there?"

Hermione sighed. She had a brief spike of excitement thinking that Ron was calling for her. "No, I'm sorry, Ron. He just left a few hours ago with Lord Malfoy."

"Oh." The disappointment was clear in his voice. Hermione was about to speak again when Ron interrupted her. "Can I come through? I'd like to see you."

Hermione looked around the receiving room. The house was completely empty now except for house elves. Narcissa was spending the day with Andromeda and Draco was taking Astoria out for lunch. Mr. Balinckh had escorted them to the restaurant and Mr. Simmons had gone ahead to be a driver for Harry and Lucius. She hadn't been told that she couldn't have guests and she did live here so she couldn't see why she couldn't have any friends over. She was pretty sure that the Malfoy's wouldn't be thrilled with her choice of company but she was still feeling angry with Lucius and the events from the past few days. She opened the floo. "Come on through, Ron." She said feeling a thrill at her slight act of defiance. Ron stepped into the receiving room brushing off his shirt. Hermione greeted him by throwing her arms around him in a big hug. "It's so good to see you."

Ron was a little shocked by her reception but hugged her back. "I wasn't sure you'd want to see me." He said smiling.

"Why wouldn't I want to see you?"

He rubbed the back of his neck and said "Well, I was worried you were still mad at me for being angry about you picking the Malfoy's over us."

She sighed and said "so many things have changed for all of us, Ron. You're not still mad at me are you?"

He shrugged and said "I am trying to understand what has gotten into Harry and you." He looked around the lavish receiving room thinking that it was probably bigger than his whole house.

Hermione frowned. He was clearly uncomfortable. "Please sit down. Can I get you some tea and biscuits? I could get one of the house elves to bring us something."

He gave her peculiar look and said "see that's the kind of thing I'm talking about. You wouldn't have even considered that an option before the death eaters got a hold of you."

A house elf appeared at her side without Hermione even calling for it, with a tray of tea and biscuits in her hands. "Thank you, Miffen." The house elf curtsied and disappeared with a pop. She knew it was their way of letting her know they were keeping an eye on her even though she was home alone. She sighed as she began preparing his tea. "Ron, I guess I never really understood their position. And now I do. I realize that they want to be here. But now I do. I realize that they want to be here." She handed him the cup of tea and said, "I know it will be hard to believe but the Malfoy's are very good to their elves. Dobby was an exception. He wasn't a good house elf. Well at least not for them. He would intentionally break things and make their life difficult. Harry actually did them a favor in releasing him from their household. Lucius was angry at first but he got over it quickly."

Ron sipped at the tea, "Mmm, this is good." He said, sounding surprised. "I do find that hard to believe. They've been openly cruel to so many people. It seems like some weird trick that they are pulling to try and get out of being sent to Azkaban."

"It's not a trick, Ron. Now that the threats of Voldemort and the supremacists are gone they can openly speak their minds about the purist movement. Tom Riddle told them that he wanted to push
the Purists agenda but then as he gained more followers it fell more and more on the supremacist side of the line. At that point they were in too deep and Riddle was too powerful for them to break away without repercussions.

"But all these years they've been belittling muggleborns and making it nearly impossible for them to do anything."

She shrugged and said "They met someone and have had a change of heart. I'm not saying that they are ok with all muggleborns but they are willing to consider those that are willing to embrace their ideals." Hermione sat back on the settee. "Where were you the other day? Harry and I were so worried about you. Harry said that you were ok and was sure you'd call on us soon." Ron smiled thinking about Dana. He got this goofy look on his face and Hermione had to smile. "You met someone." She stated knowing that love struck look on his face.

"I went to the ministry that morning to find out about the Auror job. I didn't get good news and was done really early. I wandered around the muggle part of London right outside of the ministry for about an hour before I found this little café. I went in and had coffee and a muffin. There was this really pretty waitress and we got to talking." Ron set his cup down suddenly feeling awkward telling his ex-girlfriend that he met someone else.

Hermione wasn't having any of his awkwardness. "So you stood Harry up for the girl?" She prodded wanting him to continue.

Ron gulped and said sheepishly, "I can get together with Harry anytime. I didn't want to chance never being able to see Dana again. We've met everyday since then after her shift. She's really great. She's smart like you and so pretty. And the best part is she doesn't even care that I'm a wizard."

"She's a Muggle!?" Hermione asked in surprise. Ron nodded. "And you told her you were a wizard?"

"She saw me cast a tempus charm and saw my wand when I paid. She knows about our world. She has an uncle who fled to America when the war started. She confronted me about it and well, she doesn't care."

Hermione was worried about Ron. The laws about performing magic in front of muggles were still pretty strict and she didn't want him to get in trouble. "Ron, what makes you think she doesn't care about you being a wizard?"

He shook his head and said, "I know what you're thinking Hermione but she's not like that. She wouldn't use a person like that, she's really nice."

Hermione was still skeptical but decided to put her concern aside and asked "She's a waitress in a café? How old is she?"

"She's 20. Her birthday is a year and three days before mine." He said laughing.

"Is she going to university? You said she was working as a waitress. Can she support herself doing that?" Hermione had a million questions about his mystery girl that Ron seemed head over heels for.

"She's still living at home for a few more weeks then she's moving to America to attend some University there. She'll be staying with her uncle, the one that's a wizard."

"Oh, so you won't be dating her much longer then." Hermione said feeling relieved that he wouldn't be exposing the muggle to the magical world anymore.
"Actually, it's kind of what I wanted to speak to Harry about. I'm considering going with her to America."

"America? You are thinking about leaving magical England? You can't leave, Ron. What about Hogwarts?"

"I'm not going back to that school."

"NOT GOING BACK!?" She shrieked jumping to her feet. "Ronald Weasley, what do you mean you're not going back? We have to finish our final year."

"Are you and Harry going back?" He asked, shocked at her reaction.

"Of course we're going back. We have to finish schooling if we want jobs at the ministry." She stated emphatically as she began pacing.

"Well from what I heard Harry already has his job at the ministry." Ron said bitterly.

Hermione frowned and said "He was elected to the Wizengamot but even he recognizes that he needs more of an education if he's going to be really productive in that position." She settled down next to him.

"I spoke to the head of the auror department hoping that some of my experiences would get me in like Harry's got him into the Wizengamot and it turns out that they won't even consider me without passing my NEWTS. I'm not even sure I want to be an Auror any more."

"That's all you've talked about since our 4th year."

He shrugged and said, "I guess its like you said. So much has changed since the war ended."

They sat in silence for a few moments before Hermione asked, "Why did you want to talk to Harry about America?"

He sighed and said, "Dana has been planning this trip for the past few years. She applied to some fancy law school three times before they accepted her. She's saved up all her earnings and has been working since she was 15 with this goal in mind. I wanted to ask Harry if he'd give me a loan. If I go with her it might be a while before I can get a job and there's no way I can expect her to support me. Her uncle already said I could stay with them as long as we are together, which I hope is a really long time."

"Wow, a lawyer Ron. She must be pretty smart if she's planning on that career." Hermione was really impressed. "Maybe you should finish your schooling here and then join her when the school year finishes. Its a shortened term, Ron. We'll be finished in January."

"She knows that I didn't finish school because of the war and she doesn't care. I don't need to finish school. She's already put three years into University here and she'll need to do another 5 or 6 before she can practice law there. I think I'll work a few years, before I think about going back to college for any kind of career."

"This girl must be really something if you're planning your whole life around her." Hermione said thinking about how they seemed to have everything mapped out. She was trying to stay open minded but her new purist values were seeping in as she thought about his pureblood status and how he would be thinning the magic out further if he left their area. "Ron, maybe you should consider staying here and finishing at Hogwarts and just have a long distance relationship with her." She said thinking that maybe he'd meet someone else in the meantime.
"I think she might really be the one. I love everything about her." Ron sighed and said, "She's fantastic. She's really into sports. Her uncle has taught her all about Quidditch. She knows all the teams and before the war her uncle would take her to local team games."

"He could have gotten into a lot of trouble for exposing her. What did he do for a living?"

He waved his hand around and said "I'm not sure but now he works at a casino. I think he's an entertainer or something."

Hermione sighed "I really missed you, you know. You and Harry. I was so upset when you left me but honestly things moved so fast the first few days I hardly had anytime to think about it." She said, changing the subject.

"I'm sorry we couldn't come back for you." Ron started.

Hermione waved him off "I understand. Don't feel bad about it."

Ron sighed and said "I'm glad we got to talk. Are you really good here? I'm worried about you."

"Yeah, Ron, I am really good here. I'm kind of annoyed with Lucius right now but I'll get over it."

Ron frowned, "Why are you annoyed with him? What has he done?" He asked angrily.

"Harry and him are at the muggle archive building looking for information that couldn't be found at the ministry. I'm mad with him because he wouldn't let me go."

"Wouldn't let you go?" He asked. "See that's the kind of thing I don't understand. Why would you let him order you around like that?"

"You heard that we used this rare spell to bind me for Voldemort. " He nodded "Well Lucius met with the curse breakers from the ministry. They looked at the spell we used. They don't think it was cast correctly since it doesn't seem as though the binding spell can be reversed. They don't even know what it will mean for us regarding life expectancy. To be honest with you I'm not even worried. Lord Malfoy won't stop me from being happy so it doesn't matter if I'm bound to him or not. I am bound to him and for the most part I'm happy with that situation but the purist way of life means that I have to follow their protocols and traditions. The structure and rituals are a way of life that I'll enjoy. I want to keep the magic in magical England. I want what the purists want."

"I get that you would like that type of lifestyle, Hermione. But the purists want to lock witches and wizards away from the muggle world. That's what we fought this war for so that we could be free to move about amongst the muggles and not hide from them."

"Ron, the magic is fading and it’s because so many wizards and witches are leaving the magical world. It’s the reason so many squibs are being born. Few and fewer people are being born with this gift. I know that your family hasn't witnessed this personally but many others have. The magic is thinning and it has been since the muggles started encroaching on this world."

“That's purists nonsense, Hermione. They have no proof. I would have thought you of all people would be able to see that."

"They do have proof, Ron. The Ministry has birth records proving that more squibs are being born and that even though muggleborns have increased they haven't increased enough to accommodate the fact that less witches and wizard are being born to magical people."

Ron frowned "Don't you think if that was true they would openly report it?"

"The Ministry has been corrupt for a very long time. They were paying the muggles to keep our
secret but Voldemort put an end to that. Now the muggles will expect us to step forward and take credit for all those death eater attacks. It's only a matter of time before they come after us."

Ron stood and started pacing. "Hermione, you were a muggle at one point, can't you see they aren't like that? They have moved past that kind of hatred. We will be accepted. We don't have to fear them any longer."

"I'm sorry, Ron. It's just not true. We can't trust them. As soon as they learn of the things we can do they will want to dissect us. Think about all the magical creatures they'll want to round up. Ron, I was a muggle so I know what I'm talking about. Some people might be safe and not want to hurt us but others will. I'd rather not take that chance."

"Do you have any idea how crazy you sound? This isn't like you, Hermione. Next you're going to tell me that magical people should rule the world and enslave all muggles."

Hermione chuckled and said, "Would that be so bad?" Ron was shocked that she would think that way. She laughed and went on, "I'm only joking, Ron. That's the supremacist's point of view. I don't want that. I just want to live in peace and keep the traditions of our world. I don't want the muggles taking this way of life away from us."

"Why do you think they would do that? I've met quite a few muggles over the past few days and none of them would want to do anything of the sort."

Hermione frowned and asked "Ron, have you been exposing muggles to magic?"

"I've shown Dana and her family a few simple tricks. Nothing big."

"Ron, you've got to stop doing that. The Auror department tracks certain spells and you could get caught."

'I'm not going to cast anything Dark or an Unforgivable, Hermione. The auror department has better things to do then track minor spells. I've just been doing some levitation spells and conjuring flowers and other simple things. Her uncle does that kind of stuff all the time. Like I said he's some sort of entertainer."

"Ron, this is crazy. You've got to stop showing off for them. If the Auror department catches you you'll be arrested and they'll be oblivated. You need to break up with Dana and stop this nonsense before someone gets hurt. Come back to school with us. Maybe you can find a nice witch to settle down with you. Please forget about this 'America' thing."

Ron groaned, "Hermione, you can't keep telling me what to do. I'm not a child. I'm a man. And maybe you won't be able to understand. You'll never be able to fall in love with anyone as long as you're bonded to that death eater but I can still fall in love. I'm not going to let you or anybody else tell me who I should or should not marry." He stepped towards the floo and said, "Forget I even came by. If this is what Harry and you want to believe in then I don't want to be part of it."

"Ron, please. We just want you to be happy."

"If you really wanted me to be happy then you'd forget about this purist thing and come back to the borrow with me."

"You know I can't do that, Ron."

"You could if you wanted to. These dark wizards have your brain programed to support their cause. They've taken our best hope for merging into the muggle world from us. You can't even see how evil
they are and now they are training Harry to be their new Dark Lord. Trelawney was right. Harry has to be stopped before he gains too much power."

Hermione gasped. She stood up and approached Ron warily. "What do you know about Trelawney and Harry being a Dark Lord?"

Ron turned and angrily spat at her, "It's true isn't it? They are training him to be the new Dark Lord."

"They are doing nothing like that. They wouldn't want another ruler like Voldemort, Ron." She said defending her new family.

"Trelawney told me that Harry would fix the veil and that he would rule magical England."

"When did you speak to her about this? No one was supposed to know of her newest prophecy."

"It doesn't matter when I spoke to her about it. I did and she may have been a crazy old witch but she was right about a few things and I'm sure this will be one of them." He took a handful of floo powder and said "I've got to go. I'm supposed to meet Dana at 2 o'clock." He stepped into the floo and said "Ministry of Magic." and tossed the floo powder down and disappeared in a flare of green fire leaving Hermione standing shocked in the receiving room of Malfoy Manor.
Ron stepped into the lobby of the Ministry of magic. He wasn’t sure why he picked this point to return to but after his conversation with Hermione he needed a plan. He wasn’t even sure who he could trust anymore. Could he tell his father or brother? Would they even believe him? He hadn’t planned on having that conversation with Hermione but now that he did he was certain that Trelawney was right. Harry needed to be stopped before he did something to affect everyone. Something like fix a veil. No one even knew what the veil did but he was sure that if the purist and supremacists wanted it then it couldn’t be good. He felt as though nothing had changed and he was the only person who could see that they were still fighting the same war only now there was a new leader and it was his former best friend. Looking at the time, he realized that he needed to get going if he wanted to meet Dana when she was done. He turned to leave but was so flustered that he ran right into an auror.

“Is everything ok Mr. Weasley?”, the large man asked.

Ron was a little surprised that the man recognized him. “Yes, everything is fine.” He said feeling even more out of sorts.

“Good. Good.” the Auror said. “I was wondering if I could have a minute of your time?”

“I really have to get going. I’m meeting with….,” he hesitated, his conversation with Hermione coming to mind he “…a friend.” He said hoping that the auror didn’t pick up on his hesitation.

The auror motioned to the side of the great reception area ignoring his complaint that he was in a rush. “My name is Auror Bright.” He said, holding out his hand in greeting.

Ron tentatively took his hand and shook it. “What can I do for you, Auror?” Ron asked hoping there wasn’t anything.

The auror smiled and said, “My department investigates magic exposure to muggles. If a crime is committed by a magical person we are called in to …” He paused thinking of the right words then continued. “Let’s say we clean up the mess that is made.” Ron gulped. The auror continued, “I hear that you are considering moving to America? You might consider paying a visit to the Muggle registry department to obtain a passport.”

“I didn’t even know there was a muggle registry department and how did you hear I was thinking about moving to America?”, Ron asked in surprise. He had only spoken to Dana, her mother and her uncle about their plans and no one else. Well, and now Hermione but he was certain that she would have no way of telling anyone in this short period of time. “Have you been following me?”, He asked coming to the only possible conclusion.

The auror smiled, “The use of magic in front of muggles in England is strictly forbidden as I’m sure you are well aware.” He placed his hand on Ron’s shoulder and said, “Your father and brother are well respected employees of the ministry, I’d hate for you to get tangled in any legal issues over something as small as a quick cleaning spell and a bouquet of roses that might affect their positions.” He frowned and said, “It was nice chatting with you.”, before he walked away.

Ron got the distinct feeling that he would be seeing Auror Bright again. He had get out of there. He wasn’t sure what he needed to do now. He really wanted to go to Dana but now with the threat of the auror department watching him he was worried that they would follow him and do what Hermione warned him of, obliviate Dana. The thought was horrifying to him. He felt as though the
whole ministry was going crazy. Aurors threatening wizards, the Wizengamot electing children, Death Eaters running the wizarding school and the school board and Harry turning into a Dark Lord. What was the wizarding world coming too?

He left the ministry building and decided he would head straight for Dana. She needed to get out of the country sooner than later. He’d never forgive himself if something happened to her and it was clear to him now that he had put her in danger.

Hermione stood staring at the floo still in a bit of shock when the flames sprung to life again. She jumped in surprise as Draco stepped into the room followed by Mr. Balinchk. Draco smiled at her and asked, “Were you waiting for me?”. Hermione shook her head still reeling from the conversation. She was trying to put together in her mind what had just happened. Draco became concerned, “What’s going on, Hermione?”

“Ron. Ron, was here.” Was all she could say.

“Did he hurt you?” Draco asked angrily. Ready to go back through the floo to where ever Ron had gone. Mr. Balinchk stood ready to follow him.

“No.” She said “but I think he might be planning on hurting Harry.”

Draco narrowed his eyes at her “What do you mean, planning on hurting Harry?” Draco took her arm and led her to the settee. “Sit down!” He commanded. She eased down still playing the conversation over in her head. “How did he even get in here?”

She covered her mouth horrified at the thought that she had actually let him in. He could have done anything to her. “I let him through the floo. He wanted to talk so I let him in.”

Draco frowned “that wasn’t a very good idea, Hermione. What if he tried to hurt you? I know you’re a brilliant witch and capable of defending yourself but if he had tried something would you have been prepared?”

Hermione searched her robes and went even paler. “Draco, I left my wand on the table in the library.” She felt sick to her stomach.

“Of all the stupid things. Father will have a fit when he hears about this.” Draco said shaking his head. He warmed the teapot and poured her another cup. ”I think we’re good here Mr. Balinchk if you want to take a break.” Draco said dismissing the bodyguard. “Now, tell me what you talked about that has you so upset.”

“Draco, he’s met a muggle and wants to move to America with her.”

Draco smiled “Well, would that be so bad?”

“Yes, I think that would be bad.” She stated, surprised that he didn’t see why. “He also thinks that your family is grooming Harry to be a new Dark Lord. He said that Harry’s got to be stopped before he takes over the magical world.”

“How does he plan on stopping him?” Draco asked.
“What? You really don’t think Harry will take over the magical world do you?”

Draco laughed and said, “It’s not like Harry has some evil plan like one of those super villains you were telling me about from the muggle movies but yeah I think Harry is perfectly capable of doing something like that.”

“Those super villains never succeed because they like to gloat too much. Much like Voldemort did. Harry won’t gloat.” She said smiling.

“See, it’s not so bad. Ron was just flying off the broomstick and saying things he has no way of backing up. Even if Harry did have a plan I’m sure that Ron wouldn’t be able to do anything to stop him.”

Hermione absently nodded and said “I guess you’re right. I’m just shocked that he would have had such a turn of heart. Our conversation started out pleasant. We were discussing his new girlfriend and how happy he was. I thought it was going well but then he started getting angry with me about me wanting to push the purist agenda. Said I was being brainwashed by death eaters.” She grimaced, “Sometimes I wonder if maybe I am being brainwashed.”

“Hermione, you are not being brainwashed.” Draco said. He put his teacup down and took her hand. “Look into your Gryffindor heart. You know what is right. Your chivalry is what sets you apart. You’re a true Gryffindor if ever there was one. That’s why you are fighting for the purists. You know that it’s what is right and just.”

She sniffled and wiped her nose. “I had hoped that my friends would see it our way too but after today’s meeting with Ron I fear that maybe the war isn’t over.”

Draco nodded saying “this argument has been going for a hundred years or more. It’s not going to end overnight. We will still have to push for Ministry reform. Having Harry on the Wizengamot has been a huge step in the right direction.”

Hermione nodded. “There’s something else.” She said worrying that Ron might get in trouble. “Ron spoke to Professor Trelawney. She told him the prophecy.”

“What? When did he have a chance to do that? And why would she tell him?”

“I don’t know but I’m sure he heard it. What if he repeats it and others join him in believing it?”

“No one would believe it, Hermione. We know Harry and we aren’t even sure we believe it.”

“I know he’s not really my friend anymore but I’m still worried about him. He’s been showing his muggle girlfriend magic. Told me that I shouldn’t worry about it because the auror department has better things to do.”

“Why would he want to do that?” Draco asked.

“I don’t know. I guess he’s trying to impress her. He said that she has an uncle that is a wizard that taught her about magic. He’s living in America now.” Hermione sighed “Maybe you’re right and it would be good if he went with her. I thought that he should stay as he’s a pureblood but now that I think about it he’s going against what we want.”

Draco nodded. “Let him go. Let them all go if they don’t want to stay as long as they don’t force it on us.” He said as wrapped his arm around her shoulders.

“Is it right for us to force it on them?” Hermione asked. “I mean what if Harry is able to figure out
the mystery of the Treeroot arch. Is it right for him to repair it?”

Draco shrugged “I think everyone will just have to adjust. I mean if it does what we are thinking it
does it will improve all of our lives.” He gave her a little squeeze. “Let’s not worry about it right
now.” Draco said beaming. “Aren’t you going to ask how lunch with Astoria was?”

Hermione smiled and said “Something good, I guess, by the smile on your face.”

Draco leaned back and stretched “I never knew what comedic gold was right under my nose at
Hogwarts.”

Hermione laughed and asked “Is she funny?”

“Oh, she’s hilarious. She was telling me funny stories about some of the students at Hogwarts.
Apparently, she’s a prankster. She was involved in a prank they played on Severus. He took house
points off of Gryffindor for it but it was her and some hufflepuffs that managed to replace frog wart
shavings with deer wart.” Draco was laughing.

“Draco that was really dangerous.” Hermione said her practicalness surfacing.

Draco waved her off “it wasn’t that bad it just turned the potion a different color but it was in the
following class and Severus apparently thought it was the Gryffindors pranking him. She can do
some wandless magic too. At the restaurant, she was rearranging the glasses at another table and the
waiter kept fixing them. I didn’t even know she was doing it until she started giggling.”

Hermione laughed and said, “She’ll fit right in here. Harry, her and, you can have competitions to
see who can get who best.”

“You know, her and Neville have been owlng back and forth. She said Neville wants to have lunch
with Harry and you. I was thinking of inviting them next Sunday.”

“I don’t know, Draco. Maybe here isn’t the best idea. What if he feels like Ron feels? I don’t know if
I can handle another rejection.”

“Astoria told me that he’s open to the purists ideals. She told him that she was hoping to marry me.
He asked her if she was ready to embrace this way of life and she said she was. Neville is
supposedly happy for her.”

Hermione frowned and said, “If you think it’s a good idea then I guess I can’t argue.”

“I’ll need to clear it with Mother first but I’m sure it won’t be a problem.”

Harry and Lucius sat in Lucius’ reclaimed office on the first floor of the manor. The house elves had
done a miraculous job cleaning and repairing the damage caused by the Voldemort supporters. The
office had been decorated in light blues and silvers that perfectly accented the hard wood trim around
the door and window. A stone wet bar stood off to one side of the room next to a small fire place
where two arm chairs sat. Lucius was occupying one of the chairs while Harry stood looking out the
front window. “The moon light makes the gardens look very pale. Everything looks dead.” Harry
observed.
Lucius looked up from the sketch of the Treeroot gate to where Harry was standing. “The gardens haven’t been attended to since Voldemort returned from the dead and made the manor his headquarters. This Summer I’m sure Narcissa will hire a crew to do repairs and replant the flower beds.” He handed Harry the sketch.

They had returned to the Manor just in time for the evening meal. During dinner they shared their findings from the archives. The assistant had been extremely helpful and made quick work of their research. Harry couldn’t help but relay the story of how the assistant was enamored with Lucius.

“She kept brushing up against him.” Harry said laughing. “She was really quite obvious. At one point she offered to take him to the restricted area so she could show him art work from that period that might include mentions of his family estates.”

Lucius grimaced and said “I was really quite embarrassed for her and rather disgusted. I don’t think in all my life I have ever been touched so much by a muggle.” He sighed and said “Not even when I was forced to torture them did I ever allow them to touch me that much. I may never feel clean again.”

“It wasn’t that bad.” Harry said. “At least she smelled nice.”

“She did smell nice.” He agreed.

Harry laughed and said “We found the land grant information. We realized it was part of the land the ministry sits on so she called her boyfriend in to help us find building plans for the Building.”

“The poor guy could tell the she was fawning over me and kept saying things like ‘you’re not really a Lord anymore, are you?’ and ‘I’ve never heard of you before, where did you say you’re from?’” Lucius frowned “It was really disturbing. I wanted to obliviate them both when we were done.”

“I kept trying to tell him how Lucius still held his title as it had been handed down over the years but the guy kept asking questions about why Lucius wasn’t more public. That most of the Lords in England made public appearances all the time.”

“He was trying so hard to impress her by defaulting my lordship that when he realized that nothing he was saying to her was working he quickly dug up plans for the Ministry building and copies made for us.”

“He practically threw us out of the building.” Harry said finding the whole situation funny.

Hermione and Draco were laughing at their story as Narcissa sat with her lips pursed not liking the fact that the muggle had touched her husband.

Lucius cleared his throat when he realized that she wasn’t impressed with their story. “My love, it was nothing.”

“I’m disturbed that you let her touch you so much.” Narcissa said, tersely.

“I didn’t want to upset her when she was being so openly helpful.” Lucius said in his defense. “Anyway, the property that the ministry sits on at one time belonged to the Malfoy family. We couldn’t find any title transfer information so it may actually be that we still own that property.”

“The assistant is looking into it further. She’ll contact us if she finds anything.” Harry added.

“Corosa Treeroot was a peasant that was working the land that was given to Armand Malfoy by King William in the year 1067AD. It is unclear when the building that the Ministry of Magic is in
was actually built but the plans that we found dated back to 1371AD. That building held a Tavern and an Inn. The builders built over the gate. They kept a separate room under the building for it. The room in the plans looks very much like the room does now."

“We were wondering if it didn’t become a place like the Leaky Caldron that leads from London directly into Diagon Alley.”

“I bet we could research businesses that might have been listed at that time.” Hermione suggested.

Lucius nodded and said, “More research. I bet that could be found at the ministry though.”

Hermione smiled “I’ll get on it first thing in the morning if that’s ok?”

“I think I’ll meet you down there after the Wizengamot meeting.” Lucius added. “How was your visit with Andromeda, Narcissa?”

“Teddy, has been having nightmares and Greta has been sick for the past two days. Andromeda has hardly slept. She looked awful.” Narcissa sighed, “I played with Teddy, while she rested and until he finally fell asleep for a nap and then I sat and read. It wasn’t all that exciting of a visit.”

“What is Greta sick with?” Hermione asked, concerned.

“She went to visit her muggle mother a few days ago. She was only there for a few hours but since she came back she’s had stomach ailments. They think she ate something that didn’t sit right.”

Lucius grimaced and said, “Dirty muggles. Probably didn’t wash something before they prepared it.”

“How was lunch with Astoria, Draco?” Harry asked.

Hermione suddenly felt nervous. She hadn’t realized she’d have to account for her day so soon. She fidgeted with her napkin as she listened to Draco recap his lunch date.

“Hermione, what did you do to occupy your time while we were all gone for the day?” Narcissa asked. Harry noticed she was fidgeting and wondered what she could have been up too.

Hermione didn’t answer right away which brought Lucius’s attention to her. “Hermione, what did you do today?”

Draco chirped up and said, “We were gonna wait till later to speak to you about what she did today.”

Lucius narrowed his eyes at her and said, “I’m almost afraid to ask what you got yourself into. I didn’t feel any pulls on your magic. Did you go out?”

Hermione shook her head no. Draco frowned and said “she stayed home alone for the most part but she did have a visitor.”

Lucius smiled and asked “A visitor? Who came by that has you so worried?”

Hermione glanced at Draco then Harry before she said “I let him in because I was angry at you, Lucius. I was feeling defiant.”

“Who did you let in, Hermione?” Narcissa asked, concern clear in her voice.

“Ron. I let Ron in and he wasn’t happy when he left.”

“What do you mean he wasn’t happy?” Harry asked.
“Feeling defiant?” Lucius asked angrily. “You let that blood traitor into our home because you were feeling defiant?”

Hermione nodded and said “I know, it was dumb but you never said I couldn’t have guests over. Although, I was pretty sure you wouldn’t be happy about my choice of company, I was mad so I let him come through the floo when he called.”

Draco cut in and said “It seems that Mr. Weasley had spoken to Professor Trelawney before she died. He’s heard the newest prophecy and he believes that you will be the new Dark Lord..”

“HE WHAT?!” Harry practically screamed as he jumped to his feet, his anger clear. “No one was supposed to know. Everyone has been sworn to secrecy.”

Harry began pacing deep in thought as Hermione continued “He’s got a muggle girlfriend and he’s been showing off for her. Showing her simple tricks and such. He’s thinking about moving to America with her.”

Harry paused and said, “He’s leaving England? With a muggle?”

Hermione nodded and added “He needs money to support himself until he can get established over there. You know how you’re always offering to loan him money, well I think was hoping to take you up on that offer.”

“What did he say that made you think he heard Harry’s prophecy?” Lucius asked more interested in the prophecy than the Weasley’s financial status.

“We were talking about me becoming purist and he was saying that we fought the war so that the purists couldn’t tell us what to do and now after fighting the war here I am supporting that very cause. He thinks that I’m being brainwashed. I told him about the ministry corruption and he said that he didn’t believe that birth rates were down or that muggles would do anything to hurt magic people.”

“He told her that Trelawney was right and that he believed that Harry was being groomed by us.” Draco supplied when Hermione didn’t get right to the answer.

“I asked him how he knew about her prophecy and he refused to tell me. Said it didn’t matter how he knew but he knew. Then he said he wasn’t going to let Harry become a Dark Lord or rule the wizarding world.”

Narcissa looked horrified and asked “Did he say how he planned on stopping him?”

Hermione shook her head no. Draco smirked “He couldn’t stop him from become the new Dark Lord even if he wanted to.”

Harry roared, “I HAVE NO WISH TO BECOME A DARK LORD!” His magic swirled around him in a bout of spontaneity. The candles flared bright before being blown out as the plates and silverware on the table rattled. The window furnishings billowed as though they were opened in a hurricane. Harry realizing what he was doing slammed down his control over his magic making everything jump and go completely still before storming from the dining room.

The Malfoy’s sat in silence for a moment absorbing what had just happened. Hermione cleared her throat and said, “I should go after him and try to calm him down.” as she started to rise from her seat.

Lucius shook his head and said “No. Stay where you are.”
“But he’s upset. He could do something stupid.”

“That’s not your problem.” Lucius stated. They could hear the front door open and slam closed and a few seconds later they all felt him disapparate through the wards.

“It could become our problem if he does do something stupid.” Draco suggested.

Lucius nodded and said “I believe you are right. We’ll need to decide if we want that to be our problem or if Mr. Potter should be on his own.” Lucius sighed and said “I don’t not wish for our family to align with another Dark Lord. Although, I’m certain Mr. Potter’s rule will be no where near as insane as Riddles was I don’t wish to be a part of enforcing that again.” He began his eating his meal again looking very thoughtful. After a few bites he turned to Hermione and said “In the future I do not wish for you to accept visitors unless it’s someone who is pre-approved by one of us. Mr. Weasley could have caught you off your guard and attacked you.”

Hermione groaned and said, “I never thought he’d do anything like that but after seeing how angry he got I don’t know now.”

“I’m sure you would have been fine, Hermione. Lucius didn’t block you from using your magic you could have defended yourself.”

“Yeah, if she had had her wand.” Draco said smirking.

“You didn’t have to tell him about that, Draco.” Hermione snapped.

“Why didn’t you have your wand?” Lucius asked suspiciously.

“I left it in the library. I didn’t even realize I didn’t have it till Draco got home.”

Lucius nodded and stood. “I’m very disappointed in you, Hermione. You will go to bed right after dinner. I do not wish to speak with you further tonight.” He turned to address Narcissa and Draco. “Teks told me that my first floor office was cleaned, I’m going to retire there for a bit and go through some things.”

Hermione watched Lucius as he walk out of the dining room. Once he disappeared out of sight she turned and looked to Narcissa who had a disappointed look also. “I’m sorry to have disappointed you both. May I please be excused for the evening?” Narcissa nodded to her and Hermione fled the dining room.

“I was wondering if I could have Astoria and Neville Longbottom over for lunch on Sunday, Mother?” Draco asked, as though nothing had just happened.

“I think that sounds fine, Draco. Send them out invitations with our family crest. If you would like, invite Luna Lovegood also. I think Hermione would enjoy seeing her again.”

“I’ll send them out first thing in the morning.” Draco said. “I think I’ll get started on them this evening.

Narcissa was left in the family dining room alone. She thought about how Lucius had made the decision for their family 20 years ago to support Lord Voldemort. At the time, she supported that decision but shortly after Draco had been born, Narcissa had wished that they could separate from the insane man. If the decision to support a new Dark Lord needed to be made she felt as though Harry Potter was the clearest choice.
Severus stood inside the entryway to Hogwarts watching Harry Potter walk towards the building in the rain. It was just after 8pm when he felt him walk through the protective shields. Since being reinstated as Headmaster and the shields having been repaired Severus was once again keyed into the wards. He would have thought that Mr. Potter would need to be granted access by a staff member as he wasn’t yet a student of the school but Harry had opened the gate and let himself through. As Harry drew closer he could feel the energy radiating off of him. “Mr. Potter, what can I do for you this evening.”

Harry scowled at him for using the Mr. Potter greeting. He figured that Severus had probably already spoken to Lucius about his outburst at dinner. “I was wondering if you had time for counsel.” Harry said.

He stepped into the entryway completely dry. Severus noted the bubble around him and thought it strange that it kept out the rain. “You will have to teach me that spell.” He motioned for Harry to follow him. “We can talk in my office if you like.”

“That would be fine.” They walked in complete silence to the Headmaster’s office. Severus sat down behind his desk and shuffled some parchments to the side. Harry stood looking around the office at the different headmasters. “I would like to speak some place more private if that were possible.” he said motioning to the portrait of a sleeping Dumbledore that Harry didn’t feel as though he was really sleeping and that thought fueled his anger further.

“Maybe you’d like to see the dueling room that has been designed. We have a new professor who wants to start a dueling club. She’s been working on it for the past few days.”

“A dueling club? That sounds interesting.” Severus led him back down the stairs towards the newly designed classroom. Harry was walking the halls admiring the building. He noted that there didn’t seem to be any one else around. “Where is everyone? I expected more of the professors to be milling about.”

“Most of them have gone home for the evening or retired to their quarters. We were just finishing our evening meal when I felt you come through the gate.”

“I wondered how you came to be waiting for me so quickly.” Harry said thinking that maybe he hadn’t had a chance to speak to anyone yet.

“Yes, I was just in the Great Hall dining with the few staff that are still here.”

“I envisioned that you would probably dine alone when not during term or at the Malfoy’s.”

“I have in the past felt the occasion to do just that but now that the war is over and Voldemort is finally dead I feel more free to join my peers.” Severus held open a great door. “Professor Preaks will be teaching DADA to the fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh year students and heading up the dueling club.”

“Preaks? I’ve never heard of her.” Harry said.

“She taught at a school in Austria for several years. She comes highly recommended.”

“I guess as headmaster you probably don’t have time to teach that subject.” Harry looked around the room. “Are those dummies enchanted?”
Severus nodded and said “She’s got them enchanted to let the caster know if they created a spell correctly. It’s quite ingenious.” He pulled out his wand and said “Petrificus totalus.” The dummy glowed bright green.

Harry pulled his wand out and said “Immobilious.” The dummy glowed red. Harry smiled and said “That’s brilliant!”

“You meant to cast that spell incorrectly?” Harry nodded. “What did you need to speak to me about?” Severus asked, cautiously.

Harry cast a few more spells about the room marveling at the glowing dummies. Severus watched as Harry’s mood seemed to improve with every glowing dummy. Finally Harry seemed to exhaust some of his frustration. He stood with his wand in the ready position pointed at a dummy that stood in the center of the room. He took a deep breath and focused all of his power. Severus stood in shock as a green jet of energy surged wordlessly from Harry’s wand and hit the dummy dead center of its chest. The dummy glowed bright red. He pocketed his wand and said “I spent the day with Lucius at the archive building in the muggle town of Twickenham. We found most of what we were looking for there.” He paused considering what to tell Severus. “Did you have an opportunity to speak with him?” Severus shook his head no. Harry sighed and said “Well, while we were there Ron visited with Hermione. She let him into the manor while she was home alone. Their conversation started out ok but then Ron started on about anti-purist stuff and it finally slipped that he spoke to Professor Trelawney before she died. Apparently, she told him the prophecy and that I had to be stopped. He left the manor very angry. Hermione was clearly shaken up by their conversation”

“When would he have had an opportunity to speak to Sybill?”

Harry shrugged and said “I really don’t know but from their conversation it was easy enough to glean that he did hear the prophecy.”

“No wonder you seemed in such a foul mood when you arrived.” Severus said shaking his head in wonder. The dummy still glowing an eerie red color.

Harry frowned and said “I can’t help but think that the Malfoy family feels as though I will be a Dark Lord. I had a bout of accidental magic when I became angry at dinner. Narcissa and Draco made comments about Ron trying to stop me as though they supported it. I left before I caused any real damage. I went to Grimmauld place and paced the halls for a bit. It needs a lot of work still. I couldn’t stay there any longer.” Harry cast a wordless wandless spell at another dummy and it glowed green before fading. “I feel as though everyone thinks that I am headed that direction. Honestly, I feel as though I’m being pushed into it.”

“No one is pushing you there, Harry. You seem to be on that path all on your own.”

Harry groaned and said, “Maybe I should have taken that time off that I had wanted to take once Voldemort was dead.” Harry began pacing the room again getting more and more agitated. He stopped in front of the glowing dummy. “I suppose it’s glowing still because I cast an unforgivable curse.”

“Hilda has them enchanted to glow for as long as the energy behind the curse lasts. By the looks of it that one will be glowing for a while.”

“Praesidio bulla.” Harry said from out of nowhere.

“Excuse me?” Severus asked. They had been staring at the glowing red dummy for a few minutes when Harry broke the silence with the spell.
“Praesidio bulla.” Harry said again. “Its the protective bubble charm that Hermione taught me from the book she took from the Black family library.” Harry smiled and said “Our first few attempts we were only able to bubble our wand hands then after a few tries we were able to make it surround us. I wasn’t able to make it so strong till after the battle.” He pulled his wand back out and cast the spell verbally. “Praesidio bulla hycaintho” A glowing blue bubble formed around his body

Severus pulled his wand out and tried casting the spell. His first attempt he managed a blue bubble around his hand. Being a quick learner within a few attempts he had a perfect bubble formed around his body.

Harry pointed his wand at Severus and said “Imobulus!” The spell hit the bubble and dissipated. Harry smiled and said “After she was left behind that’s all I did when Ron wasn’t around. I practiced that spell till I could do it wordless and wandless.” Harry put his wand away and thought “Praesidio bulla hycaintho” a clearly evident blue bubble formed around Harry. He stepped closer to Severus and pushed more energy into the bubble enclosing Snape inside of it. “Only problem is I really can’t cast any spells while I have the bubble. I haven’t learned to cast two spells at once.” he let the bubble pop releasing Severus from the spell.

Severus nodded and said “an adequate DADA program for sixth and seventh years would have given instruction on how to perform multiple spells at once. Hilda Preaks has already written that into the program.”

Harry sighed “everything will be different when the school year resumes. I don’t know if I can handle being treated like ‘the boy who saved the wizarding world’ again. I was just getting use to the fame to begin with, now it will be ten fold.”

“The students will settle down once they realize that you are still just Harry Potter.”

“But I’m not am I? I’m the new Dark Lord.” Harry said solemnly.

“You are still Harry Potter and a great many students and much of the staff will still follow you even if you learn the dark arts. They will follow you because you are a Gryffindor and you will do what is right for the greater good.”


“It got us free from a mad man and many of his mad followers. A purging, if you will, of the bad blood that had infected our community.”

Harry snorted and asked “You’d chose to follow another Lord that practiced the dark arts?” Severus froze. Slipping his mask of indifference over his face. “I’m not asking you to bow to me Severus. I see that you have drawn your occlumency shields up tight. All I was asking is if you’d be willing too?”

Severus clenched his jaw and took a deep breath before he answered “I don’t wish to be in a position where I am forced to do things I find morally reprehensible again.”

“I can’t see that I would ever ask anyone to do something that was morally out of line.” Harry stated. He then added angrily while raising his voice “See what I mean. I don’t even want that but somehow I keep coming back to that line of thinking.” He began pacing about the room again. “It’s like there’s something in me guiding me, no more like shoving me, in that....” He paused mid-sentence as he stared into space.

Severus watched him as his eyes glazed over. He wondered what he was seeing this time and
whether it would end their little therapy session.

Harry chuckled as he came out of his trance. He smiled and said “Sometimes those stupid visions come at the weirdest times and show the most random things.”

“What did you see?” Severus asked feeling slightly relieved that his temper had seemed to improve.

“In a few years we will be at a muggle casino and for some reason we will be dueling against unknown wizards.”

Severus grimaced and said, “I’ve never been to a muggle casino before.”

“Me either.” Harry said laughing, “I guess I should probably head back to Malfoy Manor. I need to apologize to them for my outburst.”

“I do believe that would be wise.” Severus said in his monotone draw.

“Can I use your floo?”

They walked back to his office where Severus called through the floo for Lucius.

“Severus?” Lucius asked, surprised to be hearing from him.

“Lucius. I have Harry Potter here with me.” Severus said through the floo.

“I see. Does he plan on returning this evening?” Lucius asked wondering what they could have been speaking about.

“I believe he does.” Severus said smiling. Lucius stepped back from the floo allowing Harry to step through. “We had a little talk, Lucius. He told me that Hermione had a visitor. Is she feeling well?”

“She’s had a bit of a scare. Mr. Weasley left her very unsettled.” Lucius sighed and added “I am very disappointed in her this evening.”

Severus nodded and said “I understand. I’ll be round for dinner tomorrow evening.”

“It will be nice to have you in residence. See you at the meeting in the morning.” Lucius said as he closed the connection. He turned to Harry who was looking at the room. “Mr. Potter, we worried about you. Are you well now?”

“I’m sorry about my outburst earlier. I’m having trouble with the Dark Lord thing that’s floating around me.”

“Yes.” Lucius said. “That is clear. I will admit that I am also having thoughts regarding the Dark Lord issue that seems to be surrounding you.”

Harry pursed his lips and said “I will understand if you feel as through you need to separate yourself and your family from that image.” Harry sighed as he realized that he was on that path again. Changing the subject he asked, “I was wondering if you’d have a few minutes to look over the Treeroot gate sketches again. I understand it’s late but I had a few questions that I’d like to ask you.”

Lucius agreed. They sat in his office for another hour before Lucius broke the silence. “I'm sorry Harry, I just don't recognize any of the runes.” He pointed to the sketch and said, "See this symbol here in the center. It’s very similar to the reiki symbol for power but it shouldn't have the wavy line running through it. It should be straight with 3 revolutions running clockwise around the outside. These lines are running counter-clockwise and there's 7 revolutions."
Harry moved away from the window that overlooked the front gardens. He looked over Lucius’ shoulder. "Could it be a form of rune from another country?" Harry asked, grasping for ideas.

Lucius was feeling rather exhausted but didn't want to deny him his help. "I suppose. I have studied other runic languages and none of these look familiar. It doesn't mean that it's not I just can't be clear on what they mean." He said feeling slightly frustrated with his apparently limited knowledge on the subject.

"What about the other symbols, the ones that aren't clear in the sketch, is there some way to activate the gate so that they can be seen again? I was thinking something like what we did at Hogwarts, feed it a little bit of power so that they surface again?"

"I don't know what that would do. There's probably some reason why they can't be seen anymore. They wouldn't just disappear." He handed Harry the sketch and said, "I'm sorry I'm not of more help."

Harry took the sketch and looked at the symbols. "If you were to create a protective spell such as this how would you go about doing so?" He asked trying to think of his next course of action.

Lucius sighed as he pinched the bridge of his nose. He sat thinking about how he would design the runic spells for a moment before saying "Well, the first thing I would need to do was identify the area that would need to be included in the spell. How large of an area that I would need to cover. Does it go up into the sky, deep into the earth and how far spread it is across the country side. For instance the runes protecting the manor only go about fifty meters deep and hundred meters high but the cover a 500 acre circumference."

Harry nodded and asked, "That makes sense but how would you organize the different symbols?"

Lucius took the sketch back from Harry and looked at the symbols again. "I see where you're going with this." He studied the symbols and said "I'd put the power symbol in the center then on the left I'd add the distance calculations and who the ward defended against or who it protected. On the right the height and depth calculations and what I wanted the ward to do."

"So its probably safe to assume that this funny looking reiki symbol at the top is the power symbol?" Lucius grimaced but Harry went on. "Then this symbol that's blurred would be the symbol for the land distance?"

Lucius shrugged and said "Everyone has their own style, Harry. My system isn't the same system that say Brombecher uses. His family has been making ward stones for centuries. I've been told that mine are better and my work has been highly sought after but my point is that there is no one way of organizing them. Therefore, I can't say for sure that the center stone is the power rune."

"What if we took that chance and fed a little bit of power into it to see what happens? What would the worst case scenario be?"

"I really couldn't say. I don't advise it though, Harry. We have no idea what the gate will do."

Harry nodded and said, "I understand. Thank you for your help today, Lucius."

“You are most welcome, Harry. Now if you don’t mind it has been a very long day and I’d like to retire for the evening.” Lucius stood and added, “You are welcome to stay for now but I think that it would be best for you to have Grimmauld place cleared out.”
An Earthquake at the Ministry

Chapter Notes

Special thanks to Kit56kat for editing punctuation and grammar. She's been a huge help in cleaning up my awful writing habits. :)

The archway in the death chamber in the basement of the Ministry of Magic glowed a deep neon purple. The rune markings clearly visible to the naked eye. Harry was trying to draw the runes accurately so that he could research their meanings later but they kept dimming before he could finish. He had to keep recasting a revelabit charm and every time he did they glowed too brightly for him to see them. He kept wishing that he had muggle sunglasses. He had been at it for two hours now and was growing frustrated with his drawing skills. He would need to return to the Wizengamot meeting in a few minutes but was procrastinating for as long as possible.

The morning session of the Wizengamot meeting had been extremely disheartening. He had had trouble holding his temper under control while the counsel argued about prosecuting the Death Eaters that were being held for trial. Several had claimed insanity for following Voldemort and had begged for medical help. The Wizengamot had been split down the middle as whether or not that should be considered. To his frustration Lord Malfoy had voted that they should be denied and either given the kiss or sent to Azkaban. On the other hand members like Auror Malone, who Harry knew was a supremacist, had voted that they be examined by mind healers at St. Mungo’s. Arthur Weasley had agreed, sighting that they would be deemed criminally insane and receive the kiss anyway. They had gone around in circles with the argument for most of the morning. While innocent wizards and witches were waiting in Azkaban for second trials so that they could be released and return to their lives. By the time Shacklebolt called for a recess Harry felt as though his head would crack open.

He had wanted to join Arthur for tea but when he approached him Arthur told him he had to take care of another matter during their break. He hurried off before Harry could engage him further. Harry thought it had seemed odd but the whole morning had been odd.

At breakfast, the tension between Lucius and Narcissa had been almost palpable and Hermione had looked as though she hadn’t slept a wink. Draco was the only one who seemed in a good mood as he happily greeting Harry when he entered the dining room. He handed Harry a neatly written invitation to Sunday brunch the following weekend. Harry hadn’t asked why he was given an invitation because of the discussion he had with Lucius the evening before. He figured that it was a hint that he should be out before Sunday and therefore would need an invitation to get back in. But he was more confused when Hermione entered and Draco handed her an invitation too.

The atmosphere had been tense even as Draco happily chirped on about his date and the brunch. Harry was looking forward to seeing Neville and Luna and enjoying listening to Draco. He didn’t know what he should say about Grimmauld Place and his moving out so he kept mostly to himself. When it was time to leave for the Ministry, Hermione had joined them with both of the body guards.

Their arrival at the ministry had been even more bizarre. There were reporters everywhere. The word that the Wizengamot would be begin sentencing those involved with Voldemort had gotten out. Even family members for the witches and wizards who would be on trial were there plus the victims and their families. The lobby was packed, Aurors were struggling to keep the peace and everyone
was shouting that they deserved to be allowed into the counsel room. The five of them stepped through the floor. As their presence became known, the crowds parted like the red sea letting Harry lead the small group through to the elevators. A silence fell over the lobby as they made their way through. Harry stood waiting for the lifts to arrive, Lucius on his one side and Hermione on the other. The three of them were flanked by the two body guards that Lord Malfoy had employed for these occasions. Harry turned and looked over his shoulder at the hushed crowd. Almost everyone was looking at him as though they expected him to say something. He had no idea what he should say. Lucius leaned forward and whispered into his ear. “A statement wouldn’t be a terrible thing to make at this point.” He glanced over his shoulder at the crowds again wishing they would go away.

Harry nodded and turned around to face the crowd. Lucius and Hermione turned with him showing their support. Harry cleared his throat and said “As you probably know the Wizengamot will be meeting today to begin the process of sorting through those that have been arrested for their war crimes. It will be a closed assembly. There will be no reporters or family members allowed to attend. Family will be informed of sentencing before it is carried out. If you would all please disperse and return to your homes. A report will be made in the evening addition of the Daily Prophet.” The lift doors had opened and were being held for them to enter. Harry glance back and finished with “Your continued patience and support for our legal process is greatly appreciated.” He turned and stepped into the lift. His party following close behind. Harry took a deep breath and exhaled “How was that for a statement?” He asked.

Hermione smiled and said, “I think it was perfect.”

“It was fine except I believe that the council session today was supposed to be open to the public.”

Mr. Simmons snorted and said, “I think Mr. Potter just closed the session.”

The lift doors slid open on the floor that the archives were held and Hermione stepped off with Mr. Simmons. “I’ll join you both once Lord Malfoy and Mr. Potter join the assembly.”, Mr. Balinchk said as the doors slid closed.

The doors opened again this time on the Wizengamot level. The hall was packed. People tried to move out of the way to let them pass but there wasn’t anywhere for them to go. Mr. Balinchk tried to make a path for them but it was impossible. Harry and Lucius managed to push through to the hall only to find the assembly was crowded with witches and wizards also.

Harry approached Shacklebolt who was in a deep debate with an older wizard that Harry recognized but didn’t know by name. “Minister Shacklebolt.” Harry stated loudly and clearly. Shacklebolt turned to him. Harry continued, “I have closed today’s assembly. Please have the room cleared.”

Shacklebolt nodded and made the announcement, “Due to the high level of attendance today’s council session will now be closed.”

The crowd was in an uproar. Demanding that they be allowed to stay. Lucius was shaking his head. “We’ll be here all day at this rate.”, He was saying as Severus joined them.

“I saw you arrive. I was in the lobby trying to make my way to the elevators.” He sat down next to Lucius and craned his head around trying to see who else had arrived. “Once you disappeared in the lift the crowd started to dissipate.” He looked down to the floor as a scuffle broke out between two witches. “They hang on your every word, Mr. Potter. You should make another statement.”

Harry stood and cast the sonorous charm. “As Minister Shacklebolt as already said the session will be closed today. Please vacate the assembly so that we may begin the process of justice.”
Everyone in the room turned and listened to Harry and watched as he took his seat again. People immediately began clearing the floor. Those that weren’t part of the Wizengamot that were already seated stood up and began moving out of the pews. A few of them had to pass by where they were sitting and bowed to him saying, “It’s a pleasure to see you again Mr. Potter.”, and taking his hand and shaking it while thanking him again for bringing an end to Lord Voldemort. One young wizard even slipped him a piece of parchment with his name on it saying if he was ever lonely to give him a call. Harry had burned that as soon as the young wizard was out of sight.

“What is wrong with these people?” Harry groaned as the ash from the note blew away.

Shacklebolt begrudgingly thanked Mr. Potter for his aid and the session had begun.

Now he was looking at the arch wishing he had just a few more minutes to play with it. He thought about the spell that Lucius had used to reactivate the wards at Hogwarts. He tested the spell in the air a few times to see if he still remembered it. When he felt comfortable he directed the spell to the Gate. At first nothing happened and Harry felt as though he needed to put more power into it. He tried one more time to see if anything would happen, putting more effort into it. As the spell left his wand the gate began to glow the blinding neon purple again. The runes began to move around on the arch reorganizing themselves. He panicked and tried to break the spell thinking that this wasn’t what he had expected. He found the gate was now pulling the energy from him. He his knees buckled as he became too weak to stand. Just as when he thought he’d lose consciousness the felt spell release him. A burst of energy spread out from the gate throwing him backwards and making the room rumble and as though an earthquake had happened. Dust and debris fell from the ceiling. Harry coughed as he choked from the dust. It was almost impossible to see what was happening to the gate through the dust but he could see the neon purple glow. He cursed under his breath ‘Now he had done it’ he thought, only he didn’t really know what he had done. The door to the death chamber burst open as he was catching his breath and several aurors came running into the room.

“Mr. Potter. Are you okay?” One of the aurors asked.

Another stared in awe at the gate and turned to him and said in a very accusatory tone, “What the hell did you do to the gateway?”

Harry stood and brushed his robes off and said, “I activated the Gate.”, more confidently than he felt.

Another auror asked in amazement, “Why in the hell would you want to do that?”

Harry was headed for the door. He paused and said, “I did it because I could and it needed to be done.” He left the chamber and headed for the Wizengamot hall. People were running around as though the world was ending. Harry walked past them calmly smiling and nodding at a few that he recognized. In the lift to the Wizengamot level one woman was crying that she had to get home to her children. A man was with her trying to comfort her. “Your children will be fine. It was a very small earthquake. No damage was done.” Harry said in frustration.

The woman looked at him and asked, “You’re Harry Potter aren’t you?” Harry nodded. The woman looked at him in awe. He wanted to roll his eyes at her but the door slid open on his floor. As he stepped from the lift he heard her say in a much calmer voice, “Thank you, Mr. Potter.”, as the door slid closed. He felt like he had run a few miles and his legs were shaking from the exertion.

The Wizengamot had regathered and everyone was in a tizzy about the earthquake. Harry sat down next to Lucius and Severus. Severus was the first to note his appearance. “Harry, are you okay?”

“Yes, just feeling a little drained.” He said, trying to sound casual. Lucius narrowed his eyes looking at him suspiciously. Harry deflated a little when he realized that he wasn’t going to fool either of
them. “I just need to get through the remainder of this meeting and then I’ll explain what it is that I’ve
done.” He kept his eyes forward. He was sure if he needed to use his magic for anything it wouldn’t
be there for him. He was slightly concerned that word from the death chamber would get around and
that thoughts of his arrest would be made. He wouldn’t be able to defend himself if that happened.
He sighed as Shacklebolt entered the room and scanned the audience looking for Mr. Potter. “I may
need your commitment sooner than later, Severus. Can I count on your aid today?” He tried to keep
an even face as two aurors appeared by Shacklebolt’s side. Auror Malone joined them from where
he was sitting in the pews. All their eyes turned to Harry.

Severus spluttered, not realizing what Harry was referring to at first then when it became clear he
suddenly had an urge to move away from Harry. He needed to make his decision right here and
now. He had hoped for more time to consider his options. Lucius was having trouble comprehending
the meaning of their conversation when Severus said to him, “Luci, I’m aligning myself with the
boy.” He said as he moved to Harry’s other side in the pews.

Lucius eyes went wide and he said, “Sev, we need to talk about this. Please, we need more time.”

Shacklebolt was walking towards where they were sitting. “There is no time, Lucius, I’m sorry.”

Lucius paled as he heard the Minister address Harry. “Mr. Potter, would you care to tell me what
exactly you did to the arch in the Death Chamber?”

Harry stood up feeling weaker then he realized. He felt a wave of dizziness pass over him but he
managed to remain upright. “I activated the Treeroot gate.”, He said loudly and confidently.

Lucius groaned buried his face in his hands. The other members of the Wizengamot gasped and
questions started flying about the room. Severus stood next to him ready to aid if needed. Shacklebolt
was trying to get the room to quiet down but no one was listening to him. “Mr. Potter, who advised
you to do such a thing? We don’t even know what that Arch does.” Shacklebolt was yelling over the
noise.

“We are going to find out what it does now, aren’t we?” He said annoyed with him as he couldn’t
control the crowd.

Shacklebolt’s gaze cast over Severus standing at Harry’s side and Lucius sitting behind him shaking
his head and muttering to himself. Lucius knew he would be implicated in this and didn’t want the
publicity. “Lord Malfoy, did you aid him in this process?” Shacklebolt asked accusingly.

Harry glance at Lord Malfoy sitting at his side and realized that he didn’t have his full support. He
could see Severus standing proudly next to him and felt a wave of relief. “I had an opportunity to
discuss the gate with Lord Malfoy this past evening.” The crowd quieted down as they heard him
speaking again. He continued and said, “Lord Malfoy strongly advised me not to attempt the
activation spell until further research could be done. I was working on the further research when I
tried a spell to see if it would work. It turns out that it did work.” He said, smiling proudly.

The Wizengamot fell silent as they processed what had been done. Harry could tell that with all the
excitement not much more was going to get done today so he said “I’m sorry to cause everyone so
much concern but I can assure you that everything will be fine. Now, if you don’t mind I’ve had a
busy morning, I think I’d like end today’s session. Can we reconvene tomorrow or the next day?”
He said, pointedly directing his question to Shacklebolt.

“Mr. Potter, we need to figure out what it is that you have done.” He said, his anger clear in his
voice.
“I suggest we all go home and take a look around and see if anything is different.” He motioned for Severus to lead the way hoping that Shacklebolt and the other members of the Wizengamot would accept his decision. He knew there was no way he could enforce it if they questioned his authority.

Severus scowled at Shacklebolt and said “send an owl when you plan to reconvene. You know where to find all of us.” He pushed his way past Shackelbrot and Auror Malone. His men stepping aside to allow them passage. Harry followed holding the handrail as he descended the stairs. Lucius followed feeling apprehensive.

Once in the hall Harry paused leaning against the wall gathering his strength. “I need to rest, I think I may have overextended myself.”

“Do you think at all?” Lucius snapped, as he walked to the end of the hall to call the lift.

Harry snorted and said, “I do think otherwise I’d never be able to dress or feed myself.”

Severus groaned and said “This is serious, Mr. Potter.”

Harry was feeling slightly giddy and retorted with, “No Severus, Sirius is dead. He died in the death chamber. Bellatrix hit him with a curse and he fell backwards into the arch.” When he heard the elevator ding he pushed off from the wall and headed to the lift. “By the way, it’s glowing purple and the strange shimmering look from the inside is gone.” The door slid open to the level that the archives were stored on. Lucius left the lift without saying anything more to him. “I guess he’s pissed with me.” Harry said as he cracked his neck.

“Or me.” Severus said dully.

“Why would he be angry with you?”

“We had said once Voldemort was gone that we’d never support another insane Dark Lord.”

The lift opened to the lobby. "I'm not insane.” Harry said as he pushed off the wall and stumbled towards the door. He caught the door jam steadying himself before he exited the lift. He walked as straight and proudly as he could to the floos, trying to not draw attention. People were still pointing and whispering at him as he walked by. He tried to activate the floo system calling out “Malfoy Manor.” Nothing happened a wizard approached them and said the floo system isn’t working right since the earthquake.

“We’ll have to apparate home, Mr. Potter.”

Harry groaned and said “I can’t do that, Severus. I’m completely spent.” He eased himself down onto a bench in the lobby. Thinking that maybe he had made a terrible mistake. His head began pounding as he tried to think of his options. He knew that he’d be drawing attention to himself if he didn’t get out of the lobby soon. He stood up and said “There’s nothing for it. I’ll have to find a muggle hotel for the night.”

“I’m sure I could apparate you home if need be. I was just waiting for Lucius and Hermione to come up.”

Harry glanced over to the elevators. “I’m not sure how much longer I can stay.” He said as another dizzy spell hit him. Severus reached out a hand to steady him. Harry gripped his arm and said, “Thank you.”

Severus wasn’t sure what exactly he was being thanked for. “Just a few more minutes.” He said. Harry nodded. To Severus’ relief the elevator doors opened to reveal and frazzled looking
Hermione and an angrier looking Lucius. Mr. Balinchk and Mr. Simmons looking just as frazzled were close on their heels. “What happened?”

“Not now.” He snapped, as he approached the floo. He tried to activate the floo system but nothing happened.

“It seems as though the earthquake has shut down the floo system.” Severus stated.

“Oh Harry, What did you do?” Hermione said, shaking her head at him.

“We’ll have to apparate.” Severus said and then motioned to Harry. “He’ll need help. He can’t do it himself.”

Lucius frowned at him. “He looks pretty drained. Hermione and I will take care of him. We’ll see you at the Manor.”
The wind was blowing the curtains, casting lazy shadows about the room. The smell of summer flowers was drifting on the air making Harry smile in his sleep. He shifted in the bed feeling sleep slowly leaving his body. The breeze was giving him a slight chill so he groped around for the quilt only to find it out of reach. He groaned as he realized that he would need to be awake more fully in order to correct the problem. He returned to lying still and enjoying the light breeze when it occurred to him that he wasn’t really sure where he was. Peeking an eye open he saw the room he had been given at Malfoy manor. He closed his eye again trying to avoid the inevitable.

“Harry, are you awake?” Hermione’s voice whispered into the room.

He groaned again, “I don’t really want to be. Can’t I sleep for a bit longer?” he pleaded.

“After two and a half days I’m sure a few more hours won’t matter too much.” She said sounding a bit cheeky.

Harry sat up wide awake looking at her. “Two and a half days?” he asked in shock.

Hermione nodded and said, “You really had us worried. Right as we were leaving the ministry you collapsed and we had to help you to bed. You were unconscious for nearly twenty four hours before your healer was brought in to look at you.”

“I’m sure Relic had a few choice words for me.” Harry said exasperated. He rubbed at his scar. “Did he say how long this headache would last?”

“You were unconscious. We didn’t know you even had a headache.” She said, her frustration clear. “He did say that when you awoke from your bout of magical exhaustion that you could be given potions as needed. I’ll get you a headache potion if you think you need it.”

“No. I think once I get up and move around it will pass.” He stretched and said, “Two and half days? I guess a lot has happened in that time.”

Hermione said “You could say that. I think I’ll wait to fill you in until you’ve had a chance to shower and maybe some food. I’ll go and let everyone know that you are awake.” She paused by the door and asked, “You can shower yourself can’t you? Maybe I should stay with you just in case.”

Harry waved her off. “I’m fine. I’m sure I can handle it. I’ll meet you downstairs.” He stood from the bed, his legs feeling wobbly. He made his way to the bathroom and decided a bath would feel better. An hour later he emerged from the bathroom feeling refreshed and in an extremely good mood. Kreacher was laying out his clothing for him. “I think I’d better go with something casual and loose fitting, Kreacher.

Kreacher turned and hissed at him “I know what I am doing you stupid wizard.”

Harry was a little shocked at his response but didn’t say anything. He felt as though nothing could
dampen his mood. He had been asleep for two and half days, maybe the house elf had good reason to be angry with him. He disappeared with a pop leaving Harry alone in the room. He looked over at the clothing laid out for him. Kreacher had apparently known exactly what he wanted to wear today. He had also taken the time while Harry was in the bath to straighten up his rooms. The bed was neatly made and there wasn’t an item out of place.

Harry was just getting dressed when he heard a quiet knock on his door. Harry called out “Enter.” from his bedroom.

He heard the door open and close then saw Draco’s head appear around the corner. Draco smiled in relief seeing that Harry was truly up and about. He said, “We are waiting for you in my father’s quarters. Severus has come from Hogwarts to meet with you.”

“Really?” Harry asked. “Come in while I finish getting ready.” He said, absent-mindedly thinking about Severus and wondering how everyone took his actions towards him at the ministry.

Draco sat down on the freshly made bed watching Harry get dressed. Harry was smiling and humming to himself. “You seem to be in a really good mood.” He said.

Harry nodded and said, “I feel great.” He picked up the outer robe from the spot on the bed next to where Draco was sitting. Once he had it settled in place he asked, “How do I look?”

Draco smirked and says, “You look wonderful.”

Harry laughed and said, “I look wonderful? Really?”

Draco nodded and said, “You really had me worried for a few hours.”

Harry smirked. “It wouldn’t be the first time I’ve suffered from magical exhaustion. I imagine it won’t be the last either.”

Draco groaned and asked, “Is it a Gryffindor thing for you to be so reckless or just a Harry Potter and his friends thing?”

“Reckless?” Harry asked, amused. “Well I suppose it’s the latter as I can think of several of my housemates that wouldn’t take risks like my friends and I took during the war.” Harry turned to Draco and asked, “Did Hermione do something reckless while I was unconscious?”

Draco sighed and said, “I should probably wait until we are all together before you are told but yeah, she did. It was completely crazy and my father was furious with her but Severus talked him down and Hermione is safe now so no real harm was done. She managed to take care of the Weasley problem also.”

Harry paled, “The Weasley problem?” He asked, “As in Ronald Weasley or the whole family?” He sat down on the bed next to Draco looking at him for an answer.

Draco shook his head and said, “This should wait until everyone is here.”

“I guess we shouldn’t keep them waiting.” Harry said as he turned and inched closer to Draco.

“I wouldn’t mind keeping them waiting for a few more minutes if you had something else you needed to do.” Draco said, smiling slyly at Harry.

Harry reached his hand up and gently touched Draco’s cheek. “It’s hard for me to imagine that you’re the same boy who hated me all through school.” Draco started to turn away, feeling
embarrassed for his previous actions. Harry shook his head and said, “No, don’t be embarrassed, we all did stupid things.” He laughed and said “I’m still doing them apparently. I’m not even sure this is the smartest thing I’ve ever done.”

Draco looked at him puzzled for a moment wondering what he was talking about. Understanding bloomed in his mind as Harry leaned forward and place a kiss on the side of his mouth. He groaned as Harry pressed a second firmer kiss on his lips. He really wanted to continue but his sense of duty stopped him. He placed his hands on Harry’s shoulders and said “We can’t. Not right now at least. Later. After you’ve met with everyone.”

Harry smirked and said “It’s never the right time. There’s always something.” He kissed him once more, stroking over Draco’s lips gently with his tongue hoping to convince him to continue.

Draco sighed wanting nothing more then to explore but pushed him away and stood up. He held out his hand saying “Come on, breakfast is waiting and your inner circle will be impatient to fill you in on what you did to the magic in our part of the world.

A few minutes later Harry sat in the comfy arm chair in the family room of the master suite while enjoying a light breakfast. He hadn’t realized how hungry he was until he took the first bite. After not eating anything for three days he felt ravenous.

The Malfoy’s were cataloging everything that had happened when the gate had been reactivated. The floo system had only been partially shut down. Floos that were within the wards of the gate region of England could still be connected. Places like Hogwarts, the manor, and Hogsmeade were out of the range of the wards.

Many things that had been protected by magic outside of the area were now visible to muggles. The Muggle authorities were struggling to explain where city blocks had suddenly appeared from and this had also explained why Kreacher was so mad at him. Grimmauld had lost some of its protection. Other things that were being hidden by magic had lost their shielding too. The wizarding world was scrambling to cast wards over certain areas of the country to hide herds of wild magical animals, enchanted crops and villages where the residents were primarily magical people. In other areas things that had been visible to muggles, and were mostly made of magic, had disappeared. The arch had pulled all the magic that was spread out over the country so that muggles couldn’t see it anymore.

All of those problems were simple things to correct. New shielding charms would need to be erected and places where muggles were able to go would have to change their behaviours. The Statue for Wizarding Secrecy would need to be altered slightly. The most difficult thing, however, was for wizards and witches to adjust to the weakened magic outside of the warded area. They could still perform magic but it was greatly suppressed. Those living outside of the area could no longer perform complex spells. Reports of failed potions and accidental splinchings were being made to the Ministry. Port keys that were made at the Ministry and in-network floo transportation still worked but outside of that, the wizarding population were having trouble getting around. Most were traveling through the ministry out of fear of being injured by other means of transportation. The Ministry had turned into a station where people were arriving by floo or apparition so that they could floo or apperate to other areas. Portkey requests had tripled and everyone was calling for the Ministry to do something about it.

Harry smiled and said, “that doesn’t sound so bad. Everyone is adjusting.”

“Adjusting?” Lucius said sounding affronted. “I’ve gotten over a hundred requests to produce protection runes for various buildings and wizarding establishments. Most think that I can connect them to the Treeroot gate because they think I have had something to do with your actions.”
Ignoring her husband’s outburst Narcissa said “We had to release a statement to the daily prophet after Healer Relic was brought here to examine you. Word got out that he came to the house so we did it before the rumors went wild.”

“What did you tell the Prophet?” Harry asked. He didn’t really care what they had said, nothing could upset him today.

“That you had a bout of exhaustion after performing a complicated spell and that you wished for privacy and that you’d make a statement when a statement needed to be made.” Severus answered.

“Perfect.” He said. “I knew I could count on all of you.”

Lucius groaned and said “Mr. Potter, what do you plan on doing about the situation that you have caused?”

“There’s nothing to be done, Lord Malfoy.” Harry said wondering why he was back to being Mr. Potter. “At least not at this point. We’ll need to wait and see if other things have changed also.”

“What other things were you hoping would change?” Hermione asked.

“I would have thought that would be evident.” He said taking another bite of his treacle tart.

Draco smirked and said “I think I need you to explain it to us.”

Harry took and another bite and swallowed it before he continued “The purists are saying that the magic is thinning. That there has been a decrease in births to witches and wizard and an increase in squib and muggleborn births. You wanted the magic in england to be concentrated. You wanted wizard and witches in England to gain in power and numbers. As it was we were dwindling in numbers. Of course Voldemort helped with that between the two wars he started, but according to the Ministry reports on births our numbers were dropping anyway. I’ve read the history books. I know that Hogwarts, at one time, housed over a thousand students each year. There was only 237 students in the whole school during our fifth year before parents began pulling their children out. That number has been steadily dropping for the past few centuries.”

“You activated the gate so we could make babies?” Hermione asked in shock.

Harry chuckled and said, “Well, not you and me.” He winked at her.

“Harry.” She said, exasperated.

“I’m hoping that it will have some effect.” He said honestly, “I was also hoping that it would make it more difficult for us to expose muggles to our magic. That may have backfired on me a little but I’m not disliking the outcome. We will need to alter a few things which is what we are doing already and everyone will be back to their normal lives.”

“Except now they have to pass through the Ministry and tell them where they are going and when they will be back.”

“Why would they be doing that?” Harry asked, confused.

“To keep control over the situation.” Lucius said, still sounding annoyed with him.

“The Ministry is trying to keep track of the comings and goings of the witches and wizards?”

“Of course they are, Harry. The Ministry saw that as the perfect opportunity to regulate and track
those that may be breaking the law by exposing muggles to magic.” Severus said sounding clearly frustrated with the Ministry. “It’s been a pain in the ass the past few days as Hogwarts isn’t in the floo system anymore.”

“Well that’s going to have to be stopped. Did the Wizengamot vote on that or did Malone decided that on his own?”

“I believe that he may have took it upon himself to do it. Keep in mind that he suddenly had a lobby full of people requesting portkeys and complaining about the changes. I’m sure he used it as a deterrent to make people think twice about coming to the Ministry.” Lucius stated gruffly.

Harry sat and pondered everything that he had heard. Then a thought occurred to him “Have you looked at the arch since I activated it?”

Lucius shook his and said “They won’t let anyone near it. I’m not even sure they have looked at it.”

Harry sighed and said “I spent my whole lunch break casting that spell I heard you use at Hogwarts to make the symbols glow. I wanted to copy them down.” He laughed “I suck at drawing and the runes glowed so brightly that I could barely see them. I had to wait for them to dim a bit and try to sketch them before they faded again. It was extremely frustrating. I was tired and angry that I was rushing back to the Wizengamot, for what, so we could argue more? I tried casting the spell for Hogwarts ward stone in the air to see if I remembered it.”

“I read that spell off of the ward stone, Mr. Potter” Lucius reminded him. “It was meant for the Hogwarts Wards. It shouldn’t have worked elsewhere.”

“I did remember that but figured I’d give it a try anyway.”

“That was incredibly impulsive of you, Harry.” Severus said.

“I know but I felt as though it needed to be done.” Sighing he said “On my first try nothing happened so I tried again putting a little effort into it. The second time the arch glowed so brightly and I couldn’t see what was happening at first but then I could see the runic symbols were shifting and reorganizing themselves. When I saw them moving I tried to end the spell but found that I couldn’t. The arch was pulling my magic from me.” He popped the last bit of tart into his mouth. “I started to feel weak and just when I thought for sure I’d pass out the spell ended and a blast of power threw me backwards. I hit the wall and had the wind knocked from me. Next thing I knew the aurors were flooding into the room.” He laughed and said “I don’t know what I was thinking. I got into the lift and saw how upset everyone was and was actually a little annoyed. I went to the Wizengamot thinking I just needed to get through the rest of the day not even realizing that everyone else would be upset by what I did.”

“How could you not realize that people would be upset?” Lucius asked, incredulously.

He shrugged and said “I guess I just thought there was an earthquake or something. I don’t know, like I said I was exhausted.”

“We stepped outside to an apparation point and you fainted. We caught you and disapparated before anyone noticed.” Hermione said.

“I don’t even remember that.” Harry laughed. “I’m glad you were there.”

“Hermione had a storage shelf fall on top of her down in the archives. When I arrived the bodyguards were digging her out. She could have been killed.” Lucius said angrily.
“Oh, are you okay?” Harry asked with concern.

“Yes, I’m fine. It wasn’t that bad I just got buried in a bunch of old dusty parchments. It was shocking more than anything. I did find the tavern we were looking for though as we gathered up the papers.”

“That’s great news. What did you find?”

“The Treeroot inn.” She said casually.

“What? You’re kidding? Why didn’t we think of that before?”

Hermione shrugged “The inn was confiscated and turned into a government building”

“That seems like it’s a pretty important piece of history.” Harry stated.

“I was thinking the same thing but basically the inn keeper kept logs of those that checked into the Inn for the night. Several pages were from people staying over night then they turned into page after page of death reports of Magical people. So it wasn’t like an official decision but it turned into that later.”

“My family had several listings in the book with a mention of fire at the main house being the cause of death.” Draco added.

“And that would explain why there’s no written history from the time.” Narcissa added.

“Wow. That explains a lot. Was the gate still active then I wonder? I bet all those magical people dying affected its power. Doesn’t the Corosa Treeroot fable say something about other witches and wizards adding power to it to extend the protection over their families too? I bet when those families died the gate weakened further. Everything would have been chaotic and it would have gone unnoticed for the most part”

“We were thinking that the gate was a gate like the Leaky cauldron.” Harry nodded “The death chamber name probably originated around the fact that the innkeeper was keeping death records.” Hermione added.

“But all that doesn’t really explain why the magic is concentrated in the warded area. Could the wards be extended to cover all of The United Kingdom or even further?”

“We don’t even know what the wards really do or the area they cover.” Lucius stated.

“We’ll need to get a better look at the gate.” Harry stated firmly. “When can we go and see it?”

“That should probably wait a few more days. You should take some more time to recover and after what Hermione did I think it would be wise for us all to stay out of the public eye.” Lucius stated.

Harry could hear the anger in his voice still. They had all skirted around what Hermione had done to get the healer to the manor to see to him. “So, does someone want to fill me in on what Hermione did?” He asked cautiously.

Lucius scoffed at him before saying “She was completely reckless and nearly landed herself and that stupid Weasley boy in St. Mungo’s herself.” His frustration and anger still clear in his voice.

“What did you do, Hermione?”

She sighed and said “You were still unconscious. It had been almost a whole day. Neither Narcissa
nor Severus had any idea why but by their diagnosis you were completely fine; nothing was wrong with you except for the fact that you refused to be awakened. We tried several spells and potions to revive you and nothing worked. So I panicked.”

“Panicked? What she really means is that she didn’t trust that we had your best interest in mind when we refused to call for a healer.” Lucius stated. He stood from his seat and began pacing about the room.

Harry watched him a little surprised at his reaction but was even more shocked to see that Hermione was twisting her hands in her lap nervously looking at Severus. Narcissa was clearly tutting their behaviours but didn’t say anything.

“Hermione disapparated to the Ministry so she could floo directly to St. Mungo’s.” Draco said picking up where Hermione had left off.

Harry turned toward Draco and asked “Didn’t you say that the manor was outside of the ward and that it was dangerous to travel that way?”

“Yes. Many people have had apparition injuries since the gate was activated.” Severus added “That is why we were so upset that Hermione had attempted it.”

“I was really careful. I didn’t just run out the door. I put thought into it and pulled as much of my power as I could to do it.”

“Why did you go to the Ministry?” Harry asked.

“I knew I needed two portkeys to get back with the Healer. One to get me and him here and one to get the healer back to St. Mungo’s.”

“We could have made you a portkey here.” Severus said.

“I was wondering that. Why didn’t you?”

“We didn’t know we needed one. She didn’t tell anyone her plans, she just went.” Draco said, shaking his head at her. “See what I mean, though? Is that a Gryffindor thing or a you and your friends thing?”

Harry smirked and said “Definitely a ‘me and my friends thing’. Sorry, about that.” He said, shrugging sheepishly. “You got a portkey? Then what happened?”

“First off, I didn’t realize they could make a portkey. I thought it was illegal to make one without Ministry approval. I know better now.” She said shrugging. “When I got to the Ministry I found there were a lot of people there trying to do the same thing as me. I ran into Arthur Weasley. He was trying to get a portkey for the American Ministry office in Arizona. The portkey official was asking him all sorts of questions about how long he’d be there and why he was going. Arthur was skirting the subject not giving direct answers. Finally an Auror pulled him aside. I heard him ask Arthur if he knew where his son was and what he was up to. Arthur claimed he was home at the Burrow. I don’t think the Auror believed him but he thanked him and walked away. Arthur left right after that without ever getting the portkey made.”

“That was strange. Why would they care if Arthur wanted a portkey to the US?”

“I don’t think normally they would but it seems as though they were onto Mr. Weasley and didn’t want him to leave the country.” Lucius bit out angrily and added “you are lucky that they are not pressing charges against you or me in this matter.”
“I know, Lucius. How many times do I have to say I’m sorry? I didn’t think that it was going to cause this many problems.”

“What did you do that could have gotten you arrested, Hermione?”

“Well, I could only guess what was happening with the Aurors and Ron and why Mr. Weasley was acting so strange. So once I obtained my two keys I went to Gringots and withdrew seven thousand galleon and had it converted into American muggle money. The goblin at the bank said that it wasn’t much by American standards but it should be enough to get me to safety. He thought I was running away from the Malfoys.”

“If that ever gets out the press will have a field day with it. I can imagine the headlines now. Ms. Granger makes a run for it but is dragged home by her oppressors.” Draco said smirking.

Hermione frowned and said “Merlin, I hope that never happens. Especially after the way Lucius greeted me at the ministry.”

“If you’d just stop being so inconsiderate and doing stupid reckless things I’d never raise my voice to you again.” Lucius was practically yelling at her again. He motioned to her as he spoke to Harry. “You are a terrible influence on her, Mr. Potter. You bring the worst behaviour out of her and drive me to lose my control more than any person has ever done to before. Lord Voldemort has never even made me break my composure as much as you and this girl.”

“To be fair, Lucius. If you had lost your composure like this around Voldemort he would have killed you on the spot.” Severus said trying to calm his friend down.

“That’s not the point, Severus.” He stated angrily.

Harry nodded “I understand what you’re saying, I have that effect on people. I don’t really mean to, mind you.” He said trying to sound sympathetic to Lucius’ plight. “So Hermione, I’m guessing the money was for Ron. Did you ever find him to give it to him?”

“Yes. She found him.” Lucius stated from behind him.

Harry looked over his shoulder to where Lucius was pacing around the room. Still acting furious.

“I went from gringotts to St. Mungo’s and found Healer Relic. I convinced him he needed to come and see you and gave him the portkey. It turns out that St. Mungo’s can make portkeys too. There’s so much that they didn’t teach us at Hogwarts. It’s no wonder why so many muggleborns go back to the muggle world after school.” She said sadly. “I let Healer Relic come back alone as I needed to find Ron yet.”

“Is the Burrow still in the floo network?” Harry asked.

“I don’t really know.” Hermione stated. “I had decided that I was going to disapparate from St. Mungo’s to the Burrow so I went outside to the approved point when I ran into the same Auror that was speaking to Arthur. He asked me if I knew where Ron had gone. I played like I didn’t recognise him and told him I didn’t know but that I had overheard Arthur tell an Auror that he was at home.”

“They were following her.” Draco said angrily.

Hermione nodded and said “Harry, I think they knew that Ron had visited me the day before.”

“What makes you think that and why would they care?” Harry asked perplexed.
“I asked why they thought I would know where he was and the Auror said that since I had been in contact with him they were hoping he might have told me where he was going.”

“But that doesn’t explain why they care.” Harry said again.

“Well it’s obvious of course. Ronald has been showing off for his muggle. He’s been exposing her to magic. The auror department keeps close tabs on that. All magic is forbidden but some magic they will actually track you down and arrest you for.” Narcissa stated. “You at least must know that much.”

Harry nodded. “So Ron’s gotten the Aurors after him? I guess you caught up to him before they did?” he asked.

“It was more like at the same time.” She said shrugging. “I remembered he said he met her at a cafe near the ministry building. After I got away from the Auror I went to the Ministry and started wandering around looking for a cafe. I found Ron with his girlfriend, Dana. She’s really pretty. I was kind of surprised.”

“Did you get to meet her?”

“Yeah, but she wasn’t that nice to me. She had a few choice things to say about my lifestyle choices and how Harry Potter ruined the wizarding world. She told me I should be ashamed of myself for supporting you after all the people who died.” Hermione shook her head clearing the unpleasant thoughts away and said “I was trying to ignore her and talk to Ron but he didn’t want to speak to me. I finally got his attention when I told him an Auror had approached me and asked if I knew where he was. That’s when we noticed the Aurors coming down the alley.”

“He accused her of ratting him out to them. And she still gave him the money and helped him escape.” Draco said skipping ahead in her story.

“Helped him escape?” Harry asked shocked.

“What was I supposed to do let them arrest him and wipe his girlfriend’s mind clean?”

“Yes!” Lucius barked from behind Harry making him jump slightly. “That is exactly what you should have done.”

Hermione frowned. “We’ve been over this already, Lucius.” She sighed and said “I don’t know if the Aurors followed me or if they just happened to find us but they saw us and started to approach. We were surrounded. Ron accused me of leading them to him. He pulled out his wand and cast a few spells in the auror’s direction with Dana standing right there. I couldn’t believe he’d be so stupid. I panicked and pulled out my own wand and disapparated all three of us away. I took them to the airport that my parents used to fly in and out of all the time. I gave Ron the money and told him to leave as soon as possible then left him there with her. I have no idea if he ever made it out of the country or not.”

“The aurors think he did. They found a few very confused airport personnel that have time missing from their memories.” Severus added.

“How is that Hermione isn’t in trouble for helping him escape?”

“She went back to the ministry and told them what had happened. She gave a very convincing statement that she didn’t realize that the aurors were aurors and that Ron had told her he wanted to go to the airport right before they were approached in a dark alley by strange men.” Draco supplied. “Of course during this statement father and I showed up to collect her. When we heard what she had
been up to father lost it and began reprimanding her in the middle of the Auror department. As you know there’s a lot of purists and supremacists working for that department right now and I think they all felt as though she was going to be thoroughly punished when we got home. I even heard one of them say she wouldn’t be surprised if we needed a healer later.”

“They let us take her home and didn’t press any charges because they think I will be dealing out her punishment.” Lucius sat back down in his seat and said gruffly “as if I’d ever beat her like that.”

“The public doesn’t see it that way though. All they have seen is the evil death eater. They will think that Hermione has been beaten for her behavior.” Narcissa added sadly.

Lucius brushed away the thought. “So as you can see it would be better if we waited a few days before we went back to the Ministry.”

“Hmmm, and you wish to let them have the impression that you have beaten her?” Harry asked in concern. “Doesn’t that set a precedence for how others should treat those that are willing to live like this?” He said motioning to those around the room.

Lucius frowned and said “I didn’t think of it that way.”

“It’s never going to be ok to beat someone under your power, Lucius. Nor should it be ok for anyone else to do it either. If the purists want to live like this then they should be allowed to but not if they are going to fall into abusive behaviours. I won’t let that happen to our community.”

Hermione smiled at Harry with pride and said “I know you won’t, Harry. We just have to convince the rest of the wizarding world of that fact.”

“I feel that the sooner we make a public appearance the better.” Harry added. “Unless of course you find that there is something else holding us back.”

Lucius groaned and said “A discussion needs to be had regarding who ‘we and us’ is in your mind, Mr. Potter.”

Harry was taken aback at first. He sounded snide in his tone. As though he was speaking to someone whom he disliked greatly. He was reminded of his uncle when he spoke to him about going to Hogwarts. Harry frowned and looked around the room. No one was looking directly at him now and for the first time he realized that he had taken them all for granted. He sat up straighter in his chair planting both feet on the floor in front of him, arms resting on the chair as though he were sitting on a throne. “Yes, I suppose you are right. I would like to discuss who I would like to include in the we and us statements that I have been making.” He said with an eerie of authority.

Severus glanced at Harry and smirked. Harry had once again fallen into the position of ruler as though he was the New Dark Lord. He probably didn’t even realize he was doing it but his whole demeanor had changed as soon as he had been questioned by Lucius. He glanced towards Lucius and saw that he had taken in the change also. Lucius had paled as though he was about to be punished for having taken that tone of voice with Harry. He was keeping his eyes averted. Severus was reminded of Voldemort and how Lucius was often expected to grovel at his hem. He hoped that Lucius wouldn’t be forced to take that step again. Then he thought ‘but of course, Harry wouldn’t ask that of him. This was Lily Evans Potter’s son. The boy who saved the wizarding world. They would never be treated like that again.’ Severus cleared his throat and spoke before Harry had a chance to continue. “When you are considering those that you want to aid you, Mr. Potter, I would like to remind you that you have had my support for most of your life. I do not wish to be in the same position I was in with Dumbledore and Voldemort but it would be an honor to be considered part of your inner circle.”
Harry scoffed and said “Inner circle, Professor Snape? Again I’m being pushed toward the Dark Lord direction.”

Hermione frowned “Look at yourself, Harry. I’m afraid you are already there.” She said not wanting to upset him but seeing that he was sitting much like Voldemort had when he was addressing his inner circle.

Harry glanced down at how he was sitting in the arm chair and quickly corrected his posture slumping down and crossing his legs. “That’s nothing, Hermione. I was just sitting up so that I could think clearly.” He glanced towards Lucius who still looked like he was going to cower. He was holding himself steady but Harry got the distinct feeling that he was reliving Voldemort’s reign. “I’m never going to be like Him.” He stated firmly. “I don’t want to rule like that.” He said feeling very annoyed with himself. He thought to himself, ‘I don’t really want to rule at all but Hermione is right I’m already there.’ ‘At least Severus seems to think I am and Lucius and Hermione seem to be in agreement if their behaviour is any indication.’

“I don’t want people terrified of me, fearing that I will kill them for looking at me. I don’t want anyone groveling at my feet.” He said, coming to the conclusion that he was going to just go with it. What could he lose, nothing really. He sat up again and said “Lord Malfoy.” Lucius flinched making Harry feel angry with his behaviour. Harry paused, thinking that if that is how he’s going to act then maybe they would all be better if he ended his obligation to him. He started over and said “Lord Malfoy. Look at me when I address you.” He snapped. Lucius’ head snapped up and looked directly at Harry. “Your family and you have been a great aide to me these past few weeks and for that I thank you. Your continued aide would be much appreciated. However, if you would like to disentangle yourself and your family I would understand. I know that you have been through a lot these past few years and I wouldn’t force your service.”

Lucius felt a wave of relief flood over him. He would like nothing better then to separate his family from this new situation. His mind was quickly running through his options on what he could say and not sound negative against Potter.

Harry watched him expectantly, waiting for Lucius to give him an answer. He had had visions of him still being associated with the Malfoy family but never saw if they were political allies or not.

“Mr. Potter, Thank you for your understanding of my family's plight. I would very much like to, as you say, disentangle us from your service.” Narcissa let out a gasp from where she was sitting. Lucius turned and looked at her, surprised at her outburst. “We talked about this.” He said angrily.

“We did.” She stated firmly “and I made it perfectly clear that we were going to continue with our support.”

“But that was before he offered us an out. We agreed that we didn’t want to be involved with another Dark Lord. He’s saying that it’s ok if we don’t aide him further. Don’t you see this is our chance to be out of this madness.”

“Father, his political position will further the purists cause. He’s clearly going to need help with the politics of the Ministry. There is no one more suited to that position then you.”

“This is the opportunity that we’ve always hoped for, Lucius. Control over education, the Wizengamot, and the Ministry. We could really make a change.” Severus said trying to sway his decision.

Lucius frowned and looked back to Harry who was watching their exchange indulgently. He sighed feeling as though he was being pressured into service. Deciding that if he was going to have to do
this he would try and get some of his demands met. He stated firmly “I will not be made to do anything that I consider immoral.”

Harry nodded “I will never ask that of you.”

Lucius pointed to his son and said “He will not be involved in anything that will put him in any kind of danger nor will any of his offspring be forced into service to you for any reason.”

Draco scoffed and said “Father you can’t stop me from aiding Harry, I’m an adult. My offspring will have to make their own decisions. If they decide to work for him that’s entirely up to them.”

Lucius growled and said “My demand stands. He will not be involved.”

Harry looked at Draco who was seething at his father’s demands. “He will not be involved. You have my word.”

“You can’t be serious, Harry. Why can’t I be involved?” Draco demanded.

Harry sighed and said “You’re right. You’re father is the best man for the job and I would rest easier knowing that you and the rest of your family were safe.”

Draco harrumphed and crossed his arms grumbling something about being a trophy. Harry narrowed his eyes thinking that it was a strange statement but didn’t have a chance to examine it further as Lucius went on. He motioned to Hermione. “At this moment in time she belongs to me. She is my tool to be used as I see fit.” Harry frowned not really liking the way that Lucius was speaking about his best friend.

Narcissa chimed in and said “What my husband is saying is that he would like for you to ask permission before having Hermione to do anything for you.”

“I will not allow you to endanger her in anyway.” Lucius stated.

“I would hope to never ask anyone to do anything that might endanger them but as you probably know that doesn’t always work out that way.” Harry looked at Lucius and then Severus and said “Thank you both for your aide.” Severus inclined his head a little. Lucius nodded his acceptance. “Tomorrow, unless there is something else I should be made aware of, I would like for you, Lucius, to accompany me to the Ministry to examine the Gate. It would be helpful if Hermione came along. Not only to help with examining the gate but for her to make a public appearance with you. If possible it probably wouldn’t hurt if we could bring the bodyguards along.”
Early the next morning Kingsley Shacklebolt stood waiting in the lobby of the Ministry. He was surrounded by nearly every member of the Auror department plus several non-Ministry employees that were often used as support. The lobby had been cleared of all nonessential personnel. They were all impatiently awaiting the arrival of Harry Potter. Most of the wizards and witches were shifting nervously while they watched the main entrance. The tension was high and almost palpable.

Kingsley had been shocked the previous day, to receive an owl from Lord Malfoy advising him that Mr. Potter would be arriving today to examine the Gate in the Department of Mysteries. Lord Malfoy’s letter did not request permission, but simply stated that Harry Potter was coming to take a look at the Gate. No explanation as to why they needed to examine the Gate, just that he was coming. His arrogance that he assumed they would just let him have access to the Gate once again had infuriated Shacklebolt. Who did Potter think he was? Giving orders to everyone and experimenting on objects in the Ministry building. He must be insane. His actions over the past few weeks had obviously been too much for him. The long horcrux hunt, the final battle, and his near death experiences had clearly made him more unstable than they had all realized. Changing the magic in this part of the world had been the most irresponsible thing that anyone had ever done in Shacklebolt’s opinion. Even worse than aiding known criminals in their escape from Azkaban. Dumbledore’s faith in Harry could only carry him so far. Now Harry was at the end of his rope and it was time for them to reel him in.

Harry stood looking at a scarf in the entry hall at Malfoy Manor. It was an ugly green color with rough feeling wool. He couldn’t fathom why the Malfoy’s would have something so ugly lying about their house. “Where did you get this from?” He had asked but was told that it had just been lying around and that once it was used as a portkey it would be destroyed. He scrunched his nose up at the thought. They were heading to the Ministry department to examine the Gate. Lucius had sent word to Shacklebolt the previous day as a courtesy saying that they were coming this morning.

Hermione was standing next to Lucius and shifting nervously. Her agitation clear as they waited for the bodyguards to join them. “I’d feel better if Severus was coming along with us.” She stated, not for the first time as she twisted her hands together.

“There’s no need for him to come. This isn’t his speciality.” Harry stated again calmly.

“He already told you that he has a lot of work to do before the advanced term begins, Hermione”, Lucius added.

She nodded and took a death breath in attempt to calm herself down. “I’m worried there will be a crowded lobby that we’ll have to fight our way through.”

“Severus being with us won’t help with that. It will just give us one more person we’ll have to get through the crowd.” Harry said as he took her hand. “Try and relax. We’ll be there soon and then it
will all be over with."

Hermione gave him a weak smile “I hope you’re right.”

The bodyguards joined them in the hall. “Sorry, we are late, Sir. I had to send an owl to my pack telling them I wouldn’t be home tonight.”

Lucius nodded, accepting the apology and said “I do hope we won’t be that late but it was probably a good idea to plan ahead. Now, If you would both just take up the scarf I’ll activate the portkey.”

Simmons took the end next to Harry and asked “Are we arriving directly into the lobby or outside the building?”

Harry looked at Lucius and wondered if he was able to create a portkey powerful enough to get all five of them into the lobby of the Ministry.

Lucius frowned and said, “Normally the Ministry would be protected by wards that keep a person from apparating directly into the building. I think those wards have been deactivated and I’m banking on Mr. Potter’s magic allowing us access. I’ve made the key to place us by the elevators behind the fountain.” He took a deep breath and added, “If it doesn’t work it will kick us all back here and we’ll try again.” He looked around at those holding the scarf, making sure that the were all ready. Holding his wand at the ready he said, “Three, two, one.”

Harry felt the familiar tugging sensation in his belly and was reminded of how much he hated traveling this way. He was relieved when the world stopped spinning and the back of the fountain came into view. He looked to his left and saw Mr. Simmons staggering as he gained his footing and on his right Hermione was steadying Lucius. Mr. Balinchk was entangled on the floor with a person whom he had collided with when they arrived. Mr. Simmons moved to help his partner stand and aid the person he had fallen into. At first their audience went unnoticed but as the commotion ebbed they noticed the wands pointed in their direction. Mr. Balinchk reached for his wand but was quickly disarmed by the witch that was standing closest to him. Mr. Simmons held his arms up in surrender.

Harry frowned at the reception. He had expected a lobby full of people but not one in which wands were at the ready and pointing at him. He took a step forward. “Would someone like to explain to me why we are being received in this manner?” He asked angrily. The wizards and witches closest to him took a step back with their wands pointing at him in trembling hands. They could clearly feel the power emanating off of him and he could see that they were terrified that he was going to do something to them. He narrowed his eyes at them wondering exactly what was going on here.

Finally Shacklebolt stepped through the crowd and addressed him. “Mr. Harry Potter, you are being placed under arrest for damaging Ministry property. Please turn over your wand and cooperate with the aurors.”

Harry blanched. “Under arrest? You’ve got to be kidding me.”

“I’m afraid not Mr. Potter. Your wand please.” Shacklebolt restated, expecting Harry to cooperate. Auror Malone held out his hand hoping that Harry would just turn his wand over and not put up a fight.

Harry looked around at all the expectant faces in the lobby. He glanced over his shoulder at Hermione and Lucius. Lucius was being held at wand point as well, his own wand being held in an auror’s hand. Hermione had been pulled away from them. He noted that she was not being held at wand point. He wondered why but didn’t have time to explore it further. He hadn’t expected to make a move towards his new position so soon. He turned back to Shacklebolt taking a step closer to him...
and said quietly, “Think about what you are doing Shacklebolt. Arresting me will probably end your career. Are you really sure that this is what you want to do?”

He frowned and wondered what exactly Harry meant by ’end his career’. This was probably the first move to solidify his position of Minister of magic. After this he was likely to be voted in as permanent not just acting minister. Shacklebolt gulped but held his position and said “Please relinquish your wand to Auror Malone, Mr. Potter.”

Harry nodded and said loud enough for the whole lobby to hear. “It’s just as well Kingsley. It has recently come to my attention that you do not have the respect of your peers. They do not look to you for guidance.” Harry was shaking his head sadly. “And after all the work you have done with the Order of The Phoenix I had hoped that you would take up the mantel of Minister of Magic.”

Shacklebolt blanched. He was shocked to hear Harry make such a blatant declaration of his lack leadership abilities. He watched as Harry pulled his wand from his robes and handed it to Auror Malone.

Malone hesitantly took his wand looking at Shacklebolt for direction hoping that he would change his mind. “You understand, Mr. Potter, don’t you?” He asked. Hoping Harry wouldn’t hold him accountable.

Harry nodded and said “I understand, Frank, that you are following the acting Minister of Magic’s decision to have me arrested. You are just doing your job like you have always done even if you don’t feel it’s right or just.” Harry snapped at him angrily. “That pattern of thought lead us to the death eaters killing in the name of Voldemort.”

Malone paled. He handed Harry’s wand off to another auror and said, “I’ll have to place the restraints on you, also.”

Harry smirked at him and said “We both know they wouldn’t be of any use to you.” Harry turned around and allowed the restraints to be placed about his wrists. “And where do you plan on keeping me while you decide what to do with me?”

“You’ll be taken to the area we have made for those that are awaiting trial for their crimes.”

Harry laughed and said “So you can spend hours arguing over how I should be tried? Maybe you would like to reconsider letting us take a look at the Gate before you lock me away for an undetermined period of time. That is after all why we came here today.”

Shacklebolt shook his head and said “I don’t think it would be wise to allow you near the Gate again. Not after what you did to it the other day.”

Harry nodded his head and said “I see.” He looked around the lobby at the wizards and witches who had lowered their wands. “I can also see that you have clearly not thought this through, Kingsley.”

“What do you mean, Mr. Potter? I have thought this through. You have altered the magic of the land that we all draw our power from. You have caused massive damage to the floo network and affected how we use our gifts in certain parts of the country. You have exposed magical areas that have been hidden from muggles for centuries and made areas that were made of magic disappear from their site. You are guilty of muggle exposure on a massive scale.”

Harry laughed and said, “Is that what this is all about? You’re upset that the Muggle Exposure Department is overworked?” he kept chuckling as he said, “I know that the muggles are probably looking for an explanation Kingsley, but the Department for Muggle Exposure will just have to work
a little over time to clean it up.” He wiggled his wrists in the restraints, making them open and freeing himself from their grip. “Now, hand me back my wand so that Lucius, Hermione, and I can head on down to the Gate and get a look at the changes I made as we had planned.”

Shacklebolt spluttered indignantly. “Stop laughing, Mr. Potter. This is a very serious matter.” He motioned for the aurors to take him but none of them stepped forward.

Harry glanced at the aurors and back to Shacklebolt who was looking furiously at the aurors, who were not doing as he asked. Harry looked at Hermione who was still standing to the side by the elevators. She was too far away to aid him but Lucius was only a few feet away. He wanted him to be closer as he considered his bubble. “Lucius, please come here.” Lucius hesitated for only a second while he considered whether the auror that was guarding him would let him pass. Harry continued, “Kingsley, I do not intend on allowing you to arrest me today.” He pushed his bubble out enveloping Lucius and before anyone knew what was happening he held out his hand calling his wand to him. As his wand flew from the auror’s hand into Harry’s, Lucius’ wand flew threw the air and collided with Lucius’ chest. Lucius who hadn’t been expecting his wand to come flying to him fumbled for it briefly before gaining control of it and pointing it at the aurors surrounding them. Several of the aurors pointed their wands at them, ready to fire. “Lower your wands.” Harry commanded. Lucius obeyed immediately. “I have no intentions in dueling any of you.” He pocketed his wand. “Please return Mr. Simmons and Mr. Balinchk’s wands to them.” He watched as those around him lowered their wands and the bodyguards were given theirs back. “Lucius, Hermione.”

Lucius nodded in understanding and called to Hermione, “Come Pet.”

Hermione jumped to obey but one of the women standing with her took her arm, stopping her. Harry saw the women grab her and felt a spike of anger rush up his spine. “Release her!” He bellowed. The women jumped and let her go so quickly that Hermione stumbled forward. Once his party was standing behind him he spoke to the gathered crowd. “Kingsley Shacklebolt has made his declaration of his non support to my campaign today. You will have to decide for yourselves if you intend on following him and his corrupt bureaucratic Ministry or me as I clean up this mess of a Ministry that has been allowed to rot and fester.” Harry turned and walked towards the elevators with Hermione and Lucius at his side. He nodded to the bodyguards as he passed signaling them to take their positions. He asked quietly “Lucius, if we go down and look now, what are the chances we will be able to get out of here?”

“With your luck, very good.” Lucius said with a smirk.

As the lift doors slid closed they all breathed a sigh of relief. “That was some reception.” Mr. Simmons stated.

“I must admit I wasn’t expecting it.” Harry said plainly.

“That women told me that they were saving me from the horrible death eaters.” Hermione crossed her arms angrily. “She said they were going to help me escape from their oppression.”

Lucius frowned at Hermione. “I wonder what they are discussing right now? I’m sure that the department heads are gossiping about how Harry Potter made a stand against the ministry.” He said.

Harry asked shaking his head in disbelief. “I didn’t expect to be in this position so soon. What about the Wizengamot? I guess I lost my seat.”

Lucius scoffed and said “It takes more than a disagreement with the Minister to get removed from the Wizengamot.”
The doors of the lift slid open and the five of them walked casually to the end of the hall where the entrance to the death chamber stood. Two aurors were stationed at the doors with their wands at the ready. “Mr. Potter?” They both said in surprise as they came closer. They had thought that he was being arrested in the lobby. Harry made to walk past them but they stood blocking the doorway. “We were ordered to not let anyone in.” The auror on the left said nervously. He was wondering what Potter had done to the aurors in the lobby that he made it this far.

“I see.” Harry said nodding his head. “Well, I’m altering that order. You are going to let us in and not anyone else.”

The aurors looked at each other hesitant to follow his commands. The elevator doors pinged in the background. The body guards turned, pointing their wands at the doors. Lucius and Hermione followed suit by drawing theirs out too. Harry looked over their shoulders wondering what the next surprise would be. “Mr. Potter, hold up.” Auror Malone said as he rushed down the hall towards them. “You made quite an impression back there.” He said. “Everyone is in an uproar. Some people are resigning and others are calling for Shacklebolt’s resignation.” He motioned to the two aurors standing guard. “It’s ok. Mr. Potter and his party are here to examine the gate.”

“You said this morning that the Minister said not to let anyone in.”

“Right, but now I’m telling you that it’s ok to let them in. Now stand aside.” The aurors hesitantly stepped to the side allowing them to pass. As they entered the chamber the runes on the Gate were still glowing and casting a deep purple haze about the chamber. “Wow. I haven’t been in here since you changed it. What did you do to make it glow like that?” Malone asked.

Harry didn’t answer. He was mesmerized by the glow of the arch and the changes that could be seen. It was no longer shimmering on the inside but instead one could look right through it to the other side of the room. Runes glowed clearly on both sides of the gate now and the whispering sounds were gone. Harry approached it and wondered what would happen if he stuck his arm through it.

“Harry, Don’t!” Hermione cried in a panic as she watched him stick his arm through the gate. When nothing happened he tried walking through it.

“I wonder where this gate led to before. We had assumed it was in between somewhere but where was that.” He said thinking about Sirius’ body having been sucked into the gate. He sighed trying to shake off the sad feelings. “Lucius, what do you make of it now that we can see the runes?”

Lucius was eyeing the runic symbols on the front of the gate thinking that it was strange that they were more familiar symbols than those that had been only partially visible on the back side. “Harry, did you study runes at Hogwarts?” Harry shook his head no. He eyed Harry suspiciously before saying “If I’m reading this right the symbols on this side are declaring area covered but that center symbol seems odd to me. I’ll have to do some research into it.” He walked around to the back of the gate where the symbols had only been partially visible before. Now they were clearly visible but had changed. “How did you know what runic symbols to use if you haven’t studied them before?” Lucius asked as he noted the changes in the markings.

Harry shrugged and said “I cast the same spell from Hogwarts. I was thinking about how I thought the gate must have worked before and tried casting the spell.” Harry stood looking at the back with Lucius. The markings still looked liked doodles to him but he knew that the drawings done in the right pattern and with magic could create powerful wards and spells. “That one at the top looks like the Deathly Hallows symbol don’t you think, Hermione?”

Hermione stepped up next to Lucius “I suppose it does. Why would that appear on the arch?” She
asked, directing her question to Lucius.

He shook his head and said “I really don’t know.” He took her hand and led her around the side of
the arch and pointed to the center symbol there. “Do you recognize that mark?” He asked.

Hermione flinched and said “It’s the symbol for dark magic but why would that be here?”

Lucius shook his head and said “I’ve no idea. It seems very odd to me but keep in mind that it’s only
evil if it’s used for evil. There’s a whole realm of dark magic that can be used for good.” He looked
at Harry and asked “Did you know that symbol represented dark magic?”

“No. I had no idea. Is there a symbol for light magic?” He looked at both of them for an answer.

“You really should have taken Runes with me Harry.” Hermione said in admonishment.

Harry frowned and said “I didn’t think I’d ever need it.”

“The symbol for light magic is a circle with seven lines coming out of the sides of it. Kind of like a
rude drawing of the sun.” Lucius stated feeling frustrated with Harry and his lack of knowledge.

Harry examined the markings further and declared “I don’t see anything that looks like a sun.”

“I don’t either.” Lucius said still suspicious of what that could mean.

“If these markings identify area could we change them to increase the coverage. Can we make them
cover all of Britain or maybe even further?”

Lucius sighed and said “Yes, I suppose we could if we could figure out how to change them.”

Harry motioned to Hermione “Give Lucius the quill and ink from your bag.” She handed him the
supplies as Harry conjured a table for him to write on.

“You’re not going to change the gate again are you?” Malone asked nervously.

Harry smiled at him and said “I was hoping to fix some of the problems we are experiencing. Things
like suppressed magic and loss of floo connections.”

Malone nodded and asked “You think you know how to do that?”

Harry shrugged and said “I’m going to try.” Lucius handed Harry the parchment paper. He sighed
and said “That seems like a lot of changes. You’ve made changes to every symbol.”

“Did you study ley lines in school, Harry?” Harry frowned. Lucius sighed and went on “Well ley
lines are alignments of places of significance. They are ancient straight trackways in which veins of
magic can be found. Places where the lines intersect are given symbols that can be used as runes for
wards and other spells. I’ve changed the local symbols out for ones that are further away. For
instance this Rune is the symbol for an intersection by Grimsby and this one is on Faire Isle.”

Harry pursed his lips thinking about the changes “I had thought I’d just be changing one or two of
them.”

The door to the chamber opened making everyone but Harry jump and reach for their wands again.
Harry calmly turned to see who was coming in. One of the Aurors who had been stationed outside
looked around the room for Auror Malone. “Malone, the Weasley’s are insisting that they be allowed
to enter. They say they are here to support Mr. Potter.”
Harry turned to Hermione and asked “What do you think about that?”

“I’m not sure.” She said looking at the door thinking of everything that could go wrong.

“Let them in.” Harry said to Malone. “Let’s see what they have to say.” The auror opened the door letting Arthur and Percy into the chamber. Arthur looked more frazzled than usual but Percy still had the confident cocky air about him. “Arthur, Percy. How are you today?” Harry asked politely.

Percy held out his hand to shake Harry’s, “That was some performance this morning, Harry. You sure do know how to shake things up.” Harry shook his hand and then Arthur’s, who seemed reluctant at first. “Shacklebolt left shortly after you came down here. People are calling for his resignation. Shame really, he would have been a good minister.”

“What are you doing down here, Arthur?” Malone asked.

Arthur cleared his throat before answering “I decided, or should I say we decided that we wanted to side with Harry. We came down to see what we could do to aid him.”

“We’ve been arguing with the aurors to let us in for a while.” Percy added. “I told Shacklebolt before he left that I was resigning as his assistant.”

“That was presumptive of you wasn’t it, Percy?” Hermione asked.

Percy frowned and said “I’ve been an assistant to the last three Ministers. I even worked with Voldemort’s people. If Harry doesn’t want my assistance then I’ll find another job. I’m sure with my skills that won’t be a problem.”

“I’ve worked for the ministry in some form or another since the year I graduated from Hogwarts. I don’t know what else I’m qualified to do.” Arthur said, his concern clear in his voice.

Lucius turned away from them and said so that only Harry could hear “They probably wanted to side with you so that they could influence you to their wishes or at the very least keep an insider’s eye on you.” Then Lucius said loud enough for everyone to hear “Harry, Percy is right. He could be very helpful.”

Harry nodded, understanding Lucius’ meaning. “I don’t see why you wouldn’t be able to continue in your current position, Arthur.”

Arthur frowned and said “I resigned thinking that I would have to in order to side with you.” He looked around the room and asked “What did you do to reactivate the gate?”

“We were just discussing that now. I need to make some changes to it.”

“What else are you going to do, Harry?” Percy asked with concern.

Harry frowned and said “Hermione, can you explain it to him? I really need to concentrate on the changes.” Harry focused on the symbols on the parchment only half listening to Hermione when he heard Arthur say something about Ron. He turned and looked at them trying to hear what they were saying. When he still couldn’t make it out he asked “What did you say about Ron?”

“I was just telling Hermione that Ron left a trail of muggles that needed their memories modified on his way to the US. As soon as Ron and Dana landed they were taken into custody. The American government regulates witches and wizards in their country. They don’t have a separate government like we do. They are a lot stricter on punishments when muggles are over exposed. We heard from him that he was under arrest but okay. The American authorities told us that we’d be notified when
we could see him again."

“They are holding British citizens?” Harry asked appalled.

“I’m sure Dana was given the option to return home if she liked but she probably knows that she’d be oblivated if she chose to do so.” Percy said matter-of-factly.

“She thinks she’s pregnant too. Did Ron tell you?” Arthur asked Hermione.

“No! She had some not so nice things to say to me so I didn’t really get a chance to talk to her or him. They just met. How could she be pregnant already?”

“They’d be wise to claim sanctuary after what happened this week.” Lucius added.

Harry turned and looked at him sharply “What’s that supposed to mean?”

“Well, I’m just saying you’ve changed things. The laws are going to change too and Ronald won’t be happy with some of those changes. He could probably get some help from their government to relocate there in the US if he says that he needs sanctuary.”

Harry frowned and refocused his attention to the parchment not liking the idea that a wizard felt as though he needed sanctuary from his own government. He handed the parchment back to Lucius and said “I think I’ve got them memorized pretty well.” He pulled his wand out and looked over his shoulder “I’m going to give it a try. Stand back.” He said to everyone. Thinking about the Hogwarts spell and the changes he wanted to make to the Runes he cast the spell. A bolt of purple light shot from the end of his wand. The glow from the gate became blinding again making everyone shield their eyes and look away. Harry thought through all the changes that Lucius had suggested as he felt his knees weaken again. He broke the spell this time ending it when he wanted to and not when the gate was finished with him. He fell to his knees in front of the gate waiting to feel the blast that he experienced before. When it never came he looked up and saw that the runes had changed. He smiled and said triumphantly “I did it!” Lucius and Hermione stepped up next to him and offered to help him up. Harry stood on wobbly knees holding onto Hermione for support. He was looking to Lucius to see if he was satisfied with the changes.

Lucius turned to Harry and said “You will never cease to amaze me. If this worked we should be able to floo to the Manor and Hogwarts.”

Harry nodded and said “I don’t feel any where near as drained as I did last time. I hope that doesn’t mean it didn’t work.”

“Hermione, take the bodyguards to the lobby and try it out.” Lucius ordered as he took Harry’s arm.

“Percy, go with her and see if we can get to the Burrow.” Arthur conjured an arm chair for Harry to sit down in.

Lucius frowned not sure if he liked the idea of Percy going with her. “Give her a few moments. I’ll work on the other side.” Lucius moved the table around and began noting the runes as Arthur and Malone discussed their hopes for changes. “I’m certain that this rune is the one that makes magic invisible to Muggles but directly on the other side is the reverse marking that I’m sure makes it visible. It makes no sense why would both be on the same ward stone.” Lucius said from where he was standing.

Harry shrugged and laughed “Probably because I didn’t know what I was doing.”

“I think if we move it around we should be able to fix the buildings that are visible that shouldn’t be
and make the invisible ones visible again.”

“Maybe that can wait for tomorrow.” Harry said weakly.

Lucius looked through the arch at him and asked “Are you ok?” Harry was looking rather pale. He was sitting in the armchair slouched down like he was going to slide out of it.

Arthur’s attention returned to Harry. He handed him a chocolate frog from his pocket. “I know it’s not the good stuff that Remus carried around but it should help a little.”

Harry opened the package and ate the frog as though he was starving. He looked at the card and held it up excitedly and said “I got myself. How fast do they make these things? I didn’t even know that I was getting a card.”

Lucius smirked and said “Of course you have a card.”

“I wonder if Severus will get a card.” Harry mused out loud.

“He should but probably won’t.” Lucius said with regret, “He’s always being swept under the carpet or overlooked. Although, he does sometimes prefer it that way.”

“Thanks for the Chocolate Arthur. I do feel a little better. I should probably get a real meal into me soon.”

Hermione and Percy burst through the door. “The floos are back up.” Hermione stated happily. “I even tried Hogwarts and they seem to be working just fine now. Severus was in a meeting with several staff members when I entered his office. I got to meet the new DADA teacher. She seems really nice. And Professor McGonagall says hello.”

Harry smiled and said “That’s great. Well that’s one problem fixed. I hope that fixes a few of the other problems, also.”

“There’s still a crowd in the lobby. There are some aurors in the lobby saying that Harry Potter is their boss now and that they only take orders from him or Malone. Did you do that, Auror Malone?” Percy asked. He was surprised to hear that the whole auror department had turned supporters of Harry’s so easily especially after the run ins they had had with him over the past few weeks.

Malone smiled and said “I didn’t get a chance to tell you. I told Shacklebolt that the Auror department was no longer taking orders from him. I think that’s why he left in such a huff.” Harry groaned not wanting to have taken such a large step so soon. Malone went on “Hardly anyone in my department wanted to arrest you this morning and when we saw how you handled it I think we all decided that we’d be better off with you anyway.”

Arthur frowned and said “I wish I had thought of that.”

“We’ll get it sorted out, Arthur.” Harry said confidently.

Percy smiled and said “I think that’s where I can be of help. When do you want to hold the next Wizengamot meeting? I’ll send owls out to everyone. Then you can make appointments with the department heads and decide who needs to be dismissed and who needs to be reappointed.”

Harry frowned and said “Did I take control of the Wizengamot too? Can I call for a meeting?”

Lucius smiled and said “Mr. Potter, I think you can probably do anything that you want to do.”
Harry nodded and said “You are probably right. How much notice do they need before a meeting?”

“The Ministers usually liked to give at least 12 hours but as you know personally, Harry, they were willing to change the times in as little as an hour if it suited them.”

Harry stood up and walked around the gate again. “Lucius, what change did you want to make. I’m feeling better I’d like to try them today after all.” Harry said.

“Are you sure?” Harry nodded. Lucius sighed and handed him the parchment. “As you can see there’s only a couple of changes and one addition.. I think if we switch these two symbols the muggles won’t be able to see what we don’t want them to see.”

Harry pointed to a rune that he thought he recognized from somewhere and asked “What will this rune do?”

Lucius smiled and said “It’s a fertility rune. I know that’s something you wanted and I don’t see that any of the runes that appear here already give any kind of boost to that so I thought we’d add it.”

“Where have I seen this before?” He asked.

“I couldn’t tell you.” Lucius said frowning “If you don’t want to add it that won’t change anything.”

Hermione glanced over Harry’s shoulder looking the rune “Harry, do you remember the book that I found that had crop formations from the Malfoy and Treeroot farms? That was one of the crop circles in that book.”

“I imagine our ancestors were probably trying to make their livestock and crops more prolific but it will have the same effect on us.”

“Will it affect muggles too?”

“Everyone in the warded area. I don’t know of a way we could single out just wizards.”

“Lucius, will it affect things like our birth control methods?” Hermione asked with concern.

Lucius frowned pondering her question not entirely certain of the answer.

“Harry, I really don’t think we should be messing around with reproduction of magical people.” Arthur said. “A lot of unwanted children could be born.”

Harry continued to stare at the parchment thinking about the consequences of adding a rune that could affect the magical population. He considered Arthur’s overly large family and how they had struggle to pay for things but how the Malfoys had only had one child even though they had wanted more. He considered the new laws that they were developing that would protect and provide for magical children. The laws were originally meant for muggle born children but they could easily be changed to include children of witches and wizards. Harry handed the parchment to Lucius. He drew his wand out and pointed it at the gate and cast the spell. The gate glowed brightly, temporarily blinding all those that were present. He finished the spell and stood on shaky legs. “That’s getting easier and easier. I really do need to get some lunch now though.” He turned to Percy and said “I need a pamphlet written warning everyone that their fertility may have been affected due to the changes in the Gate. Lucius, can I ask that Narcissa and you prepare a statement for me to make to the papers. I think it would be better to have a bit of a script when I talk to them so I don’t sound stupid. I’d like to make the statement after the Wizengamot meeting, how soon do you think you could have that prepared?”
“I’m sure we could have it ready by the morning. Will you be willing to aid us in the writing?”

“Of course, I don’t expect you to read my mind. We’ll discuss what I want it to say and you can word it properly.” He looked around the room taking in it’s occupants. Hermione was beaming at him. He felt his heart jump at the thought of how she had made it through the war, alive and happy. Arthur was looking worriedly at Percy. Harry could only assume that he was concerned at the thought of losing him again. Percy was scribbling away on a parchment not even paying attention to the other occupants of the room. Malone was chatting with the bodyguards by the entrance to the chamber. Harry suddenly remembered what the aurors were doing to people passing through the lobby. “Auror Malone, it was brought to my attention that the auror department was interrogating witches and wizards that were passing through the lobby.”

“We were but now that the gate seems fixed we shouldn’t have to do that.”

“I don’t want our citizens to feels as though they have no privacy. Don’t do that again without clearing it with me.” He stated firmly. Then he amended “Unless of course there’s some state of emergency.” Malone nodded in understanding. Harry started for the door “Let’s go. I feel like we’ve been in here forever. Percy, let’s see if we can get the Wizengamot here at 9am tomorrow morning. Send me a copy of the pamphlet once it’s written. I’d like to get it into the Prophet as soon as possible.” As they exited the chamber Harry turned and looked at the guards. “I want this chamber kept locked and guarded at all times. No one is to enter without my express permission. Malone, I want specific aurors assigned to this station. People you can trust to follow their orders. Rotate them out as often as you can so they don’t get bored and lackadaisical.”

Malone nodded and asked the aurors “You men okay? Do you need a break or anything?” Both men nodded saying they were okay.

Harry turned and walked briskly down the hall towards the elevators. About halfway down the hall he stopped mid step as a vision passed over him. The others nearly collided with him not expecting him to stop so suddenly.

“Mr. Potter are you okay?” Malone asked after several moments. Arthur and Percy were looking at him in concern.

“He’ll be fine just give him a minute. I’m sure it will be brilliant.” Hermione said watching him expectantly. Lucius took her hand and kissed the back of it smiling at her. She beamed at him.

“Who’s in charge at Azkaban?” Harry asked suddenly. “Does that fall under the auror department? Are there dementors still there?”

Malone was surprised at his sudden question. To him it seemed to come out of the blue. He answered hesitantly not sure where he could be going with this line of questioning. “It does fall under the auror department and yes the dementors are still there.”

“I want them replaced with wizards and witches immediately. It should have been done already but I thought the Wizengamot had to do it. Now I can see that I can do it just as well. Once we have them sorted the dementors can go back to guarding.”

They all piled into the lift. “I expect that you three will spread the word that all departments should go back to business as normal. I don’t really want there to be any further interruption of service to our citizens.” Malone, Percy and Arthur nodded. “If I’m needed for anything I’m currently staying at Malfoy manor.” The lift arrived at the lobby and the doors opened to the familiar vision of witches and wizards milling about doing their jobs. Harry breathed a sigh of relief he was almost afraid that they would greeted at wand point again. As they reached the floos he turned back to Arthur, Malone
and Percy and said “I really appreciate your support. I really believe that we are finally taking a step in the right direction.”

Lucius called into the floo “Malfoy Manor.” Opening the connection to his home. He held out an arm for Harry to step through followed by Hermione.

Harry stepped out into the receiving room of the manor. He was a little surprised at how easy the travel had been. Hermione stepped into the room behind him followed closely by Lucius. “Is it just me or was that a lot easier then it normally is? Usually I feel like I’ve been jostled around like a rock in a shoe box.”

Lucius looked back at the floo and said “It’s not just you. That felt a lot like walking from one room to another. Normally it’s a very rough form of transport.”

Hermione smiled and “I was surprised myself. I don’t even feel as dusty as I normally do after floo travel.”

Teks appeared and informed them that lunch would be ready in five minutes. Harry’s stomach grumbled at the mention of food. “I wonder if our changes worked. We know the floos are fixed but what about some of the other things.” He called out “Kreacher.” The house elf appeared at his side three seconds later. “Kreacher, thank you for coming so quickly. Have you come from Grimmauld Place?”

“Yes, Master Harry. I was working on the bedroom of Master Regulus.” Kreacher said sadly.

“Oh, I see. Thank you for cleaning that room Kreacher.” Harry said knowing that it was probably hard for him as Regulus was his favorite master. “Well, I was wondering if you saw or felt any changes to the house while you were there?”

“Yes, the house is no longer visible to the muggle neighbors. I felt the charm pass over it again about an hour ago.”

Harry smiled and said “That’s great news. Thank you, Kreacher.” Kreacher disappeared with a pop. “I guess he’s still ticked with me.” Harry said, chuckling at the elfs abrupt departure.

Narcissa and Draco entered the room. “So how did that go? We heard you fixed the floos but what about everything else?” Draco asked as they walked to the dining room.

Hermione began recounting the morning’s events and how Harry had taken over the Ministry. Narcissa was shocked at how easy it had been.

“They are ready for leadership that will make changes. I’m sure that’s why it was so easy.” Harry said modestly

“And the fact that they think you might be as powerful as Voldemort himself. There’s a certain amount of fear that comes with that respect.” Lucius added.

Harry shook his head “If that’s what they think, they are going to be disappointed. I’m never going to be able to elicit the fear that Voldemort did. I’m not going to be able to treat people like that.”

“You won’t have to, the auror department will handle that for you.”

Harry frowned “I never considered using them for that but I guess that makes sense.” He stretched and added “I could use a nap. Lucius do you think Narcissa and you can work on the speech a little while I rest? Then we can finish it right after dinner?”
“Yes, I think that would be fine. I have a few ideas we can start on.”

“Thank you.” Harry rose from the table and started from the room.

“Wait up, Harry. I’ll walk you to your room.” Draco said racing to follow him out of the room.
Play Date

Chapter Summary

Harry and Draco finally get it on.

Chapter Notes

This chapter could be completely skipped and you wouldn't really miss much in the story line. Its complete smut. It shows a level of darkness in Harry. There's mentions of MPREG with cum and spit play. I enjoyed writing it and hope you all enjoy reading it.

“Wait up, Harry. I’ll walk you to your room.” Draco said racing to follow him out of the dining room.

“What’s going on, Draco?” Harry asked a little annoyed that he was being held up.

Draco hesitated for a moment before answering suddenly feeling apprehensive. “I was wondering if you know … if you thought this was a good time.”

Harry stared at him blankly for a moment trying to figure out what Draco was getting at then the realization of it hit him. “What now?” He asked almost stupidly then corrected himself and said “of course you mean now. I hadn’t thought about it. Frankly it was the furthest thing from my mind. I didn’t sleep great last night and I’m still feeling drained from all this complicated magic I’ve been doing.”

“Oh.” Draco said feeling crushed. He had been trying to find time to spend with Harry for the past few weeks. Ever since the day of the battle when they shared a kiss. They had said that they wanted to explore it further but it seemed that it was never the right time.

Harry felt bad for turning him away again. He could clearly see that he had hurt his feeling. “Listen, I’m going to shower and then lay down for a bit. Why don’t you come up and hang out with me?” Harry said with a wink and an encouraging smile.

Draco smirked and said “hangout? As in literally or figuratively.”

“We can see where things go.” Harry shrugged and started for the stairs.

Draco bust out laughing and followed him. “Okay. I’m sure we can find a place for everything. Although it might be hard.”

“I’m sure we can squeeze it in.” Harry was saying as he reached his door.

“Everything will come out okay in the end.” Draco said laughing as he followed Harry to his room. Harry walked into his bedroom and began taking off his shoes. He was feeling exhausted but he was looking forward to spending this time with Draco.
Draco sat down on the bed watching him kick off his boots and shrug out of his layers of clothing.

Harry was pulling off his the last of his coverings when he glanced at him. “Are you enjoying the show.” He said sarcastically.

Draco smiled and said “It’s just getting to the good part.”

Harry stood in his undershirt and boxers looking at him expectantly. “Well show’s over turn around so I can finish getting undressed.”

“You realize that eventually I’m going to see you naked don’t you?”

Harry thought about that for a minute “I suppose you’re right, Malfoy.” He said putting emphasis on his last name since Draco had used his.

“And you were unconscious in our home for nearly 3 days what makes you think I didn’t get to see you then?”

“What? You peeked at my body while I was sleeping?” Harry asked suddenly feeling violated.

“No, I didn’t.” He crossed his arms in mock anger “Hermione wouldn’t let me.”

“Ah, well, good.” He said feeling relieved “I’ll have to remember to thank her for that later.”

“I did get a look at your tattoo though.” Draco said smirking.

“My what?”

“Or should I say your gross lack of a tattoo. Most of the school was convinced that you had a tattoo of that Hungarian Horntail on your chest. I told them that there was no way you’d do be into that kind of thing but I wasn’t really sure.”

“Ginny spread that rumor one year when she wanted the girls to think that she was doing more with me then she really was. She told everyone that Ron and I had gone together to get them and that he had a pygmy puff which he doesn’t.”

Draco smiled and said “I would have believed the pygmy puff story.” He sighed and added “I will never get another tattoo for the rest of my life. One was enough and if I could I’d have it removed.”

Harry stood in front of him taking his left hand in his. Draco tried to pull his hand back not wanting him to see the ugly mark that was forced on him. “I want to see it.” Harry said his tone didn’t leave room for argument. Draco hesitated before relaxing and allowing Harry to pull his arm to him and push up his sleeve. As Harry examined the mark Draco felt sick to his stomach. He rarely ever looked at the mark even going so far as to avoid it when he changed his clothes or showered. The skull and snake could still be seen but they were blurred and faint.

Draco flinched when he felt Harry run his fingers over it. “Don’t do that please.” Draco said flinching as Harry continued to trace the skull.

“I feel like I could change it. Make it something more pleasant to look at.” Harry said ignoring Draco’s pleas.

“Change it?” Draco asked. Harry nodded as he pressed on his skin shifting the mark around. “What would you change it too?” Draco asked almost sounding appalled.

Harry shrugged “I don’t know maybe a ferret would be nice.” He said teasingly.
Draco tried to pull his arm away saying “Haha, funny Potter. Gimme my arm back.”

“No,” he said pulling his arm more firmly to him. “I’m serious, Draco. I’m sure I could change this to something more pleasing.”

“What and mark me like Voldemort did? I don’t think so. I’ll just keep the inert mark.” He said angrily.

Harry shrugged and released his arm. “I wouldn’t have made a mark to control you like that.” Draco pulled his sleeve back down feeling awkward. “I’m sorry, I didn’t mean to kill the moment.” Harry said feeling bad about putting a serious spin on their fun.

“It’s ok. I’m a little sensitive about it. I could see that things were going from bad to worse when it was decided that I should receive the mark. I didn’t want to do it. And then, after Dumbledore’s offer to help us escape, I begged my parents to flee the country and they refused. Later when we heard that the deserters were being hunted down and killed I knew that it was better that we didn’t run. It didn’t make serving him any easier though.” He said sadly as he rubbed the mark through his shirt.

“No. I imagine that it didn’t.” Harry pulled his t-shirt over his head and tossed it at Draco. “I’m going to jump in the shower now. Care to join me?” He strode into the bathroom leaving Draco to his morose thoughts and hoping that the change of subject would pull him from them.

Harry stood under the hot water letting it wash away all his tension. In an act of spontaneity he had invited Draco to join him but he had been in here for a while and was thinking that maybe Draco had decided not too. He was feeling rather nervous as he had never been with another person in such an intimate way. Sure he had snogged and fondled before but never naked skin to skin. The thought was thrilling and arousing but it was also making him nervous. He laughed to himself thinking ‘I defeated a dark lord. I’m sure I can manage this.’ He felt a burst of cool air wash over him making his nipples tighten as Draco stepped into the shower with him. Harry glanced at his body immediately noting all the scars that marred his skin and his erection jutting up proudly between his long legs. Harry turned to face him and forced himself to ignore the marks that he had been witness to their creation. Nervously he lifted his hand and placed it behind Draco’s neck pulling their foreheads together. “I was thinking that maybe I had killed the moment entirely. It took you long enough to get in here.” He said looking deep into his silver eyes.

“Nope, I was just taking care of a few things.”

“Things?” Harry asked curiously.

“You’ve never done this before, have you?”

“No, never. Not even with a girl.” Harry shook his head. “Is that going to be a problem?”

Draco smiled “No it’s just going to be so much more fun.” He pressed his lips to Harry’s.

Harry’s confidence returning he opened his mouth and sneaked out his tongue to taste Draco’s lips. He tasted minty like he had just brushed his teeth. Harry smiled remembering the amortia potion in Slughorn’s class. At the time it had smelled of things that reminded him of Ginny but now he was certain it would smell of mint and spice and Draco.

The hot water was still pounding against their bodies as they continued kissing. Harry pulled away and reached for the soap. “I had time to wash myself while I waited for you.” Once he had a good lather worked up in his hands he started with Draco’s chest gently soaping over the scars. Running delicately over the Sectumsempra scar which he had given him in their fifth year at Hogwarts. It felt...
like ages ago. The scar was large and ugly but it was nothing compared to the little scars that riddled his body. He could clearly remember seeing him receive each and everyone of them through Voldemort’s eyes. Harry closed his eyes trying to push the memory away but it was no use. It was a few days after Hermione was left behind at the Manor that Voldemort had tortured Draco forcing him to watch through their connection. Harry was really upset about it for days afterwards being completely incomprehensible even though Ron and Luna had tried. He had never admitted to anyone what really had him so upset.

Draco took his hands in his and said “Please don’t. They don’t bother me don’t let them bother you.”

Harry nodded and said “I can still see many of the things that Voldemort forced into my head but this was the worst he ever showed me.”

Draco gave a derisive snort and said “I’m sure it’s not the worst thing he ever did.”

“No, but it was the worst for me. I think what made it even more disgusting was that he was deriving sexual pleasure from it.” Harry turned Draco around and started on his back. He was ready to confess and he didn't think he could look Draco in the eye when he did. Draco placed his hands on the wall to give Harry full access to his body. “But the most shameful thing of all for me,” Harry continued as he was running his soapy hands over his back and arms.” was that because of his and my bound I was forced to orgasm several times during the night with him.” He leaned forward and nipped at his ear as he said “and I think I might have liked it.”

Draco tensed and said “You never said anything about that before. I knew you had a bound with him and that you saw what he was doing to me but never that you could feel what he was feeling.”

Harry nodded and went on “I was so angry with him.” He trailed off as he traced a particularly long scar down his side with his index finger remembering how Voldemort had used a dagger to create it. “And with myself for feeling the way I did. Sometimes” He continued as he was running his soapy hands over his back and arms. “I worry that a small part of me actually likes that kind of perversion.” He moved his hands down to Draco’s ass cheeks stroking him from the top of his thigh up to his lower back where his fingers traced over a set of scars that he could remember Voldemort carving into his back with his long yellow nails as he was fucking him. He sighed as he moved on sliding his hands back down he cupped his ass letting his fingers brush over his little bud of an anus. “I think about how Hermione seems to enjoy it with Snape, or at least that’s what I’ve been told, and I think I might enjoy that too.”

Draco’s breathing had increased and he wasn’t sure if it was from his fear or his arousal. He hadn’t thought that Harry could have a sadistic streak. The idea that he might have provocatives such as those that Voldemort enjoyed was terrifying to him. He felt Harry's fingers run over his but crack again. Draco gasped as his soapy finger pressed against his anus. “Harry, I can’t give you that.” He said nervously knowing that if Harry wanted to do something like that he wouldn’t be able to stop him.

Harry leaned forward pressing his erection against Draco’s hip wrapping his arm around his waist pulling him firmly against his body. He slipped his soapy finger into his anus breaching his sphincter and whispered into his ear “Give me what, Draco? You can’t let me fuck your ass or you won’t let me carve you up while I’m doing it?” He bit down onto his ear biting it hard enough to cause him pain as he continued to frott against Draco’s hip clearly aroused as he was exploring the scars on his body. When he could tell Draco was having trouble thinking pulled back releasing his ear with a pop and said “Well, are you going to answer me?” He asked snickering at Draco’s dilemma.

Draco’s brain was beginning to feel scrambled by the way Harry was playing with him. “You can fuck me but please don’t carve me up while you do it.” He gasped out in a rush. Harry snorted and
withdrew his finger. “Merlin, Harry, I thought you said you’ve never done this before.” Draco sighed in relief as Harry eased off a little.

Harry rubbed against his hip again and said “I haven’t but I’ve seen it done and I had a lot of time to think about how I would like to do it.” He drew his hand across his stomach letting his nails scrape over his taut muscles making them quiver in their wake. He reached for his arm and said “And I think I’d like for you to stroke my cock.”

Draco let Harry take his hand and guide it to his cock. He gripped Draco’s hand around the base of it guiding it up and down before letting go then trailed his fingers up Draco’s stomach and chest ending on his jaw where he returned to kissing him on his neck. Harry nibbled and sucked hard enough that he was sure to be leaving little love bites on him.

Draco continued to stroke him exploring his length. His cock was much thicker than his own but not as long. Another difference that he noted was that he didn’t have foreskin. Draco had to remind himself that Harry was a halfblood and that his muggle born mother probably had him circumcised at birth. He had never been with anyone other than a pureblood and thought Harry’s penis looked strange. His length was just a few inches longer than his own fist. He shifted his body to use his other hand so he could fondle his balls as he stroked his cock. “I had a lot of time to imagine this too and I never imagined it like this.” Draco said between kisses.

Harry chuckled and turned the water off. “I had thought we’d be in a bed or on a sofa somewhere.” Harry took hold of Draco’s member and began stroking it his other hand returning to exploring his ass crack. “I want to fuck you.” Draco simply nodded. Harry stroked his cock again looking down at it. “I’ve never held another mans cock. Obviously I’ve seen them but never one as hard as this.” He gave it a little squeeze exploring its hardness. He returned to kissing him again letting their tongues mingle and tease while they jerked each others cocks. After a few minutes he spoke again without pulling away from the kiss. “Your cock is very long but thin. I rather like it.” Draco smiled even though Harry returned to kissing him. “What’s so funny?” Harry asked pulling back from his smiling lips.

“Your cock is so long and think I rather like it.” He said trying to imitate Harry’s voice as he was laughing.

Harry smirked and said “what I was getting at is that mine is not as long as yours but it’s much thicker. I think I like how your’s is thinner it will fit easier.”

Draco reached for a towel “Let’s move this to the bedroom.” He said tossing the towel at Harry.

Harry caught the towel and began drying himself off. “I don’t want to hurt you.” He said in concern as he began drying his body.

Draco smirked at him and said “for a minute there I was afraid you wanted to make me bleed.” Harry shook his head “No, not today I don’t.” Draco paused as he was drying himself thinking about the day Harry would want to hurt him. “Today, I think I just want to try having sex, if that’s okay?”

Draco tossed his towel into the corner then walked into the bedroom. “I wasn’t sure if you knew how to cast a lubricating spell so I grabbed some.” He said changing the subject.

Harry followed him still drying his unruly hair. “I don’t know how to cast a lubricating or a contraceptive spell. I know they exist though.”

Draco smiled and said “fortunately we won’t need the contraceptive spell and the lubricating spell has to be cast by the top. A bottom can’t cast it on themselves.”
“Hermione told me that she read somewhere that wizards in homosexual relationships could have children. Is that true?”

‘Yeah, but it takes a lot of magic to make a baby like that.”

“My magic is kind of erratic right now, Draco. Cast the spell, I don’t want to take any chances.”

Draco stared at him for a moment thinking of the consequences of that outcome. “Merlin, Harry, if you get me pregnant I think my father’s head will explode.” He dug his wand out of his robe pocket and cast the spell pointing the wand at his belly. “I hope that works. I’ve never casted it on myself before.”

Harry wrapped his arms around his waist kissing him. His erection rubbing against Draco’s “I do want children so if it happens we’ll just clean up the mess from your father’s head exploding and raise the child together.”

Draco snorted “Oh, okay. You’ve got that all worked out in your head, do you?”

Harry shrugged and said “I’ve dealt with worse conditions I’m sure I can manage a pregnant boyfriend.”

Draco kissed him and pushed him back towards the bed. When the back of his legs hit the bed Harry pulled Draco down on top of him. “I could try to teach you the lubricating spell that I know or we could use the wiz lube.” Draco offered as he was lying on top of Harry’s naked body.

“Wiz lube?” Harry asked with his nose scrunched up in disgust. “That product needs a better name than that. Let’s try the spell.”

Draco smirked and said “Let me show you how it works. Scoot up here.” He rolled off of him pointing to the head of the bed suggesting that Harry lay back on the pillows. Harry obeyed while Draco stroked his cock waiting for him to be in position. “Lift your legs up so I can see your ass.”

Harry hesitated eyeing Draco’s cock. “I’m not going to fuck you. I just want to show you the spell.”

Harry sighed and lifted his legs. “I might let you fuck me but not right now. I think I need to be on top this time.”

Draco reached over and stroked Harry’s ass. “I might like to fuck you if you’ll let me but I don’t mind being on the bottom either.” He stroked over his puckered hole and said “I need to work a finger in order to do the spell. Is that ok?”

Harry shifted awkwardly moving himself up on the pillows so that he could watch what Draco was doing.

Draco continued to gently stroke his anus. He reached up and took Harry’s cock in his other hand gently jerking it in time with his strokes. A bead of precum formed that he scooped up with his finger and rubbed it around his anus. Draco looked up into Harry’s eyes to see if he was watching what he was doing. Harry was staring intently at his hands waiting for him to make the next move.

Draco pressed his finger covered in the precum inside of him.

Harry’s eyes flew to Draco’s in an almost panic as his finger slipped in. “The spell is otium modo.” Draco said calmly. Harry gasped when he felt something wet and squishy enter his ass. Draco began easing his now lubricated finger in and out of Harry’s opening. “It doesn’t work when you put your own finger inside of you nor does it work when you try it out of someone’s ass. I’ve tried it on girls and it works in their asses but not their pussies.”

Draco pushed his finger out and pressed two back in. He continued stroking Harry’s cock while he fingered his anus and explained the spell to him.
Harry couldn’t believe how good it felt to have Draco’s fingers sliding in and out of his ass. He laid back for a moment just enjoying the sensation. “I want to try that on you. What was the spell again?”

“Otium modo.” Draco said making another burst of lubricant shoot into his ass.

Harry groaned saying “That feels so strange but really good.”

Draco nodded “There’s a cleansing spell that you can use to clean a person out enough for oral play. Works the same way as this spell.”

“Oral play?” Harry asked.

Draco nodded and said “Let’s save that for another time.” He withdrew his fingers taking Harry’s towel he wiped his hands clean. “So how do you want me?”

Harry propped himself up on his elbows thinking. “Would on your knees be okay?”

Draco crawled up over Harry and kissed him. “However you want me would be okay with me.”

Harry pulled his head down kissing him deeply. After a few minutes of kissing and tongue wrestling, Harry said “on your knees.” Draco complied. Harry knelt behind him and ran his hands over his backside again noting the various scars. He stroked over his anus pressing his dry finger against it. Draco looked back to see what he was doing. Harry glanced up and said “eyes forward.” he smirked as Draco tensed up but turned to face the pillows again. He leaned over his ass and spit on his anus.

Draco flinched and jumped forward. Harry gripped his hips trying to hold him in place. Draco was staring at him in shock. “Did you just spit on me?” He asked incredulously.

Harry pulled him back into position and began rubbing the spittle around his bud. “I did. Is that okay?” He asked as though he was challenging Draco to say no. He pressed his spit lubricated finger into his ass. He worked his finger in deeper before pulling it out a little and adding some more saliva to it. He pressed it all the way in enjoying the tightness and heat. When Draco began to relax some after being spit on Harry told him. “You mentioned oral play. I was thinking that I might want to lick you here,” He wiggled his finger pressing it in deeper. “but the cleansing spell you mentioned made me think otherwise.”

“You wanted to lick me?” Draco asked not really sure what to make of Harry’s exploration.

Harry nodded and said “I did but now I want to do something else. Otium modo.”

Draco felt the lubricant burst forth from the end of his finger which was pressing deep into his anus. He began panting as Harry withdrew his finger and added a second. “Are you sure I’m not too thick for you? You seem so tight and so hot.” He groaned and added “I can’t wait to get into you.”

Draco sighed “you may need to stretch me out some. Do the spell again but closer to the outside.”

Harry cast the spell again this time right at his opening. Draco gasped and nodded “Now try adding another finger.” He reached between his legs and stroked his own cock. “I don’t know how long I’ll last.”

“I’m not going to tell you not to cum. I know some people like to do that.”

Draco nodded and said “I’ll try and hold off till you’re inside of me that way you can feel the muscles contract.”

Harry tried to scissor his fingers to open his ass up further but his muscles were too tight. He add a
third finger and twisted them around stretching the opening. Draco gave an involuntary thrust back on to his hand letting out an erotic moaned. Harry’s cock twitched and tightened “That’s good I think. You’re very tight still.” He said. “I think I’ll be able to press into you now though” With his other hand he stroked himself a few times still fucking Draco’s ass with his three fingers.

Draco Looked back again and was eyeing Harry’s erection as he stroked it. He groaned inwardly thinking that Harry probably was going to be too thick. He considered telling him but didn’t have a chance to voice his thoughts. Harry withdrew his fingers from his ass leaving him gaping open. He watched as Harry repositioned himself and leaned forward letting some spit run from his mouth into his stretched opening. Draco groaned and clenched at the strange feeling of the spittle dripping into him. Harry didn’t give him anytime to protest as he guided his cock into his opening. At first the pressure was too much. He was trying to relax his muscles to accommodate his girth but he felt as though he was being split in two by his cock. Then with a pop he pushed past the ring of his sphincter.

Harry froze, Draco was as tight as he had expected him to be, his anus felt like a vice. It was almost painful and he wasn’t sure he’d be able to move and he felt hot and wet from his spit and the lube and the feeling was incredible. He leaned forward over Draco’s back wrapping his arm around his waist and asked “Is that okay? Merlin it’s hot.” Draco nodded. He lay for a moment panting against Draco’s back before he arched his back trying to thrust forward testing the tightness.

Draco’s head flew up and he keened. His gut clenched and his cock flexed making a thick bead of cum erupt from its tip. He was painfully stretched. It felt searingly hot and filling but wonderful all at the same time. He had been with several other guys but none of them were this thick and Harry’s slow teasing exploration of this most intimate act was intense. Harry thrust forward again pressing deeper into him. Draco began to cry. He couldn’t stop himself or Harry even if he had wanted too, it just felt too good.

Harry kissed his back and said “I don’t want to stop. It feels too good.” Draco shook his head no. Harry thrust forward again his thick cock buried deep inside his body. He stroked over his arched back noting the muscles contracting under his pale skin. “Am I hurting you?” He asked. Draco nodded but reached down and took his hand guiding it to his cock which had softened slightly after his initial entry. Harry took the hint and stroked it for him. Draco braced his hands on the headboard and pulled forward nearly pulling Harry’s cock from his ass. He then pushed back against him pushing his cock in deeper. After a few times Harry got the idea of the pace and picked it up. “Fuck this feels so good.” Draco held onto the headboard while Harry thrust in and out of his ass unable to formulate any coherent words. Harry’s one hand continued to stroke his member to renewed hardness as his other gripped his hip roughly pressing and exploring the scars that were under them.

Harry was panting in excitement and nearly losing his control so he pulled himself from Draco’s opening looking into his gaping hole. It was stretched wide and the edges were tinged red with blood. Harry felt the hot soft tissue inside of Draco with his fingers being fascinated at how spread open and willing Draco was before him. He cast the lubricating spell again noting how his opening glistened with the fresh coating of lube. He eased himself back in slowly. It felt so good, hot, wet and tight. He could feel Draco’s muscles contract around him every time Draco whimpered and moaned with pleasure. He was close to his climax again even though he had eased off for a minute. He needed pick up the pace. He began thrusting forward finding his own pleasure as he pounded into Draco’s body.

“Oh, Harry, not so rough.” Draco finally managed to say through his moans of pleasure. He was being pushed forward into the headboard and having trouble holding his position. He had never been treated so roughly by a lover before. Even though he had never been treated so roughly he was still finding it extremely arousing.
Harry groaned and shifted his weight pressing Draco facedown into the mattress. He knew what he wanted at that moment and was going to use Draco’s body to get it. Harry began thrusting in earnest getting closer to his climax. The new position made it so that every forward thrust hit the sensitive spot inside of Draco. His cries of pleasure were being muffled by the pillows so he reached forward and threaded his fingers into Draco’s hair pulling his head out of the pillows so he could hear him better.

Draco was in a contorted position, his head being pulled back roughly while his shoulder were being pressed down into the mattress. Harry had a firm grip on his cock holding his hips with his arm up to meet his forceful thrusts.

“You’re going to need a healing spell or potion when I’m done with you.” He growled shoving into him roughly, almost meanly.

Draco’s head spun with Harry’s words. He began cumming, covering Harry’s hand and the quilt with his sticky ejaculate.

The spasm of his climax pulled Harry over the edge with him. Harry shoved forward on last time burying his cock balls deep into his ass as he lost his control. He cried out as he reached his peak, his magic crackled about the room as he released spurt after spurt of cum deep into Draco’s bowels. Harry shook with the intensity of his climax, stars sparkling behind his eyes. He collapsed onto Draco’s back barely able to hold himself up as the waves of his orgasm washed over him. His bout of accidental magic draining him further, sparks flying about the room as he continued to shuddered from his climax. He lay across Draco’s back shivering from the exhausting release.

Under Harry’s weight Draco slid down onto his belly laying in the wet spot. As his own climax subsided he could see the magic crackling about the room and remembered Harry’s statement about it being unpredictable. After a few minutes he caught his breath and groaned “That was …” He trailed off at a loss of words. Then said “I don’t know what that was.” He clenched his sphincter muscle realizing that Harry was still buried deep in his ass, although now he was much softer.

“Harry, did you cum in my ass?” He asked feeling a little grossed out.

Harry chuckled at the question as he regained his composure. “Was I not supposed too?” He asked as pushed himself up to a kneeling position feeling how weak he was. He eased his cock from Draco’s body watching as a small gush of cum ran down over his balls. “That’s so hot.” Harry said panting as he ran his finger through the little stream.

Draco gave a little shiver of disgust as the warm fluid ran over him. “No one has ever cum inside of me before.” He said feeling humiliated.

“I don’t think I want to cum anywhere but inside of you ever again.” Harry said trying to catch his breath. “That felt incredible. Like nothing I’ve ever experienced before.” He took the towel and rubbed it over Draco’s crack. His muscles contracted again and more cum dribbled out. “Merlin, that’s so sexy. I’ve got this image of my cum sitting deep in your bowels while we’re eating dinner with your mother and father. You struggling to keep it from slowly leaking out. My cock will probably be painfully hard again just thinking about it later tonight.”

Draco frowned. None of his lovers had ever cum inside of him before. It was an unspoken rule that they always pulled out. Even with the girls he had been with he had always pulled out. He didn’t know what to make of Harry’s excitement. He felt humiliated by the whole thing but Harry, he could tell, found it arousing. He had never considered cum play all that arousing. It was something that he just cleaned up and pretended that it never happened.

Harry finished wiping his ass off and laid down on his back next to him. Draco turned his head to
look at him. Harry smiled at him “You’re quiet.” He stroked his cheek and realized that Draco wasn’t smiling like he was. “Are you upset with me?” Harry asked in concern.

“I’ve never had sex like that before. No one has ever dared to spit on me and all my lovers have always pulled out.”

Harry frowned “I’ve made some faux pas regarding sex then haven’t I?” Harry asked suddenly feeling deflated. It had felt so good and he had found that the spit and cum part extremely erotic. “I didn’t know. It felt incredible though, don’t you agree?”

Draco nodded and shifted so that he was laying on his side. “I agree the sex was really good. And some people do enjoy that kind of stuff but I never have. It was rather humiliating to be spit on and then filled with cum as though I’m some animal in heat.”

Harry hummed as he thought about how hot an ‘I’m some animal in heat’ statement was coming from the perfect pureblood Draco Malfoy. "I don’t care what you think, it was fucking hot. I bet you’re glad you cast that contraceptive spell now aren’t you?” Harry said waving his hand about the room. Sparks could still be seen floating around in the air.

Draco groaned looking at them. “I’ll admit it was pretty hot but had I known that’s what you had in mind I would have told you to pull out.” He held out his hand and said “Accio potion.” Taking the potion stopper off he said “a healing potion made by Severus for occasions such as this.” He swallowed the contents in one gulp. “It’s grape flavored.”

Harry propped himself up on his elbow. He pulled Draco forward and kissed him tasting the grape flavor still lingering in his mouth. With his lips still pressed to his he said “I’m never pulling out.”

Draco pulled away and said “I may never let you fuck me again.”

Laughing Harry shrugged “You’ll be begging me for it soon or later.” He said with confidence. “But next time I’ll let you fuck me first.” He yawned and rolled over on to his side with his back to Draco. Harry held his arm up urging Draco to spoon up behind him. Draco wrapped his arm around his waist as he settled in place. Harry sighed and said “Thank you, Draco.”

“For what, Harry?”

“For doing this with me. For being my first.” Harry said as he drifted off to sleep.

‘Hmm, now that’s something to brag about.’ Draco thought bitterly ‘I was The Great Harry Potter’s first fuck.’ Draco lay there for a few minutes thinking about what role he would get to play in Harry’s life and in the wizarding world as a whole. ‘Whore’ was not a role he was looking forward to. He had always thought he would have a more influential career. Celebrated potions master or innovative transfiguration expert. Even magical object repair and maintenance. He had fixed that antique vanishing cabinet with limited instruction from Mr. Borgen.

He sighed as he ran his hand down Harry’s hip. He considered what they had just done. Harry was right it was incredible and he probably would be begging him for it again. When he thought more about it he realized that he had actually gotten more aroused after Harry spit on him. It was such a dirty yet intimate act that it had switched something around in his brain. He wanted to be dirty for Harry.

He clenched his ass muscles feeling Harry’s cum still gushing around inside of him. He had been filled with Harry’s seed. He thought about how Harry’s magic had crackled about the room at the moment of his climax and worried briefly about Harry getting him pregnant. Harry had really
enjoyed cumming inside of him. He knew that he would probably never refuse him that act and that was arousing to him in itself.

Draco hugged Harry’s body to him and kissed his neck. “I’ll probably never be able to refuse you anything. I’d probably even carry a child for you if you asked even though I really don’t want too.” He said out loud. Harry mumbled something in his sleep as he snuggled into Draco’s embrace. Draco tensed, he couldn’t be sure what Harry had said. Although, he was certain that he had said it in parseltongue. Whatever it was, it had made his gut clenched again making Harry’s cum squish around inside of him. Draco tried to push the concern of pregnancy from his mind as he let sleep overtake him.
“Harry! Harry, It’s me Hermione. Are you awake?” Hermione was pounding on his door trying to wake him. She tried the knob but it was locked and the alohomora spell had no effect. Frustrated she banged on the door again.

Harry jumped when he heard the pounding on his door. He groaned wishing he had just a few more minutes. He was having a really good dream about holding a child but now that Hermione was persistently banging on the door he couldn’t remember anything else about it. Groaning he wondered why she didn’t just barge in like normal.

Draco angrily reached for his wand. He pointed it towards the outer chamber door through the bedroom wall and muttered something then pulled the blankets up to cover them both snuggling back down against Harry’s back. He began running his hand over his chest finding a nipple and teasing it.

Harry smiled thinking that he must have done something to chase Hermione away so that they could have some more time together. He was startled when she burst through the door saying “Harry, you won’t believe what’s happening in downtown London.”

Draco chuckled at his reaction and whispered “I put a lock on your door so that we wouldn’t be disturbed but our dear Hermione won’t be dissuaded.”

“Hermione, I’m a little busy right now.” He tried saying hoping that she would get the hint. Draco was still teasing his nipple under the blanket. Harry could feel his erection pressing against his backside and was recalling how he had said Draco could fuck him. “You should leave, Hermione.”

“Harry, there will be plenty of time to fool around later. Plus it’s almost dinner time.” She sat down on the bed next to him smiling at them both. “So how was it?” She asked coyly.

Harry grunted out “I’m not discussing sex with you, Hermione.”

Hermione frowned and said “I told you about my sex life and now I’m not having any the least you could do is let me live vicariously through you a little.”

“I’ll fill you in later if you let me watch you get off.” Draco said as he kissed Harry’s shoulder.

“Hmm, is that allowed?” She asked thinking about Purist’s traditions.

“I really would prefer if you didn’t talk about my sex life.” Harry said as he adjusted his position putting his arm around Draco’s shoulder. “Now, Hermione, tell us what was so important that you came barging into my room.” He said as he stroked his arm.

“Oh right, the gargoyles in downtown London have come to life.” She said excitedly.

“The gargoyles!” Draco exclaimed in shock.
Harry frowned and said “This is probably one of those things I should have learned about in History of Magic or Magical Creatures, right?”

Hermione nodded “Gargoyles hunt and eat magical creatures including people.” Wizards hunted them down and turned them into stone. They were left on buildings all over the country so they could be reanimated when they were needed. Of course not all the stone gargoyles that you see are real ones but there are enough that once they take flight at night we may have a problem.”

Grimacing Harry said “He will free those that are oppressed to live as they wish and release those that are made of stone. I wonder if that’s another part of the prophecy.” Harry said in shock. “What do the gargoyles do?”

“Historically, they hunted wizards and witches that used their magic out in the open but they also hunt magical creatures that are in muggle areas.”

“So they are like guardians?” Harry asked.

“Yes, but they started to get out of hand when blood traitors started living with muggles so they were hunted down.” Draco said as he climbed out of bed his erection clearly visible to both of them. “I need a shower and I can see that you are going to be busy with your stuff now.” He said bitterly. He pulled his outer robe on not bothering with the rest of his clothes and left the room.

Frowning Harry said “I think you upset him, Hermione.”

“Actually, Harry, he’s probably angry about being told that he can’t help you with the ministry stuff. He wanted to be a bigger part of the new regime.” Hermione told him.

“Oh, I guess i should speak to him about it.” Harry said as he looked at the door thinking about what he could say, after deciding that that was a problem that he would have to work out later he asked, “What is happening with the gargoyles?” His attention back to the newest of the problems that needed to be addressed.

“The head of the department for Regulation and Control of Magical creatures, Marrila Gentry, Has sent out a request for Wizards to help manage them. I think the changes we made this morning may have affected the gargoyles but I don’t think that muggles will be able to see them so I don’t know what she’s so upset about. In anycase they need to be addressed before anyone gets hurt.”

“Let me take a quick shower. Then we’ll see what needs to be done.”

Three hours later Harry stood on a tall building in the center of London with Auror Malone, Mrs. Gentry, and two people from her department, Mr Harrin and Mr. Gosh. Night had fallen and they had received reports from distant cities saying the they had already been seen flying around. He wonder what the gargoyles in London were waiting for.

“This is going to be really bad.” Gentry was saying to her counterparts. She was a young woman, she couldn’t be older than thirty. Too young, Harry thought, to be in such a high pressured position. She didn’t seem to have any practical experience dealing with creatures and the two men that were with her looked to old to be handling dangerous magical creatures. Harry tried not to think about their ages. Dumbledore was a hundred and fifty and a capable wizard, more than capable he reminded himself, and Hermione would have been able to handle this situation easily so age didn’t matter. He wished she was here with him. She had wanted to come but Lucius had deemed it to dangerous and refused. Harry had to agree as the wind whipped against them standing high on top of the building. He wished Hagrid was here with him, also. The half giant would be excited about seeing a creature that hadn’t been seen in flight for the last hundred years or so. Harry was trying to
ignore her as he watched a nearby statue begin to stretch as though it was just waking up. “Look, there’s one. It just jumped down off the balustrade.” Mrs. Gentry said pointing at what looked like a falling rock.

He looked to where she was pointing. The gargoyle plummeted towards the earth falling like a rock and nearly crashing into the sidewalk below before throwing its wings open wide and taking flight. It swooped and dipped narrowly avoiding the utility wires that were strung across the street. The muggles didn’t even seem to be aware that they were there. More took flight around the city swooping and diving in between buildings and wires that wouldn’t have been there the last time they were able to fly.

He wondered what had signaled the gargoyles that now was the time to take flight. Then he saw what it was. In the distance Harry could see more flying towards the city. He wondered if they were coming from all over Britain but why would they congregate here in London. “Mrs. Gentry, How many gargoyles do you estimate live in Britain?” Harry asked thinking about the gate’s new runes. If he really did release them from their stone prisons how many would they actually be dealing with. He could see them clearly flying in from the east and when he looked around he thought that he could see them coming in from the other directions too.

The gargoyles were spinning in the air, performing death defying acrobatics, flying fast through the buildings. Every time they circled past the building that they were perched on it seemed as though more joined the flock. “How many do you think there are?” Mr. Gosh had asked as they made another pass.

Harry shook his head “I don’t know. A couple hundred, maybe. Maybe more. It’s hard to count they are moving so fast.”

They continued watching the swarming flock for several minutes before they noticed their speed slowing. They watched as two of them collide in mid air and spiraled out of control towards the street below. They were struggling with each other arms and legs entangled, wings unable to stop their descent as they spun. Finally the smaller of the two creatures folded its wings allowing the larger gargoyle to take control stopping the descent by unfurling its large wings. With two large strokes they were soaring skyward again. Looking around they could see other pairs of creatures were doing the same type of thing.

Malone groaned when it became clear what they were doing. “Merlin, they are mating, Mr. Potter.”

Harry frowned thinking about the rune that he had add to the gate that morning. “I can see that Auror Malone.” He looked at the horror struck look on Mrs. Gentry’s face. “Any idea what the reproductive process is with gargoyles?” He asked even though he doubted that she had any clue at all. She shook her head in terror. Harry turned to the men she brought with her “How about either of you, any ideas?” Both men had their wands drawn ready to fire protective spells at the soaring gargoyles. He could tell that neither men had any ideas. Turning to Malone he said “I suppose we need to find out that little bit of information before anything else.”

Malone’s eyes were still focused on the mating pair a look of awe on his face. Everyone turned to where he was staring. The pair had landed on a building not far from where they were standing. At first they had assumed that the larger of the two creatures was the male but now they could clearly see that the female was the dominate and larger of the two creatures. She was brutally forcing herself onto the male gargoyle and it was clear that he wasn’t happy about it. They watched in horror as she tore his wings off throwing them to the ground below where they disappeared into a puff of dust. The poor thing was wailing piteously as it tried to get away from her even as she was shoving herself down onto what could only be called it’s penis. “I think I might be sick.” Malone said before
vomiting on the ground in front of them.

Mr. Harrin pointed his wand at the sick and said “scourgify.” A second after the words left his lips there was a loud screeching sound coming from the gargoyles. They looked up in time to see the gargoyles that were closest to them focus their eyes on Mr. Harrin.

Harry frowned and said “Hermione told me they hunted wizards who did magic out in the open. Don’t do anything else.” He said in warning. Mr. Harrin screamed and disapparated as more gargoyles came sweeping in from the side streets their eyes searching for the person or creature who performed magic. Suddenly the air around them was filled with the creatures as they searched for the magic maker. Harry watched terrified as they whizzed past the four of them. “I think were are safe as long as we don’t do anything.” He cried over the sound of the wind whipping around them.

Mrs. Gentry screamed as one of them landed next to her sniffing the air around her. Harry pushed past Mr. Gosh and Mrs. Gentry placing himself in front of them. The gargoyle jumped back eyeing him warily. “Mr. Potter, What are you doing?” Malone asked nervously.

Harry bowed to the gargoyle not taking his eyes off of his body. He knew that they weren’t like hippogriffs but he was at a loss for what to do. The gargoyle made a deep cawing sound and snapped his jaws at him. It was all he could do to not flinch as the creature snapped in the air near him. When Harry didn’t move away or run the creature let out a loud screech and jumped into the air joining the others that had begun to circle the sky above them. Chirps, cawls, screeching and loud grumbles could be heard from the flock. Harry looked at the other three and said “Don’t panic. Trust me.”

Malone nodded and said “I trust you Mr. Potter. It’s them that I don’t trust.”

After a few minutes a large gargoyle swooped from the flock and landed with a heavy thud in front of Harry. It snarled and snapped at him threatening to bite but Harry bowed again keeping his eyes on his body ignoring the threatening behaviour. The gargoyle hissed snake like at him and stepped back. Harry couldn’t believe his ears. The creature had just clearly asked him if he was a snake. The gargoyle tried again hissing at Harry becoming agitated at his lack of response. Harry hissed back that he wasn’t a snake but that he could understand. The gargoyle howled to the flock over head. Several swooped closer crying to the one in front of him. It cried back at them and hissed to Harry. “How long have you kept us imprisoned?”

Harry hissed back “I don’t know for sure but longer then living memory.”

It howled to the flock making them shoot off down the main street of London. Harry and his associates could see the power going out as the flock snapped the power lines.

“He knows we are made of magic why aren’t they attacking?” Mr. Gosh asked his voice wavering.

Harry glanced at him only giving him a second of thought. He hissed at the gargoyle “Stop them.” He ordered.

The gargoyle roared and began circling Harry who stood his ground. “We do not take orders from your kind.” It hissed out evilly.

Harry cracked his neck and hissed “If you value your freedom you will. I will return you to stone if you do not comply.” Harry hissed as the gargoyle circled behind him.

It reared up and lunged forward Harry threw his hand up and hissed “inlocolapidaverunt” turning the gargoyle to stone. Harry turned to his counterparts. “Better disappear now before they return.” The
screeching sound could be heard again from where the flock had flown towards the other end of the main street, their gleaming bodies being reflected by the half moon light. Harry heard two pops of disapparation.

“Are you sure, Harry?” Frank asked as the flock neared their location.

“Better just go, Frank. I’ll be able to handle them.” He said as he thought to himself ‘I hope i can handle them at least.’

Once Frank had gone Harry ended the stone spell releasing the gargoyle leader. It stumbled forward and grabbed for Harry. He disapparated just as the creature reached him reappearing behind him he hissed “I will not allow you to harm cause harm.” The Gargoyle howled and the flock zoomed towards where Harry was standing. Harry disapparated again narrowly avoiding being swept away by the flock. He reappeared a second later and cast the spell again. The flock circled back. Seeing that Harry had turned their leader into stone they cried out almost in unison then the flock began breaking apart. New leaders being sorted out and fights being fought for flock dominance. Harry watched as they fought each other for a few minutes as they tried to work it out. As the battles were lost some of the losers were turning to dust and being blown way on the night air. Harry knew that the leader that he had turned to stone could see what was happening to his flock so he hissed to the gargoyle that he was going to release him again so that he could bring order to his flock. Harry ended the spell and the gargoyle took flight. Aiming for a the large female that they had watched mating on the nearby building. He glanced to the building where the pair had landed and saw the male was still sitting on the edge of the building screeching and calling to its flock but unable to join in the flight.

Harry disapparated and reapereared standing behind the injured male. He hissed at it “Do you understand me?” Apparently, it hadn’t taken notice of his arrival. When Harry spoke to it it jumped in surprise and fell from the edge of the building. Thinking quickly Harry cast a levitation spell and lifted it back to its perch on the building. When it was settled back in place it cowered away from him as though Harry was going to harm him. Harry tried again “Can you speak to me?” He asked.

It cawed out to the night sounding like a great bird of prey that was calling for its mate. Harry Grimaced thinking that the female wasn’t going to be happy with him. He looked at the flock and could see many of them had begun to swarm. The large gargoyle was flying with its flock trying to gather its followers again while the female was circling with a few of her own. When she spotted Harry with her mate she let out a screech and dived for the building where Harry was standing. Harry knew that she wouldn’t take time to speak to him like the leader had so he disapparated back to the ministry.

He landed in the lobby where his four companions had returned to. Looking to Mrs. Gentry he asked “Did you find out if this is all of them? They seem to follow that one leader. When I took him out of the picture they started fighting among themselves, killing each other. And i don’t think they can all speak parseltongue. I tried to speak to that injured male and he either couldn’t or wouldn’t speak to me.” Harry said breathlessly.

Mrs. Gentry nodded and said “The reports we have gotten in say that they left the other cities. I think they all flew to London.”

“Why would they do that Mr. Potter?” Mr. Gosh asked expecting that Harry would know the answer.

“I was hoping that someone in the department for Regulation and Control of Magical creatures would know that answer.” He looked expectantly at the three of them and groaned when they didn’t have an answer. “How long have you been in this department?” Harry asked the three of them.
Mrs. Gentry answered “I’ve been in this department for over fifty years, ever since I graduated Hogwarts, longer than anyone else. That’s how I got to be department head.”

Harry looked at her suspiciously. “You don’t look that old. Have you really been in the department that long?”

Mrs. Gentry shrugged and said “I use a glamor spell everyday.”

“That must be why the gargoyle was interested in you more than the rest of us.” Malone stated the reason becoming clear. “I wondered why it focused in on you first.”

Harry motioned to the others and asked “What about you two?”

“I’ve only been in it for the past few years. I’m mainly a paper pusher i have no practical experience.” Mr. Harrin answered.

Mr. Gosh added “I was a magical pest exterminator for a few years before I got a job in the maintenance department here. I was in that department for nearly 30 years. I’ve only been in this department for a few months. I’m a pureblood.” He boasted proudly and then added “but since most of the employees in this department were muggle borns they had openings that they needed to fill. So I volunteered.”

Harry scowled at him when for his pride about being a pureblood. “No practical experience?” He asked in shock. “Why were you on that building with us?”

Malone answered “no one wanted to go. The aurors said since it’s not in their department that they didn’t think they were needed to fight magical creatures and everyone else in that department had no experience.”

“This is the kind of thing that’s got to change.” He said gesturing at the situation. “It shouldn’t matter that they are creatures, if something is attacking magical people we should be protecting them.” He through his hands up at the situation his frustration clear before saying. “I’ve got to go back out there and see what I can do to bring them under control.” Harry disapparated with a pop reappearing a few buildings away from their original perch on a helicopter pad that was higher up. He looked down over the city wondering if the lead gargoyle had gained control over his flock again. It didn’t take long for him to get his answer. It seemed that in the short time that he was away the flock had reformed and the leader was leading the swarm around the city again.

He watched for a few minutes wondering what he could do to bring the leader back to him. As they zoomed towards him Harry sent his stag patronus out to charge at the creatures. They let a screech of recognition that someone had used magic as the stag charged head long into their midst. They were undeterred by it and at first Harry thought that they couldn’t see it but then he noticed that some of the flock was turning and following it through the sky as the creatures in the lead zero’d in on the caster. Harry took a chance and sent a stunning spell towards the leader hitting him dead center of its chest. It howled in pain and veered out of control falling from the flock as they sped towards him.

The leader dropping from the charge momentarily confused the flock and they broke off their attack. Harry groaned, he hadn’t meant to knock it out only to get its attention and now it had fallen out of sight. Harry tried to look over the edge of the building where the gargoyle had fallen but he couldn’t see the street below. He glanced back to the sky again and saw most of them circling looking down for their leader. Then as one they took off down towards the street and flew around the building coming up in the far side. Harry breathed a sigh of relief when the leader could be seen in front of the flock.
Harry cast his patronus again trying to ignore the screeching noise that the Gargoyles made every
time he cast a spell. He hissed to it “I don’t want to hurt you or your flock but I will if you can’t be
controlled.” He motioned for the stag to take off sending it to the lead gargoyle. The stag soared
through the air along side of the leader passing the message along. Harry watched as the flock
changed its course flying towards Harry again. Harry stood his ground with his wand raised. When it
was clear that they weren’t going to change course he through a wall up in front of them. The
gargoyles in the lead crashed into the wall some falling to the helicopter pad as others turned into
dust. The flock changed it’s course shooting off into the night sky. Harry watched as the gargoyles
got to their feet staggering. Harry noted that their leader wasn’t with them. Casting the stoning spell
on them he returned his attention to the flock as they circled overhead screeching at his use of magic
again.

The flock was breaking up again. Their leader calling to them and growling as new leaders tried to
assert their dominance. Harry sighed and wondered if they could be reasoned with at all. It was going
to be along night and if he couldn’t bring some order to them he’d have to start turning them back
into stone one by one. He glanced at the statues on the landing pad and wondered if they’d be missed
from their perches. Sighing he tried sending his patronus out again this time with the message that he
wanted to try talking to him.

The stag jumped forth and charged towards the leader who was fighting with the large female again.
The female hissed in Harry’s direction as the stag passed it’s message along. Both gargoyles flew
towards him still snapping and lunging at each other.

Harry took a few steps back giving the creatures room to land. The female hissed at him again saying
“go away wizard before we kill you.”

Harry hissed back to her “I will not. You and your kind will obey or you will be imprisoned in stone
again or worse.”

She lunged at Harry again but before he could cast any spell to defend himself the male pounced on
her. Harry watched as they wrestled and the male caused a large gash on the female’s side. She
howled in pain and allowed herself to be pinned to the pad. The male growled at Harry “She is from
the north lands and does not understand the power of the southern wizards.”

Harry frowned and asked “southern wizards?”

The gargoyle grunted and hissed out in parseltongue “yes southern wizards have always been more
powerful.”

This was news to Harry. He had never heard that wizards in one area were more powerful than
another. He wasn’t about to argue the point with the angry gargoyle nor did he want to question it
further while he held the squirming female under him. “Do you know how you came to be
awakened after all these years?” He hissed to the gargoyle. The other gargoyles had started to land
around them on the rooftop, some were still circling over head.

The gargoyle growled and said “we were frozen in stone when the magic protecting this area ended.

“The northern flock were hunted down and turned to stone on their perches by wizards like you.”
The female hissed out and renewed her struggling.

Harry crouched down and looked the female in the eye and said “I had heard that you were hunted
because you were hunting us.” He sighed and stood back up looking at the flock that surrounded
him. “I replaced the magic this morning and extended it out over all of Britain.. I released you from
the stone prison.”
The female stopped struggling when she heard Harry say this. She hissed “why?”

Harry shrugged and said “The magic in this part of the world wasn’t working right, our numbers were dwindling so i’m trying to fix it. I can’t allow you to hunt magical people again. I don’t want to change the fact that you are free but I will if i find that you are hunting humans again. I will allow the wizards to hunt you down again. You must all agree to not attack magical people. I suppose that i can’t stop you from hunting other creatures but humans are off the menu.” He looked around the flock to see how many could understand what he was saying. They were chirping and screeching at each other in their strange language.

The male let the female up and she lunged at him snapping her jaws but she jumped into the air taking flight before he could retaliate. She circled the air above chirping and twittering to the flock below her. A few jumped into the air and began circling with her.

Harry turned to the male “what are they saying?”

“She’s trying to gain followers but they will not go with her.” The male hissed out. He let out a loud caw and the flock that had landed on the building took flight again. He hissed to Harry “release them.” As he motioned to the gargoyles that Harry had cast into stone. Harry ended the spell. Without even pausing they jumped into the air and joined the flock. The male joined them and before Harry could say anything more they flew off still dipping and reeling. The female was still trying to pull followers to her but the male had firm control over the flock. As they flew out of sight Harry hoped that they would return to their perches by morning and that he wouldn’t have to hunt any of them down.

He apparated back to the ministry where he found his party waiting for him. He sighed “I think they will be okay. I spoke to them and i think their leader understands our position.” Harry sat down on the bench. “Have any of you ever heard that wizards in one area being more powerful than those in another? Their leader thinks southern wizards were more powerful than northern wizards. His excuse for the females behaviour was that she doesn’t understand how powerful southern wizards are.”

“In other countries, where the population is thinned by merging with muggles, the wizards and witches tend to be less powerful.” Malone said.

“I have heard that certain areas have a higher concentration of magic in the land. In South america in the amazon region the magic is very powerful. People born there can harvest the magic but since it’s underpopulated and uncivilized they don’t do much with it.” Mrs. Gentry said shaking her head.

“I suppose,” Mr. Gosh added “that it’s possible the southern region of Britain could have had more powerful wizards and witches because it’s where most of the Pureblood families settled at first.”

“It’s also the area that would have been protected by the original gate.” Malone added.

Harry nodded “I guess that gargoyle could be right then.” He stood and stretched. “It’s late. Thank you for your help tonight. If you hear anything more about the gargoyles let me know.” He started for the floo “You know where to find me if you need me.” Green flames burst from the closest floo. Harry frowned wondering how it knew that he was going to activate it when he watched Kingsley Shacklebolt step through it. “Good Evening, Kingsley.” Harry said surprised. “What brings you here so late?”

Kingsley frowned and said “Actually, Harry I was coming to contact you. I thought I’d have to contact you from here.” He eyed him suspiciously before asking “Why are you here?”

Harry frowned and asked “Didn’t anyone tell you about the gargoyles? I’ve been on top of a
building in London for the past four hours.”

“Gargoyles? No, no one told me anything. I got a call from the Muggle Prime minister asking me if I knew anything about the power outage on main street. I told him that I didn’t think it was anything to do with us. I also told him I’ve been replaced and that I would make an appointment with him to introduce my replacement.”

Harry groaned and said “We really need to discuss that. I didn’t want to replace you. I just want things to move faster and I won’t tolerate the way things are being done right now.” Harry was frustrated. He really need to get things in order so that he wasn’t overwhelmed with the work load.

“I don’t know what you think there is to discuss.” Kingsley said bitterly. “You made it pretty clear to everyone this morning that you were taking over.”

Harry grunted and said angrily “You tried to have me arrested.”

“You did something to that arch in the death chamber that has affected everyone in Britain. It’s a criminal act. You should be tried and punished for it.” Kingsley countered.

“You may be right,” Harry said conceding to Kingsley’s accusations “but having me arrested for bettering the wizarding world won’t help anyone. I fixed the problems with the muggles and the floo system today. If need be we can tweak it further but not if I’m in a rotting in a cell in Azkaban.” He sighed and added “I suppose now would be a good time to talk if you have a few minutes.”

Kingsley frowned. He didn’t really want to talk this boy, his anger with him was enormous. Everything he had worked for over the past 17 years was being pulled apart in a matter of a few weeks. After the confrontation in the lobby earlier that day he had been feeling like the wizarding world had gone crazy. He knew this conversation would need to happen at some point but it was late and it had been an extremely stressful day. He sighed and motioned towards the lift. “We can talk in the Minister's office. I’m not really sure if it’s your’s or mine anymore after what happened this morning but I have a few personal items I’d like to retrieve.”

Harry led the way towards the lift. “I don’t think this will take long.” He said as the lift doors slid open. “As you probably guessed I’m not really fully qualified to act as Minister of magic.” The elevator started for the Ministers level as Harry went on not waiting to get to the privacy of the minister's office. “I had wanted to be in more of an assistant to the minister rather than the minister but now that we have all these people wanting me to be in charge, I wonder if I could convince you to remain in this position with me as more of an overseer.”

Kingsley unlocked the door to his office. “An overseer?” He asked in incredulity “ You want me to be your assistant?”

“I wasn’t thinking assistant but there’s gonna be everyday things that need to be handled and I’m not sure I’m up to that task. I’m pretty certain that I can’t hire anyone I wouldn’t know the first thing about deciding credentials but I know I won’t hesitate to fire someone that isn’t performing up to par.” Harry sat down in the guest chair in front of Kingsley shacklebolt's desk. He looked around the office “Plus, I really can’t see myself sitting in an office like this. Who decorated this place anyway?” He asked scrunching his nose up in disgust. The walls were covered in dark wood paneling with various pictures of former Ministers. Harry didn’t recognise any of them but most of the Ministers that he would have recognised were corrupt and probably wouldn’t give very good advice anyway. The wall directly behind the desk was covered with book shelves. Most of the shelves were packed with books but a few shelves had artifacts that must have had some kind of magical use but for the life of Harry he didn’t recognize any of them. They reminded him of the objects he would often see in Dumbledore’s office. Turning in his seat to get a better look around the office, behind him to see if
Shacklebolt grunted and said “The muggle prime minister. He doesn’t know that we have a picture into his office. It’s useful when we need to make contact with him. He has an assistant named Mr. Crumb that’s a wizard so if he ever needs to contact us he has Mr. Crumb do so. The order removed the picture from his office when Voldemort’s people took over. A few days after his fall I went over and put the picture back. On his side it’s a man fishing in a stream.”

Harry smiled and said “That’s brilliant. See that’s the kind of thing I’m talking about. I wouldn’t know the first thing about dealing with the muggle prime minister.”

Shacklebolt shifted to look at the picture again. The background had visibly lightened and there was a woman moving about the office. Harry watched as she filled the mini fridge and emptied the trash can. Once she left the room another man entered with a muggle device and scanned the room. “They scan the room daily sometimes several times a day. I really don’t know what they think they will find.”

“I’m sure they are looking for a listening device or something.” Harry said as he watched another man enter the room.

Kingsley motioned to the picture “that’s him. The first time I met him he was not very receptive to the idea of magic.”

“I suppose that’s a normal response for someone in his position. He probably thought he knew everything there was to know about Britain when he was elected.”

“Yes, He’s been more receptive since Voldemort returned and I explained that a lot of the problems they were experiencing in the muggle world were caused by him.”

I’m sure that didn’t make it any easier to deal with those problems.”

“No it didn’t. I actually feel kind of bad for him. He was elected right before Voldemort and his followers started making trouble. Many of the problems were blamed on him by his opponent. It made him look really bad. And then you shook things up by changing what could and could not be seen.”

“Did you speak to him today? How are they handling the newest changes?”

Crossing his arms he considered Harry for a moment. He didn’t want to admit that the problems were mostly fixed. “Whatever you did today made the muggles forget they saw anything weird. Some of the Prime minister’s people have charms that we gave them so that they can see things. They know that there was a problem but everyone else has forgotten.”

Harry smiled proudly. “That’s awesome. And see if you had arrested me that change would have never happened.”

Kingsley frowned and said “if you hadn’t messed with the gate we wouldn’t have need you to make those changes.”

Harry sighed “You need to trust me, Kingsley. The changes I made are for the betterment of our
community. Our citizens will only become stronger and our numbers will increase.”

“I worry that we will have another power hungry Dark Lord come along that’s bent on world domination.”

“I’m not power hungry.” Harry stated emphatically. Shacklebolt held his tongue even though he noticed that Harry hadn’t corrected him on being bent on world domination. Was Harry thinking he could eventually rule the world? “So what are you thinking in regards to you remaining Minister of Magic?”

Considering his question he asked “How do you see that working?”

“Working?” Harry asked confused.

“Yes, How do you see that working? What do you think we would be doing?”

Grimacing Harry said “I hadn’t considered it. I figure you should probably keep going like you are until there’s some decision that needs to be made and then I’d step in and make the decisions. For instance, there’s muggle borns and half bloods still being held in Azkaban. They are going to be released tomorrow after the Wizengamot meeting. I’m not sure how many there are but it will be done. I’m tired of the bureaucracy dragging their feet about it. And the death eaters and Voldemort supporters are going to be transferred there. I don’t care if they are criminally insane or not. It can be sorted out later. There’s a few that will be given the kiss as soon as they get there, no trial needed. It’s ridiculous that we are holding things up like this.” Harry stated angrily.

Shacklebolt shook his head sighing “we were trying to do things fairly but I agree some things just need to be done. There’s still so many supporters in the Wizengamot that things have been moving slow. No one wants to make the hard decisions and them be wrong.”

Harry nodded and said “I’ll be making those decisions from now on. I’ll have advisors to help me along but I can’t let things go on like they are. Not as long as it’s in my power to change it, at least.” Shacklebolt sat thinking for a few minutes not saying anything. Harry was watching the prime minister in a meeting with a man in a blue suit. After a few minutes the man in the suit stood and looked into the fireplace. “What’s he doing?” Harry asked.

Shacklebolt looked over at the picture. “That’s Mr. Crumb. Since the Prime Minister doesn’t know we can see him. Mr. Crumb makes a show of trying to contact the Minister of magic.”

“How does he know that you’re in your office?”

“He doesn’t. He contacts the main desk and then they call down to me and I open the floo down here. Now that the floo system is working again we should be able to speak directly to him.”

There was a knock on the door. “Minister Shacklebolt?” The witch asked from outside the door.

He called to the door “Come on in, Phylis.”

She peeked her head around the door and said before looking at Harry “Mr. Crumb says the Muggle Minister would like to speak to you.” She noticed Harry sitting in the chair closest to the door. Smiling broadly she said “Oh Hello, Mr. Potter. Are you taking over for Mr. Shacklebolt today?”

“We were just discussing that.” Harry said smiling to her.

“Thank you, Phyllis.” Kingsley said dismissing the witch. “The Prime Minister is interested in meeting The Great Harry Potter. He knows what you did to end the war and I explained to him
about the changes to the gate. He had trouble grasping the concept of how that works but he’s accepted that he probably will never fully understand and is happy with that. I did tell him that you were taking over for me but now I think that maybe I will stay on. I’d like to see how things go and I don’t want to abandon this position to someone who is under qualified.”

Harry smiled and said “Perfect, I figured I could count on you.” He looked back at the picture. The prime minister was pacing the room now as Mr. Crumb was standing by the fireplace. “I really dislike the fans. People fawning over me, The Boy Who Lived, The Saviour of The Wizarding World, the Man who Defeated the Evil Dark Lord, Lord Voldemort. I find it really aggravating.”

Kingsley frowned and said “I hope he won’t be that bad. He’s met heros before I’m sure it won’t be any different than meeting a war hero.”

Harry stood motioning to the fireplace “Let’s get this over with. I’d like to get a bite to eat before the Wizengamot meeting and then there’s the press meeting. Percy should have the pamphlet written and that will need to be approved. There’s a lot to do today.”

“What’s the pamphlet for?”

Harry sighed and said “one of the changes that I made to the gate will affect our fertility. Everyone needs to be warned that they need to use some form of protection.”

“Why would you do that?” He asked in shock. “There will be unwanted pregnancies all over the place. We’ll have a baby boom that no one is prepared for.”

“I’m hoping for a baby boom. Our numbers are so low that we could go extinct and historically speaking the witches and wizards from this part of the world have always been more gifted than from other regions. It only makes sense that our numbers should be greater.”

Once again Kingsley was fighting an internal conflict over Harry not denying the world domination part of his speech.

Chapter End Notes

Here’s the part where I feel I should apologize to all of you. I really hate this chapter. I don’t even know where I was headed with the gargoyles and I tried to rewrite this chapter several times but this story line was really stuck in my head. Finally I gave up and just tweaked this chapter. I have been procrastinating posting it because of my dislike for it. I hope you enjoyed it more then I did. I only have a few lines written for the next part of the story. I'll try not to take forever to get it up. Only a few more chapters to go.
Harry followed Kingsley through the fire place into the Prime Minister's office. The Prime Minister stopped pacing as they stepped into the room. Harry noticed that he was smiling happily as Kingsley stepped into the room but his smile faltered as he emerged behind him. Glancing to his right, Harry saw Mr. Crumb pulling his wand from his pocket as though he was going to defend the Prime Minister. Harry, acting quickly, disarmed him casting an expelliarmus spell before anyone got injured. Mr. Crumb’s eyes widened in shock as his wand flew from his hand. The Minister, seeing a second person and that Mr. Crumb was drawing his wand, stumbled backwards and fell over the coffee table that was set in the center of the seating area thinking that he was going to be attacked by this new wizard.

“Minister Blair!” Shacklebolt said as he went to aid him. The Prime Minister was sprawled on his back trying to right himself. One of his legs was tangled into the leg of the coffee table while the other was still on top. He was still floundering in surprise as Harry pulled the table out of the way so that Kingsley could help him to his feet.

Mr. Crumb was stumbling over apologies to Harry, his embarrassment of having drawn his wand on him was clear. Harry waved him off. “It’s fine, Mr. Crumb.” Harry was saying. “We didn’t mean to surprise you. I suppose we should have warned you that a second person was coming through.”

The Prime Minister was on his feet and brushing himself off. He said angrily, “Mr. Shacklebolt, I didn’t expect you to bring another person unannounced into my office. Who the hell is this kid anyway?” He asked gesturing towards Harry.

Mr. Crumb paled even further “This is The Great Harry Potter, Minister Blair.” He said reverently.

The Prime Minister stared at Harry in shock. He looked from Crumb to Shacklebolt. Kingsley was smiling broadly at his reaction. He began laughing. “Oh, this is a joke.” He said as he pulled a handkerchief from his pocket to wipe at his brow. “You two really had me going there for a moment.” He motioned to the seating area. “Please, have a seat. Can we get you anything?” He said mainly to Kingsley but Harry figured he meant for both of them to sit.

Once they were settled and Mr. Crumb served them drinks Kingsley started the conversation again. “Minister Blair, I think that maybe we got off to a bad start. I’d like to formally introduce you to our guest. We weren’t joking. This is really Harry Potter.”

The Minister stared at Harry for a moment before saying “I thought he’d be older and taller.” Harry frowned at that. He could tell that the Minister was still in shock but he had expected better manners from the Prime Minister of England. “I’m sorry, that was terribly rude of me.” He held out his hand and said “So, you’re the Great Harry Potter, Our Savior. It’s a pleasure to meet you.”

Harry took his hand and said, “Likewise, although, I’m sorry I haven’t had much time to follow
muggle politics so you probably know more about me then I do you of you.”

The Prime Minister frowned and said “I really did think you’d be older. Kingsley or Minister Shacklebolt,” he corrected himself “I guess I should say, has informed me that you will be taking over his position, Mr. Potter.”

“He may have been a tad bit premature in telling you that. We have spoken and he has agreed to stay on for a bit longer. As you have pointed out several times this morning I am very young and I feel I have a lot to learn before I take over completely.”

“So you plan on being involved in the magical government?” He asked.

Harry leaned back into his seat and sighed. “I’ve been gifted a specific skill set that can really only be used for one thing. To not be involved would be a terrible waste to our society.”

The Prime Minister frowned. He really wanted to ask what skills Mr. Potter thought he had that would make him a good government official but he feared he wouldn’t like that answer. After a long pause he asked “I’m led to believe that you, at your age, single handedly defeat a super villain. How can that be? What power did you have that Lord Voldemort didn’t have?”

“Minister Blair, I don’t…” Kingsley started to answer but Harry held up his hand to stop him.

“First off Voldemort wasn’t a super villain. He delved into dark magic but he wasn’t super and it’s something that anyone of us could do. The problem with dark magic is that, like all magic, you really have to balance it to make the most of it. Voldemort let the dark magic take over he never put any checks or balance into his casting. He sacrificed large parts of his soul in order to delve even deeper into the darkness which will drive anyone mad. The same goes for wizards that only work with light magic but those that gain that kind of power on the light side have a tendency to sacrifice other people to gain power. Second, I didn’t defeat him single handedly. I had help, and a lot of it. There were a lot of people helping me and working against him to weaken his position. If it weren’t for them, the war would be over, I’d be dead and the muggles would be enslaved.” Harry took a sip of his water letting that idea set in before he went on. “People in the non-magical world don’t believe in prophecy, heck I’m not even really sure I believe, but this outcome was the culmination of several prophecies. The Magic community has been preparing for a New Dark Lord to come to power for years. I just happened to be born at the right time to fulfill that prophecy.”

“You are saying that you have the power of prophecy behind you and that is how you defeated Lord Voldemort.”

Harry nodded and said “Lord Voldemort made a lot of mistakes. As a community we must learn from them and change our ways.” He stood up and said to Kingsley. “Kingsley, thank you for introducing me to the muggle Prime minister.” He turned to the Prime Minister. “It was nice to meet you. Minister Shacklebolt will be happy to answer any questions that you have and will contact me if I am needed.” Harry nodded to Mr. Crumb and stepped into the floo, calling out the directions to the Ministry.

The Prime Minister stared at the fireplace for a few minutes before saying “I see now what you mean. He is kind of intimidating for one who is so young. And what was that all about? Why did he just get up and leave?”

Kingsley shook his head saying “He’s just like that. When a meeting is over or not going anywhere he just excuses himself and leaves. Frankly, we are lucky that he even said goodbye. Sometimes he just walks out in the middle of meetings.”
Mr. Crumb smiled and said wistfully, “He’s going to be the new Lord of the wizarding world.”

“Mr. Crumb, I’m not sure we need a new Lord of the wizarding world. What do you hope he will be able to accomplish?” Shacklebolt asked.

“He’s going to unite the wizarding community so we can take our rightful place in the world.”

The Ministers looked at each other worriedly. “What skill sets does he fancy that he has that will make him a good candidate as a public official?” Minister Blair asked, as the gears in his mind started working on different scenarios of what a person with the kind of power Mr. Potter reportedly had.

“I am glad to still be Minister of Magic.” He said avoiding the question. “I will be keeping a very close eye on Potter and his supporters.” He glanced to Mr. Crumb who was still standing by the fireplace. “I can assure you that I will do everything in my power to prevent an Evil Dark Lord from taking over again.” He stood and held out his hand “Tony, if you have any problems or questions you can still feel free to have Mr. Crumb contact me.”

“Kingsley, I did have something I wanted to report to you. My security team reported to me earlier in the morning that gargoyles were the cause of the power outages.”

“Ah, Yes. I did not receive that report till after the fact, but yes there were gargoyles apparently flying around the city. They’ve been dealt with by Mr. Potter. He assures me that everything is in order now.”

“That’s is good to know. I can assume that that is part of his skill set?” He asked knowing that Kingsley wasn’t going to give him a direct answer.

“There’s a lot of work to be done. I better get to it.” Kingsley stepped into the fireplace and disappeared in a puff of green smoke.

Minister Blair watched him go and wondered what kind of work Kingsley had to do and hoped that he could keep Harry Potter from his plans of world domination. “Mr. Crumb, please contact the Queen’s aid and inform her that I have met with the leader of the magical community and that we have nothing to worry about.” Mr. Crumb nodded and left the office. The Minister took his seat behind the desk and quickly wrote a letter to be hand delivered to his contact at the UN. He knew that he would need to inform them of the danger that would be coming to the non-magical world and after hearing Mr. Crumbs opinion of magical people taking their place in the world he was sure he could never trust him again.
Harry stepped out of the floo into the lobby of the Ministry of Magic. He cast a tempus charm and saw that it was only 6:36 in the morning. Enough time to go back to Malfoy manor, get showered, and eat. He didn’t want to just sit around waiting for the Wizengamot meeting at 9am. He stepped back into the floo but paused as a new vision flashed through his mind. He stood in the floo as images of the future invaded his mind. Images that he couldn’t make sense of. As he came out of the vision he couldn’t remember where he had wanted to go. He stood thinking for a moment and was startled when the flames around him flared up. Before he could move the person coming through the floo collided with him. They both went sprawling onto the floor of the lobby. Harry was apologizing and trying to help the older women to her feet as she was berating him for standing in the floo. Harry was relieved that she hadn’t taken notice of who she had collided with as she was busily gathering her scattered belongings. After seeing that the older women was okay and on her way Harry left the lobby via the front entrance, intent on finding something to eat. He was still feeling distracted from the vision as he found his way to the muggle part of London.

In his vision he had seen flashes of fire and heard people screaming as though there had been an explosion. In another part he was certain that he had seen Sirius but he looked different. Was he the reason for the explosion? Was he seeing flashes from the past? But that couldn’t be right as he was certain that he heard Draco calling his name. And the explosion seemed like it was indoors maybe a restaurant or a grocery store. The vision was so mixed and jumbled not like the clear flashes that he normally experienced. He couldn’t work the images out. His stomach grumbled again. He needed to eat. Maybe he would be able to think clearer with something in his belly.

After wandering around for a few more minutes Harry found a street vendor selling muffins and tea. He placed his order and dug through his pockets for muggle money. Feeling slightly alarmed that all he found was wizarding money an older man who was in line behind him paid for his items. As he walked away Harry realized that he probably looked disheveled and dirty. He glanced down at his clothes and then back to the man who paid for his meal and wondered if that man could really afford to do such a thing.

He looked around and found a dark alley and apparated back to Malfoy manor. Arriving at the gates he took the long walk through the garden to the front door where he found Draco waiting to greet him. “Good Morning, you look like hell.” He said jokingly with his bright happy smile.

Harry smiled, happy to see him and said “I feel a little better now that I’ve eaten and I see you”

“How did the gargoyle thing work out?” Draco asked, curious about the adventure he was denied.

Harry waved him off and said, “They are settled now. They just needed some guidance. You didn’t miss much.” He knew that Draco was having issues with not being able to do adventurous things so he wanted to downplay the events to spare his feeling

Draco grimaced not liking being brushed off like that and said, “What took you so long if it wasn’t much to miss?” a little more forcefully than he had intended.
Harry met him on the top step with different intentions but once he heard Draco’s slightly bitter tone and feeling as though he was being attacked he said defensively, “I met with Kingsley then the Muggle Minister, then I took a walk.” Feeling frustrated, he pushed past him saying “I need to change my clothes before the meeting.”

Draco sighed. That wasn’t how he had wanted the day to start. He hadn’t meant to be so upset about his situation. He watched Harry take the steps two at a time. He considered calling after him but decided to let it go for now. It wasn’t really Harry’s fault that he was the last of the Malfoy’s and that his parents wanted to protect him. Harry was just respecting his father’s wishes. He couldn’t blame him for that but he was beginning to hate them for their over protection. Hermione kept reminding him that in a few years it would be easier if he had children he could be a little more risky. He just had to have some patience.

Wandering back into the house he found his mother and father in the lower office working on the press release that would be given later that morning. His mother looked up and smiled at him.

“Darling, was everything alright with Harry?”

“Yes, mother. He’s changing for the meeting later.” He said as he sat down in the arm chair.

Lucius looked up and frowned when he saw the glum look on his son’s face. “What’s bothering you?” He asked.

“I’m tired of being locked up in this house when everyone else is out doing things.” He said trying to not sound like a petulant child and failing. “I need to get out and do something.”

“Why don’t you go and visit some of your friends. Maybe Blaise would enjoy a visit from you. Didn’t he go to France for the summer?” Narcissa asked.

Draco shrugged and said, “I’m sure he’s busy and I haven’t really talked to anyone else since the war ended. I’m not even entirely sure who I can still count on as friends and who hates me for turning on Voldemort.” Neither parent said anything as they went back to work on the proper wording for the press release. Draco groaned and rolled his eyes. It was typical of them when they got to working on something together. They didn’t necessarily ignore him but their focus would be elsewhere till they were done. Testing their attention he said “You know mother I think that is a great idea. I think I’ll go to the house in France for a few weeks just to get out from under foot.” They still didn’t respond to his statement, he stood and started for the door.

Narcissa stopped him and he turned to hear her rebut and was surprised when she said, “That’s a fabulous idea. I’ll send the elves to clean up the place then I’ll join you. I’ll even invite Astoria along. I’m sure Hermione would enjoy the trip away for a few days that is if Lucius thinks he can spare her.” Narcissa glanced toward Lucius who was scribbling away at the parchment ignoring both of them. She sighed and said “Even if he doesn’t I’ll insist that she comes along. Would that make you happy?”

Draco nodded and said, “Possibly, will I be able to leave the house and explore?”

Narcissa frowned and said, “That house is in a magical village, I’m sure it would be safe for you to do so.”

Without taking his eyes off of the parchment Lucius chimed in “With bodyguards of course.”

Draco groaned and walked away thinking “At least when Voldemort was alive I could leave my house without fear of being attacked. This is getting ridiculous.”
"Lucius, my love, I think we are being over protective of our son." Narcissa said. She saw the defeated look on Draco and worried that maybe he would end up rebelling if they didn’t ease up slightly.

“You were the one to suggest following him to France.” He said as he handed her the parchment. “Read that.” He ordered.

Narcissa sat back down, forgetting the discussion for the time being.

Harry rushed up the steps trying to avoid further confrontation with Draco. He knew what was bothering him and he couldn’t really do anything about it. He went back to thinking about that muddled vision and focused on what Draco was saying during that vision. He was calling Harry and someone else’s name but was Draco calling for help or calling for him because something had happened. He closed the door of his room and closed his eyes remembering what he had seen. He was standing in a line with Draco at his side when he saw two Asian looking men get up from a nearby table they were sitting at and leave. His mind flash forward through the vision and he realized that the men had left a bag under their table. That is what caused the explosion.

His head ached anew as an altered form of the same vision entered his mind. This time he was with Astoria in line and Draco was at their table. The men had followed them into the restaurant, no they had followed HIM. They didn’t care that they were in a public place or in a muggle restaurant. They wanted him dead. Harry opened his eyes and realized that now that he knew of the future assassination attempt he would be able to protect the people around him. No one would be injured. Draco was calling for him because he was outside of the explosion bubble. Harry realized that Draco could probably see the explosion and fire and thought that Astoria and he were stuck in the middle of it. He closed his eyes again trying to see the faces of the men so that he could identify them but now they didn’t seem as clear as they were before. One appeared to be a women and the other didn’t seem Asian at all. Groaning he pushed off the door and started for the shower.

He rushed through the shower and dressed in the robe set Kreacher laid out for him. He began thinking about why Sirius would be in a vision like that. He concentrated on this godfathers image again. His hair was short and he had a full trimmed beard but no mustache. Harry wrinkled his face up not liking the image. It didn’t look right in his head. He had never seen any pictures of him groomed in that manner so he could only assume it was in the future. Did that mean that his godfather was still alive? Harry looked around his vision and realized that they were on a muggle street but there were aurors surrounding them and he felt strangely angry about it. Deciding that there wasn’t anything else he could do about it he left his room.

Hermione was at the top of the steps coming towards his room. “Harry, you’ll be late for the press meeting. You’ll need to read the press release before you get there.”

“I forgot about that. I was preparing for the Wizengamot meeting.” He rushed down the steps with her by his side. “Did you read what they prepared for me?”

“Not yet. They just finished writing it. They were hoping you’d be back sooner to help.” Hermione said. He reached the bottom of the steps and allowed Hermione to lead him to the lower office. “Here he is! I found him! He was just coming down.”

“Sorry, in all the excitement I forgot we were doing this.” Harry said as he entered and took a seat by the desk. “How did you make out without me?”
Lucius handed him the parchment. Harry sat back and read the finely penned words. His concentration focused on the parchment for less than a minute when another vision came to him. He stared at the speech not really reading it for a few minutes as he processed what he was seeing. He wondered what was going on that he was having all these visions today. Lucius and Narcissa shifted nervously as time went on and he still didn’t react to the speech. Harry looked up and asked “Did Draco leave for France?”

Hermione frowned and said “Harry try to focus. Draco isn’t moving out. Lucius decided he could stay. Don’t you remember?”

“He mentioned that he was going to vacation there for a few weeks before the new school term. We have a nice little chateau in the south in an all wizarding community.” Narcissa said realizing that Harry had another vision and wondering what he might have seen.

Harry nodded and said “I see.” He went back to reading the speech and said, “This is really good. You said everything I wanted to say and it doesn’t sound disorganised like it would if I wrote it myself.”

Lucius exhaled in relief then asked “Should we be concerned about his trip to France?”

Harry shook his head no and added, “Astoria will keep him in line.”

Narcissa frowned and said “I haven’t even invited her yet. She may not want to go. Her mother and sister have fled to France, she might want to avoid it.”

“She won’t let them ruin her life but you better ask her soon because Draco is going today.” He stood from his seat. “What time do you have the press meeting at the Ministry?” he asked. “I’d like to have a few minutes to say goodbye to Draco if I could.”

“The press will wait for you as will the Wizengamot.” said Lucius. Harry hurried from the room.

Hermione frowned and asked, “You’re letting Draco go to France alone?”

“The house will need to be cleaned up a little and then I’ll be there in a day or two with Astoria.” Narcissa said “He won’t be alone for long.”

“It would be good for him to have some free time to himself. Don’t you think, Cissy?”, Lucius asked as he stood. “Did you want to go too?” He asked Hermione.

“I don’t want to go for a long time but for a few days would be nice. Would you come with us?”

“No. I think I should stay behind and do some work.” Lucius said, thinking about the Wizengamot.

Harry knocked on Draco’s door. He was slightly out of breath from running up the steps but he could hear Draco moving around inside. Draco threw the door open and said, “I thought you were leaving. Don’t you have a press meeting to go to?”

Harry smirked “Did you really think I’d let you leave for France and not say goodbye?”

Draco frowned and said “I haven’t even told anyone I was thinking about going today. I just
mentioned it to my mother a few minutes ago.”

Harry shrugged and asked “Can I come in?”

Draco stood aside and let him pass. “What makes you think I’m leaving today?” He asked suspiciously.

“I don’t know why but I’ve been having a lot of visions today. Weird ones that I don’t fully understand but one of them was that you’re leaving after lunch. You really should leave a note still. Your parents sort of know but you should still leave them a note.”

Draco nodded and admitted “I started to write it but couldn’t think of what to say so I just started packing. If I do go today I’ll finish it before I go.” He closed the door and went back into his walk-in closet.

Harry followed him. “Are you mad at me?” He asked warily. He didn’t want to get into a fight right before he left for the summer.

“No. I’m not mad at you.” Draco said as he continued packing.

Harry reached for his arm, stopping him. “You’re going to be gone for a few weeks and I’d like to have sometime to say goodbye.” He said as he pulled Draco towards him.

Draco wrenched his arm from Harry’s grip, then held the offended limb to himself. He was certain that Harry had used some kind of magic as the Dark Mark began to tingle when he came into contact with it. “You don’t have time for that.” He said feeling hurt that Harry would use magic on him even though he told him he didn’t want the mark changed.

Harry grimaced “I’ll make time if you want me too.” He said feeling more and more concerned for Draco. “They can all wait.” He said, motioning angrily to the outside world.

Draco sighed and laid back on his bed “You can’t do that. You’d upset to many people.” He said, clearly frustrated. He wrapped his arms around his belly feeling concerned about how this conversation was going. “Just go.” He said wishing now that he hadn’t let Harry in the room.

Harry frowned. He approached the bed wanting to do something to comfort Draco. “I’m not leaving you like this.” He said as he climbed on to the bed and sat down next to him.

Draco moved his arm away from Harry. “I’m fine, Harry.” He said as he started to get up from the bed. “I’m just bored. I just need to get out of this house for a little bit.” Harry reached for his arm again stopping his retreat. Draco looked down at his arm where Harry had a firm grip on him, his hand covering the place where the mark was hidden under his linen shirt. “Stop that!” He yelled angrily, this time not wrenching his arm away. “What are you doing?” He said in an accusatory tone.

Harry released his arm “I’m not doing anything.” He said, holding his hands up. “I just want to talk to you. Why are you acting so weird to me?”

“Not doing anything?” He jerked his shirt up to reveal the dark mark Voldemort had placed on him. When Voldemort had died the mark had faded to where it was a light grey color. Draco look at it in horror as the lines of the mark were darker than ever but the mark itself had changed. “What did you do to me?” he yelled.

Harry looked on in shock not realizing that he had done anything. “I’m sorry, Draco. I swear I didn’t do anything intentionally.”
“I told you I didn’t want you to do anything to it.” Draco said ignoring his apology. He went to the door of his room and pulled it open. “Just get out!” he bit out, loud enough for the whole house to hear.

Harry stood in the hall looking at Draco’s door after Draco slammed it shut. In his vision he saw that Draco left for France in an angry huff and that Astoria talked him down from running away from his family. He didn’t see that he was the cause of his anger. He turned to see Lucius, Narcissa and Hermione standing at the top of the steps wondering what had happened. Harry regaining his composure, turned from the door, and said “I’m sorry but it seems that I’m the cause of his early departure.”

“What has him so upset?” Hermione asked as Harry started down the steps.

Harry paused not wanting to look at them as he admitted to having another bout of accidental magic. “I somehow, unconsciously, did something to change his mark. I told him that I thought I could yesterday after we fixed the Gate and he said that he didn’t want me to. Then today I touched his arm and he must have felt magic, that I didn’t even feel, do something. When he saw the changes he became angry and threw me out of his room.”

Lucius paled and said “It’s been bothering me all morning.” He unbuttoned his sleeve and rolled it up exposing the mark. Since he had his for a longer period than Draco it hadn’t faded as much as his son’s but now it seemed darker than ever and it was different.

Hermione looked over his shoulder and said “That’s the same mark we saw on the top of the gate. The one that looked similar to the Deathly Hallows.”

Lucius looked at Harry angrily “Did you do this? Did you think about something like this to mark your followers?” He asked.

Harry shook his head, “I never thought about it, I swear.” he said defending himself.

Lucius rolled his sleeve down and pushed past Harry. Harry followed feeling like recalcitrant child who had just been severely reprimanded. Lucius stormed off towards the office and returned with the speech. Handing it to Harry he said, “We’d better get going.”

Harry glanced at Narcissa and Hermione. Hermione had pity in her eyes for him but Narcissa looked downright angry. ”I’m sorry.” He said again. “Please tell Draco I’m sorry.” He followed Lucius into the receiving room.

“I asked Mr. Weasley to have the reporters meet us in the lobby by the new fountain.” Lucius was saying as they reached the floo. “We are running a few minutes late now so they will be waiting for us.”

Harry was starting to feel a little sick thinking about how he was upsetting everything this morning. Trying to shake off the unease he was feeling he asked “How do I look?” as he smoothed down the front of his robes. “I feel really overdressed.”

“Your look fine. Dressed like a politician giving an important speech.” Hermione said as she straightening his outer robes.

They were just getting ready to step into the fireplace when green flames heralded the appearance of Severus. “I was hoping to catch you before you left, Lucius. When I arrived at the ministry and saw that you hadn’t arrived yet I decided to come here.” He looked at Harry and nodded “A moment in private please, Lucius.”
Harry watched as the two men left the receiving room. He turned to Hermione and said “I don’t understand why they are so upset about that mark being changed. It’s not as though I’ll be using it to control them and they already swore fealty to me.”

Narcissa frowned and said angrily “You can’t just go around marking people and claiming them as yours.”

Losing his temper Harry retorted “I can and I will if it suits me to do so to better the magical world.”

“Harry!” Hermione exclaimed, “think about what you're saying. You can’t treat people like that.”

“Hermione, It’s not as though I’m trying to control anyone. They were already marked.”

“And what other reason would there be for placing this sort of mark on a person?” Severus asked as he reentered the room. “If not to gain some sort of control over them?” He was rolling down his sleeve and doing the buttons a look of disgust on his face.

“Your’s too, Severus?” Hermione asked.

He nodded and said, “I felt it late last night.” He looked at Harry and said angrily “It woke me from a sound sleep. It hurt as though I was being summoned by Lord Voldemort again. I nearly had a heart attack thinking that all of this was some sort of dream.” He said motioning to Hermione.

“When would it hurt?” Harry asked puzzled.

Lucius went to the floo and said “We will discuss this in more detail later for now we’ve things to do.”
Graduation Day

Chapter Summary

There's a little bit of a time jump here but I think you can all follow along. hope you enjoy it.

Also Kit56Kat edited an early version of this chapter then I added and changed a few thing. So thanks to her for helping. I think I'm getting better at commas and punctuation. I can find other people's mistakes easy but for some reason I have trouble seeing my own.

Today is the day. February 6th had finally come. Severus sat on the raised platform in the great hall of Hogwarts school of Witchcraft and Wizardry. He was watching friends and relatives of the graduating students take their seats. Of the 37 students that had been offered the accelerated program only 18 of them had taken the offer and today was their Graduation day. He was attempting to keep a straight face as his excitement mounted. In a few short hours Ms. Granger would no longer be a student.

After Harry had taken over control of the Ministry and the Wizengamot things had moved along quickly and smoothly. He had become even more of a celebrity and was handling it remarkably well. The media had named him Lord Potter and everyone around him accepted his new title with ease. He had stepped into his new position as though he had been preparing for it all his life. It was as if he had been building their trust and loyalty for years. Which Severus supposed was true, as he had been known to most of the wizarding world since Lord Voldemort marked him for death and failed at his first attempt to kill him. Dumbledore had been preparing him for something like this since he was born but he was sure that he hadn’t intended on this path.

Lucius and he had begun teaching Harry how to control the dark magic that he had brewing in his core and Harry was learning fast. Harry was able master difficult spells that had taken Severus several years. Many of the spells they were teaching, Lucius had had only the basic knowledge of from reading his family’s books, but Harry was able to grasp their concept and learn them and then teach them to Lucius and Severus. He had gained remarkable control over his new powers and it was visible to all. His outburst of accidental magic had lessened to the point that they rarely happened and he hadn’t had a public incident since Halloween.

For severus it had been a long and torturous few months. After the marking, and the shuffle of Lord Potter’s loyal supporters, Severus had been singled out as Lord Potter’s second in command. The media had had a field day with touting that he had somehow influenced the new Dark Lord and that he was aligning himself to take over as the next Dark Lord. Harry had worked hard to dispel anyone’s beliefs that this was the case but Severus still got sidelong glances from doubters. However, once the school year was in full swing again, most of the doubters could see that his focus was on Hogwarts and the education of the new generation of wizards and witches.

As for being back at Hogwarts It had been difficult having Hermione at the school. Seeing her everyday at meals and even spending time with her on weekends at Malfoy manor. On four separate occasions he had to substitute for classes that she was in and it had taken every ounce of self control
to not favor her in anyway. He even went so far as to insult her for being a know it all and taking points off for Gryffindor.

She hadn’t made it any easier for him. On one occasion, when he had filled in for Professor Preaks, Hermione had teased him by sending smoldering looks his way and blowing kisses at him when no one was looking. It was making it difficult for him to concentrate and because of this he had misstated information which she then openly corrected during the lesson. He took 10 points off for Gryffindor. But she had her revenge later that night at the evening meal when she intentionally sat at a table close to the teachers tables and openly flirted with Blaise Zabini. Sending him flirty glances as she giggled and fawned over Zabini. Zabini for his part looked rather surprised at her behavior until he caught the murderous glare that Severus had been sending at him at which point Blaise quickly excused himself and left the hall. Hermione smirked and pointedly turn her back on him as she returned to her discussion with Draco. Draco was having what looked like a heated debate with Astoria. He was sitting very close to her and and whatever they were discussing Astoria looked fuming mad. Since their vacation in France Draco and Astoria had become close friends. It was common knowledge that they would be married as soon as Astoria graduated. Severus scowled thinking about how his godson could openly flirt with his fiance but he couldn’t. He stood and excused himself from the dining hall storming from the room with his usual flourish. At that time he had had an incredible urge to put Hermione over his knee and spank her right there in the great hall but she was completely hands off, that is until today.

Today was the day. He nodded to Lucius and Narcissa who entered the hall with Harry Potter and Astoria. The crowds of people parted allowing them to pass as they took their reserved seats at the front of the room. After the take over at the Ministry Harry had decided that he wouldn’t be able to return school. Severus had asked the Professors to arrange a home study program for him which Harry was being slow to complete. It wasn’t his fault, really, the Ministry was taking most of his time but Severus still felt as though he should be moving faster than he had been. He supposed that he should have been tutoring him on his Hogwarts studies but teaching and learning dark magic had proven more interesting and educational than the old information from Hogwarts. Now that Hermione would be done school and home at the manor he felt confident that she would prod him along and complete the courses in time for him to take his NEWTs in May with the other 7th year students.

“I must say Severus, I’m impressed with your self control.” Minerva Mcgonagall said as she took her seat next to him on the teacher’s platform pulling him from his musings. “I thought for sure that you would slip and have inappropriate contact with Ms. Granger during the school year. Of course there’s no telling what happened while the two of your were at the manor during breaks.”

Severus scowled “I can assure you that nothing inappropriate happened.” He bit out angrily “And even if it did that’s still none of your business.”

Minerva smiled knowingly. “We all know what happened, or at least have a good idea of what happened, while she was being held at Malfoy Manor during Voldemort’s reign of terror. If the rumors are even half true, Severus, you’ve showed great restraint.”

Professor Flitwick climbed into his chair on the other side of Severus. He looked past him and said to Minerva “Well, Minerva, today’s the day that you will have to pay up.”

He couldn’t help but let a small groan escape him. “You gambled against me, Minerva?” He asked indignantly.

Filius smiled “Nope, she gambled against Ms. Granger.” He said cheerfully as he settled into his chair.
“Why on earth would you do that?” Severus asked his annoyance clear in his voice.

“She doubted that Ms. Granger would finish the school year.” Filius said, triumphantly. “Seems I know your cub better than you do. Not only did she finish she received high marks on all her NEWTs and even a record breaking score on her DADA NEWT.”

Minerva frowned wishing that Filius hadn’t started this conversation in front of Severus. “I merely thought that she had advanced knowledge and that since most of her friends opted not to come back or had ended their relationship with her that she wouldn’t want to remain in school.”

“She also was betting on you not being able to restrain yourself from having an affair with a student. We all know that as soon as she graduates that you will be courting her.” Severus watched as the students entered and took their seats on the left side of the hall while trying to not think about his colleagues apparently poor opinion of him. Hermione sat in front of the class as she was head of her the advanced class followed closely by Draco and Luna. Filius went on “Don’t be mad, Severus. We all know what happened during the war and we know that you had her best interests in mind.”

Professor Preaks entered and smiled at Severus as she took her seat. “So today’s the day, Sev.” She said cheerfully.

“He’s still trying to deny his interest, Hilda.” Filius said shaking his head trying to tell her to lay off teasing him.

“Has my whole staff been talking about me?” Severus asked his frustration clear.

“My dear Severus, only the staff that cares enough about you to debate the topic.” Minerva said in a motherly way.

“So yeah, the whole staff.” Hilda said matter of factly. Severus scowled at them angrily. Hilda ignored him “Oh look, she’s looking your way, smile, Severus.” She said waving to Hermione making Minerva and Filius chuckle. Hermione waved back wondering what was going on that had Severus looking so grumpy while everyone else was smiling and waving happily at her.

“The point is, Severus, we all know. We couldn’t help but notice how you didn’t look at her most of the time and when you did you looked at her like she was…”

“The most fantastic thing you ever saw.” Hilda cut in leaning over Filius to poke at him. Severus jerked his arm away.

“What Filius is trying to say Severus is that we all approve. I will admit that I wanted my star pupil, my favorite cub, the Gryffindor Princess, to meet a nice young man that she could fall in love with and live happily ever after. But I can be happy with her decision. Even though you’re a mean and grumpy old man you’re also one of the bravest and most intelligent men I know and you are perfectly matched with her. I dare say she will be good for you and I know you will be good to her.”

He couldn’t believe what he was hearing. He had thought that they would be uproarious when they heard of their engagement which he knew would be announced only a few days after her graduation. Now, it seemed that they were encouraging them. Hermione had told him that she confessed to Hilda about how in love she was and Hilda had guessed that it was him. Hermione hadn’t denied it. At the time he had been angry with her, fearing backlash from the staff that loved her so but now today was the day that everything would change. “I think everyone’s here and we can get things started, Severus.” Minerva said bringing him back to the present ceremony. He stood numbly at first then pulled himself together and greeted the guests.

After the awards were given and NEWT letters handed out there was a small reception. Severus
mingled with the guests answering questions about the school and the new staff. Many of the parents hadn’t seen the school since they had graduated many years before so Severus arranged tours for them. He kept trying to break away from them and find Hermione but every time he ended one conversation he’d get cornered by someone else. Finally he was approached by Harry Potter. “This is some turnout, Professor Snape.” Harry said emphasizing the ‘Professor’ part.

“Thank Merlin, Harry, follow me.” He said in desperation as he pulled him aside. He caught sight of another parent who was walking towards them “Of course, Lord Potter, I always have time for a private word with you.” He said loud enough for those around him to hear as he bowed slightly to Harry.

Harry was a little confused but he played along. “I won’t take but a moment of your time, Professor Snape.” He motioned for Severus to walk ahead of him as he wasn’t really sure where they were going. Severus led him out of the Great Hall down to an empty classroom. “What’s going on?” He asked under his breath as they walked down the hall.

Severus closed the classroom door before he spoke again. He exhaled as he leaned against a desk. “I’ve been trying to escape to find Hermione since the ceremony finished. I just needed a break.”

Harry laughed at him. “You fooled two of the most powerful wizards of all time but you can’t handle a few parents?”

“It’s not easy lying to people about their beloved brats.”

“Brats? Are you calling Hermione and Draco brats?” Harry asked laughing.

“You know what I mean.” He said waving off Harry’s question. “Is there some way that you could send Hermione in to see me?”

Harry looked at him quizzically. “What’s so important that it can’t wait till tonight when you come home to the Manor.”

He groaned not really wanting to discuss his intentions with Harry. “Don’t ask, can you please just ask her to come down here.”

Harry eyed him suspiciously before he said “Don’t mess this up. You’ve got a good thing with her.”

He left the room to find Hermione.

Severus paced the room impatiently waiting for their return. After what seemed like forever he heard the door open and Hermione’s voice saying “Harry, I don’t think we should be disappearing from the reception like this. People want to talk with us.”

“Harry, what are you…” She cut was off from finishing as Severus wrapped his arms around her from behind. “Professor Snape?” She said in surprise as she tried to wiggle free of his arms. “What are you doing?”

“What does it seem like I’m doing, Hermione?” He said as she turned in his arms. She placed her
hands on his chest and pushed against him. “And it’s not Professor Snape to you anymore, you’ve
graduated.”

Hermione gasped as he pushed her back against the cold stone wall. “Sev, we agreed to wait till after
the announcement was made. We can’t do this now.”

“I was thinking about that and I think now seems like the perfect time.” He pressed his lips to hers.
She was caught off her guard at first but then returned his kiss. She had missed his attention and his
talented mouth.

He pulled back to look at her, marveling at how beautiful she was and she was his. Sometimes when
he thought about it he couldn’t believe his life had taken such an unbelievable turn. She scowled and
said “Stop looking at me like that, we need to get back to the party. Our friends and family will be
wondering where we got to.”

“Let them wonder and let them speculate.” He said as he began kissing her neck. He nibbled his way
up to her ears and whispered “They might even come looking for us and find us.” He pushed his leg
between hers as he returned to kissing her neck.

She gasped and pushed at his chest again. “Severus, please I don’t want to be found like this.”

“What if I do?” He took her hands in his looking at her fingers. He stroked over her knuckles. She
had such beautiful hands. Strong but still lady like. He had an image flash through his mind of a time
that seemed so long ago of how she had used those talented fingers. He pulled her arms over her
head and pressed them against the wall. Shaking off the memory he said “I want them to know. I
want them to know that you’ve chosen me. That of all the little boys you could have chosen from
you chose this old man.” He pressed his lips gently to hers. Kissing and nibbling on her lips.
Hermione struggle to free her hands as she returned his kisses. He pulled back and smiled at her. “I
think I like your hands where they are.” She watched his hands slide down her arms and over her rib
cage. Hermione giggled as his fingers dug gently into her ribs. She tried to jerk her arms down to
defend herself from his tickling fingers but her arms were stuck on the wall. She could feel his hands
still holding her in place even though they were now roaming freely over her body.

“Severus,” She gasped “What are you doing?” She tried a nonverbal spell to release her hands but
whatever spell he had used to stick them there wasn’t responding.

“I’m making love to my fiance.” He said simply. He began kissing her again to stop her from
thinking. She giggled through the kiss as his hands ran down her thighs and began inching her robes
up. He paused and said “Shhh, I think I hear someone coming.” As they listened to the sounds from
the hall he slipped his hand under her robe.

She tried clenching her thighs together to halt his progress but his thigh was still pressed between her
legs. She was still listening intently to the sounds outside of the classroom. She could clearly hear
voices and was sure it was Harry and Lucius but when she felt his long fingers slide against her
pussy lips she suddenly forgot all about them. “Severus.” She whimpered not really sure what she
wanted. She wanted him to stop but more than anything she wanted him to continue.

His name on her lips was like a prayer to him. He kissed his way down to her neck line. Nibbling
along her collarbone. He whispered something to her chest and the clasps holding her robe closed
opened exposing her beautiful round breast to him. He ran one hand up her chest cupping her breast
and giving it a firm squeeze. The cold air of the room and her arousal had turned her nipples into little
hard nubs that he yearned to suckle on. The heat of his breath and his warm hands stood out in sharp
contrast to the cold air of the room. His talented fingers of one hand were working their way through
the tender folds of her most private place while his other hand was holding her breast to his lips as he
nibbled and tugged on her tit. Hermione squirmed and shifted her legs giving him better access to her pussy. Severus groaned as he found her wet and ready for him. “Merlin Hermione, it’s been torture watching you strut around my school and not even being able to think about you without feeling like a dirty old man.” He said to her breast before he continued sucking on it. He had begun using his teeth leaving delicious bite marks that were sure to last for days. Breaking away from what he was doing to her breast he kissed her hard again. He shifted his legs pulling hers up to rest on his thighs spreading her open. She instinctively wrapped them around his hips as he struggled to free himself from his robes. Arching her back she ground herself against him impatiently and when he finally released himself his cock sprung free, hard and ready. Hermione’s excitement escalated as he pressed against her body again kissing her hard as he shoved his tongue into her mouth. He pulled back biting her lip before he said “I’m going to fuck you in this classroom like I’ve been imagining for the past six months.”

Hermione moaned “Do it already and stop talking about it you dirty old man.” She said teasingly.

Severus thrust forward impaling her with his member. She cried out as he penetrated her body. A spike of pain shot through her body that hadn’t been penetrated for nearly eight months. It added to her mounting excitement. She shifted, her hips pulling back, sliding him from her body before thrusting forward, meeting Severus’ thrust slamming him deep into her cunt. “Yes, Severus fuck me.” She cried out loud enough that he inwardly cringed. He wasn’t actually sure that he wanted to be caught in this position. It did add to the excitement but he thought in reality it might not be such a good thing. He silently cast a spell to give them some privacy.

He shifted to get a better angle so that he could fuck her like she was begging for. “You want me to fuck you now do you?” He said as he started thrusting into her body. Hermione cried out again making inaudible sounds that could have been clearly heard in the hall if not for the silencing spell. “I thought you said you didn’t want to be caught getting fucked in a classroom.” She nodded as he continued thrusting into her. “Such a dirty girl fucking a man twice your age in your former classroom.” She cried out again clutching around his cock. The sound of his voice chastising her was sending thrills of pleasure through her body. Severus smirked. Of all the times they had had sex during the Voldemort occupation they had never explored dirty talk. “Hmm, I think.” He began punctuating his words with a hard thrust into her dripping cunt. “You really like. Being fucked. By a dirty. Old. Man. You filthy mudblood.” Hermione cried out loudly as her orgasm exploded over her at his humiliating words. He continued pounding into her as the waves of her climax washed over her. As she came down from her climax he kissed her again, saying in between kisses “Such a beautiful girl. So good to me letting me take you in an old classroom.”

She looked up at her arms and said “Severus, please.” He released her arms. “I love you.” She said as she wrapped her arms around his neck.

Severus groaned as he shifted her so that he could get a different angle. Not being pleased with the new position he said “I’m not done with you yet.” He picked her up and carried her over to the desk. Hermione laid back pulling him on top of her. Severus climbed over her and laid down between her thighs. He eased into her body slowly penetrating her deeply before her pulled out and thrust forward again.

She placed her arms around his neck and pulled him to her lips kissing him as he fucked her with his weight pinning her to the desk. His thrust were brushing against her body, the rough fabric of his robes stroking her breast with every forward thrust stimulating her nipples. Hermione, knowing that he would be close to completion soon, said “Severus, a contraceptive charm.” At her words he paused briefly thinking about what she asked for then thrust forward more urgently racing towards his completion. “Severus?” She question wondering why he hadn’t cast the spell. She had never cast it before herself as she wasn’t allowed to use her magic without permission. Lucius, Draco and him
had always done it right when they started. “Please, Severus.”

Severus paused and kissed her crushing his lips against her's desperately. He pulled away from her lips and whispered in her ear “You can thank your friend Harry Potter for changing the magic and making everyone so fertile.” as he resumed cock sliding his cock in and out of her tight channel.

“But the charm Severus.” She said pleadingly.

“No, Hermione!” he said as if it were a command. "I'm not going to cast the charm. Don’t you see. I long to see your body swell with our child.” He began thrusting urgently into her body. “I want to see you fat as my offspring grows in your body.” He pulled out from her cunt and thrust forward forcibly pushing her further up the desk. He pulled her back to him and thrust into her again. "I want to hold your body close to me and feel my child moving in your belly." He said as if a madness had taken over him.

Hermione didn’t know why but suddenly she wanted to carry his child more than anything she could remember before. She pulled him to her again kissing him saying “Okay, I want that too.” She spread her legs painfully wide allowing him to penetrate her deeper.

Severus groaned and shifted so that he could wrap his arms around her shoulders, arching her upper back which gave him a better angle to pound into her. This new angle had his cock sliding roughly against her g-spot. It was to much for her to process and it sent her over the edge again. Severus groaned and pulled out letting her orgasm wash over her. She cried as the loss of his cock that had stretched her so sweetly even as she rode out the wave her pleasure. When she had regained her control he pushed into her body again as he began telling her what he wanted. “I can’t wait to hold your hand while you go through the pain of delivering our child.” He pushed forward again speeding up. “I want to hear you cry out my name as our child enters the world.”

As if on cue Hermione cried out loudly “Severus!” As she climaxed for the third time.

He exploded deep into her cunt following her over the edge into bliss. “Ah, Hermione.” He was all he could say as he continued thrusting roughly pumping his seed into her body, as he rode out his climax. As he came down from his high he laid on top of her for a few minutes catching his breath. Hermione stroking his head running her fingers through his hair. He moved off of her lying on his side resting his head on her chest. He gently stroked over her abdomen and asked, “I meant what I said, you know?”

Hermione paused in her administration thinking about what he had said before she answered “Do you think that the Gate makes people want to get pregnant?”

His hand roamed up her stomach and rested on the breast that he hadn’t worked on earlier. He gently stroked the mound and watched as her nipple hardened. Hermione hummed in pleasure as he gently plucked at the hard little peak. He smiled at her reaction then pinched and twisted her nipple roughly eliciting a gasp from her, satisfied he returned to stroking her breast lazily. “I don’t know.” He said as he watched her breathing return to normal after his little assault. “I will tell you that every time I heard that someone else was pregnant I thought about when you would be.” He softly plucked at her nipple again and smiled as she tensed as if she were preparing for him to pinch her again. “You have the most beautiful breast. I long to see them heavy with our child’s milk.” He propped himself up on his elbow and took the offended nipple in his mouth sucking on it gently.” He released it with a pop and added “I did think that it would be a few years from now.” He leaned up and kissed her slipping his tongue into mouth her stroking her lips and tongue with his own. He ended the kiss and said “I’m not getting any younger and in a few years you’re going to want to work with the muggleborn registry to ensure their safety. I don’t think having our children now is such a bad idea.” He pushed himself off of the desk and began righting his robes.
Hermione climbed off the desk and immediately felt the evidence of Severus’ release run down her thigh. She quickly lifted her robes so that it wouldn’t get on them. “Sev,” She said in desperation. He pulled his wand out and cast a cleaning spell. “Thanks. And I do agree now does seem like a good time. I had wanted to wait for a few years but the new laws won’t really be enforceable till this time next year. There doesn’t seem to be any reason to wait.”

He pulled her to him and kissed her. “I love you more than I thought I could ever love anyone.”

Hermione frowned “I love you too.” She said as she turned away wondering if he really did love her that much or was he just saying it cause it was the right thing to say. Inwardly she cursed herself for allowing that negative thought to surface. She was sure Severus sensed her sudden change in mood and berated herself when she heard him ask.

“What’s wrong?”

Sighing she responded “I know you love me, Severus, but I also know that you loved Lily.” Hermione was fixing her hair, trying to stem the emotions that were threatening to boil over. She hadn’t wanted to ever have this discussion but knew that some day it would come up.

“I see. So because I loved Lily you think that I couldn’t love you just as much if not even more.”

“You have to admit her image is a lot to live up to.” she said as she let some of her frustrations surface. “I mean you fought a war for her. Your patronus is a freaking doe for godsakes.” Hermione said raising her voice slightly. She hadn’t realized how much this conversation would upset her. She had often told herself that it didn’t matter that he had held such love and devotion for Lily. Lily had broken his heart than died and left him and now he was hers and she was happy to have him.

Severus frowned and said “You don’t understand Hermione. She was my best friend since we were young. And I did love her but what I feel for you is completely different.” He pulled out his wand. Thinking of how happy she made him he cast the Patronus spell “Expecto Patronum!” He shouted. Silver light sprung from the end of his wand and wound around the room before taking form and encircling Hermione.

Hermione looked on in awe. Severus’ patronus had taken on a new form. “Severus, what happened to the doe?” Hermione asked as she watched the Otter twist and turn about the room.

“I found someone who makes me happier then I’ve ever been.” Severus wrapped his arms around her waist. “I have fallen completely and madly in love with you.”

Hermione began laughing her tears falling away as she said “I’m madly in love with you too, Severus.” throwing her arms around his neck and kissing him soundly.

“Good now that that’s settled let’s rejoin the reception. It’s probably breaking up about now. Dinner will need to be served soon so the guest will have to clear out.” He opened the door and Harry stumbled into the room. “Potter, what are you doing?”

Harry straightened up and said “Standing guard. I already sent Lucius, Professor Preaks and her girlfriend, and two students, all who I think were looking to use the room as you were, away.”

Hermione groaned and said “I was trying to release my hands. Lucius probably felt me pulling on my magic.”

Harry nodded and said “I cast a silencing charm when I realized you could be heard in the hall, Hermione.” She blushed furiously. “No one could hear what was happening in the room after that.” He said reassuringly. “It took me some time to convince Lucius that you were okay, though. You
were okay, weren’t you? I was starting to worry, you’ve been in there for a while.”

“Yes. I’m more then okay. Severus and I have decided to start our family and we have you to thank for it.” Hermione said taking his arm as the three of them walked back to the reception.

“All I did is watch the door, Hermione.” Harry said chuckling.

“You did much more than that Lord Potter. So much more.” Severus said as they entered the great hall. “There’s Lucius and Narcissa. Come, Hermione, I’m sure they are anxious to get Draco and you home for good. He pulled her across the room. She was still holding Harry’s arm dragging him with them.

“Is everything Okay, Severus? Lord Potter said you were discussing your engagement in the classroom. I could feel Hermione pulling on her magic.”

“Everything is perfect, Lucius. Hermione and I have decided to start our family. Today is the day!”
Chapter 33

Chapter Summary

Clearing up some visions. I think it looks really clean. So i didn't wait for my editor friend. She's been really busy with school lately. Hope you enjoy it. Plus only one more chapter to go. I should have that posted by Sunday.

Astoria walked down the crowded cobblestone street. Mr. Balinchk followed close behind but was laden with shopping bags. They had been in France for the past two weeks vacationing before Astoria returned for her seventh year. It had been over a year since the fall of Voldemort. Once Harry took over at the ministry in London other magical communities had fallen in suit with how things were being run there. Many of the leaders had begun to defer to Lord Potter’s command and everyone in the wizarding world was enjoying a feeling of safety. Astoria had spent the day shopping with Narcissa but had left her company to return to the villa with the bodyguard, Mr. Balinchk. Her and Mr. Balinchk had taken a detour on their way back to the villa when they stumbled across a furniture store that she thought Harry would like. Deciding that she couldn’t wait to see Harry and Draco they had set out in search of the restaurant where Narcissa was meeting them.

She paused looking up and down the street wondering where they were. “I think I might have gotten us lost.” Astoria said to Mr. Balinchk. “I don’t recognize this street at all.”

He set some of the bags down and looked around. “At least we are still in a wizarding neighborhood.” He said as he sniffed the air. He scrunched up his nose and said “Too many dirty muggles around though.” He sniffed again and smiled “I can’t smell Draco or Lady Malfoy but I do smell Lord potter. He must of come this way a few minutes ago.”

Astoria frowned “I didn’t know you could do that.” she said. Thinking it strange. She had known him for well over a year and had become good friends with him but she had never seen him do that before.

He shrugged as he gathered the bags. “It’s close to the full moon.” he said simply as though that was all the explanation she needed.

Astoria followed behind him as he led the way to the restaurant. He took up a position outside of the door as she entered. She saw Harry standing in line and silently sidled up next to him on his right side. She hadn’t seen him in two weeks and was thinking this would be a great surprise. His attention was fully focused on the special menu above the kitchen area. He glanced over his left shoulder at the table Draco had reserved for the three of them wondering if he would enjoy American style french fries with cheese sauce. He got a sick feeling in his stomach when he recognised a woman that stepped in front of Narcissa as she approached the table Draco was sitting at. Harry looked to his right knowing that he was going to find Astoria standing next to him. When he saw her smiling face he didn’t even say hello to her as he turned and throughout a bubble of magic just in time to encase the explosion that erupted at a nearby table. The force of the explosion threw everyone back but the destructive fire and the majority of the debris was contained in the force field that Harry had created. People were screaming and crying as they scattered from the restaurant. Harry had been thrown against the wall dazed but unharmed. Astoria lay feet away unconscious with a large cut on the side
of her head. He crawled over to her to inspect her wounds. He could hear Draco was calling to them, the panic in his voice clear but for the moment he could only concentrate on Astoria’s limp form.

Mr. Balinchk appeared at his side. “Lord Potter, What the hell happened?” he asked as he pulled a handkerchief from his pocket. He gently pressed it to the side of Astoria’s head looking her over for any other injuries. Once Harry could see that Mr. Balinchk was tending to Astoria he looked around the room for Narcissa and Draco. He found Draco helping Narcissa up from where she had fallen. Rushing to their side he stated “Astoria’s been injured. I’m going to go out and see if I can find that women. See if you can help Astoria.” He ran out the door of the restaurant. People were screaming and rushing around. Several aurors appeared and began directing people from the street. Harry was frantically looking around trying to find the woman he had seen in his vision. She had been here. She had stopped Narcissa from leaving the dining area. She had intentionally placed Narcissa and Draco in line of the explosion. Harry had thought the explosion was meant for him but now he questioned if that theory was correct. Of course if he hadn’t contained it everyone in that little restaurant including him would have been killed. Figuring he wouldn’t be able to find her he turned to go back into the restaurant but one of the French Aurors stopped him.

“I’m sorry, Sir. But I can’t let you go back inside.”

Harry slapped his hand away and said “My family is inside, I’m going back into see to them.”

The auror tried to take his arm again but Harry blocked him as he pushed passed him. He re entered the restaurant in time to see Draco Helping Astoria to a chair. Harry sighed in relief “Is she okay?” He asked directing his question to Narcissa who had her wand out and was casting pink spells over Astoria. “Are you okay?” he asked Astoria. He knelt down in front of her.

She held the handkerchief to her head and nodded. She had managed to hold her emotions in until then but Harry’s worried look of concern made her break down. She began crying and wrapped her arms around him. Sniffling she managed to ask “how did you know there was going to be an explosion?”

The Auror that had followed him into the restaurant and asked “Yeah, I think we’d like to know how you knew?”

Harry stood and looked Draco over making sure he was okay before turning to Narcissa. She was busy casting another spell over her future daughter in law who was still crying. “Narcissa, are you alright?” Harry asked ignoring the auror.

Narcissa finished casting her last spell and pocketed her wand. She hugged Astoria before responding to Harry. “I am fine, Lord Potter, thank you for your concern and I believe Ms. Greengrass will be fine also.”

“Lord Potter?” The Auror asked in surprise. “As in Lord Harry Potter from England? What the hell are you doing here?”

Mr. Balinchk stood at attention when the auror started looking angrily at them. Draco eyed the auror warily as Harry turned and introduced himself to the auror. “Yes, that is me. I hope you can understand the need for discretion. It won’t do either of our countries any good to know that there was an assignation attempt today.”

The auror paled and said “No, I suppose that is probably true. I will have to notify our ministry of magic.” Harry nodded in understanding. Feeling certain that the london ministry would be interested in this. “Who created that force field?” the auror asked looking at Mr. Balinchk in distaste. The force field in question was still enclosing the remnants of the table where the bomb had gone off. The fire
had burned out but the smoke still lingered making it look like a great grey bubble in the center of the restaurant.

“I did. I had a premonition about a year ago about something like this. Ms. Greengrass wasn’t supposed to be here. I intentionally hadn’t invited her for this very reason. I was trying to avoid this by avoiding the parameters.” Harry smiled at her saying. “I am glad to see you though. I missed you.”

“I wondered why only Draco and Narcissa were invited. I thought maybe you were making engagement plans or something.” She said regaining her composure. She pulled the handkerchief from her head and asked “is it still bleeding?”

Draco smiled fondly at her. “We were going to discuss that actually.” He held out his hand. “In Addition to other things like why Harry had asked us to not bring you. My mother did a good job of healing you.”

“Your father is going to have a fit when he hears about this.” Narcissa said frowning as she looked around the wrecked room.

Mr. Balinchk chuckled “Just be glad Hermione wasn’t here with us.” he added as he began gathering up the bags that he had carried into the restaurant when the explosion had gone off.

They all nodded. Draco added “We should send a message telling him we are okay. If he hears about this he’ll worry.”

The aurors were checking the damage and looking at the bubble. “We should get out of here before I let that bubble go. Once it pops I think all that smoke will pour out into the room.” Nodding they started for the door.

“Wait! Lord Potter.” One of the aurors said when he noticed they were headed out. “There’s a crowd gathered outside. You should probably just disapparate from in here.” Draco took astoria’s hand and twisted out of sight. They were followed closely by Narcissa and then Mr. Balinchk with all the bags. “Lord Potter, what should we do with the bubble?”

“I think once it pops the room will fill with smoke. You can clear everyone out now and I’ll release it before I go.” He watched as the last auror left the room. He pushed out and popped the force field and as he expected the smoke filled the room. Disapparating just before it reached him he found himself standing in the little living room of the villa. “Is everyone here?” He asked.

“I’ve missed you.” Draco said as he pulled him to the sofa.

“I missed you, too. You’ve no idea how hard it’s been dealing with the American government. They are insisting that we register all of our citizens with a UN regulatory committee.” Harry groaned and said “I promised Hermione I’d come and spend a few days here and not think about it and I’m not here three hours and it’s on my mind again.” He took a seat on the sofa and sighed. “I can’t help but think about who that bomb was meant for.”

Narcissa handed him a glass of juice. “It doesn’t matter who it was meant for we’ll just have to be more vigilant. Although, I’m not entirely sure how we could have prevented something like that.”

“Did anyone know you were coming here?” Astoria asked.

“Yeah, a lot of people knew I was going to france to visit the Malfoy’s. I didn’t keep it a secret that I was getting away for a few days.” He frowned, “Will I have to keep my movements a secret now? Sneaking around the world as though I’m some sort of villain or criminal.” He asked angrily.
“How is Hermione?” Narcissa asked, deliberately trying to change the subject.

Harry smiled thinking about his good friend and knowing why Narcissa was changing the subject. “She’s literally glowing. Severus insisted on staying at the manor while Lucius and I were at the UN meeting. Of course Hermione keeps insisting that she is fine and doesn’t need them to doot on her like they are but I suspect that she’s loving all the extra attention from them. Plus I’m pretty sure she’d leave the manor if there wasn’t someone there to keep her busy.”

“We are going to be home in a week then Severus can go back to his routine and stop fawning over her.” Draco added knowing how his father and godfather were acting towards Hermione as though she was fragile and would break.

“When I was pregnant Lucius behaved the same way. It got worse after the first miscarriage. Even after having carried Draco to almost full term he still panicked every time I moved.” Narcissa said as she remembered how Lucius had fretted over her well being.

Astoria hugged Draco to her side and asked “will you be as attentive when we’re expecting?”

Draco wrapped an arm around her shoulder “maybe even more so. I might just tie you to our bed so that you can’t do anything at all just to keep you and our child safe.” He said only half joking. "Plus, I will have you at my disposal."

Harry smiled when he remembered his vision of his future with Astoria, Draco and their children. “I’m feeling kinda hungry. Where can we get something to eat now that the restaurant has been blown up?” He asked.

The following morning Lucius appeared at the villa to check on everyone and make sure they were okay. After leaving Harry the afternoon before he had returned to the Manor and spent the evening with Severus and Hermione. It had been shortly after their meal was finished that they had received the information from Draco about what had happened. Feeling reassured that his family was fine Lucius had decided that he would spend the night with them rather than going directly to the villa in France.

Over breakfast Narcissa assured him again that they were fine and drilled him on the goings on in England. Harry knew that Narcissa didn’t want to admit it but she was as concerned for Hermione as Lucius and Severus were. She avoided asking the question for most of the conversation hoping that he would fill them in. Finally she asked, exasperatedly “Lucius, would you just get to the point and tell us how Hermione is faring.”

Everyone was feeling overprotective of her since she had given them all a scare when she was just 16 weeks into her pregnancy. Harry blamed himself since she had stayed late at the ministry helping him sift through wizengamot laws. Without considering her condition he sent her home alone when she was looking exhausted. She argued that she was fine but went back to the manor via the floo network. The trip had proven too much for her as she was overtired, a little dehydrated and hadn’t eaten all day. Even though travel that way had become much easier since Harry fixed the Gate it still took a toll on one's magic. When she arrived at the manor she promptly collapse and hadn’t been allowed to leave it since. Harry knew she was starting to feel a stir crazy and frustrated but they were doing it for her own good even if she felt like it was being overdone.

Once everyone had been assured that Hermione was feeling fine Lucius went on about their travels.
Harry sat and listened to Lucius’ recounting of the meeting in Beijing with the leaders of the Chinese magical community. That meeting hadn’t gone as well as Harry had hoped but they had managed to convince the leaders to allow a representative to join Harry’s team of advisors. The girl that was sent was only fifteen years old and barely spoke any English but had a firm command of her elemental power. The things she could do with water was amazing but she couldn’t cast any other spells. It was as though they had only taught her one thing. Harry had felt it was an insult to him and his cabinet but took it in stride. He didn’t want to give the other leaders any reason to doubt his purpose.

Lucius had enjoyed their tour of the city so much he couldn’t wait to take his family there to show off the sites and now that they were on speaking terms with the nation he felt as though he’d be able to do so. Harry felt a bit of pride for being able to make that happen for Lucius but now he was wondering about the women that was sent with the bomb yesterday. She looked Asian to him. What if they weren’t as friendly as he had thought they were? What if Phan Thi wasn’t as friendly as she seemed? What if she was actually a plant and bent on destroying everything he was working on building? The room around him humbled as Harry musings became darker. He started thinking about all the possibilities of what could happen to his loved ones and the magical community as a whole if his plans fell through.

“Lord Potter!” Lucius exclaimed as the table began rattling. He wasn’t sure what was going on but it was clear that something was upsetting Harry “Harry! What is wrong?” He cried louder trying to get his attention. Harry snapped out of his thoughts and looked around the room. Draco was standing holding Astoria’s hand and looking at Harry nervously and Narcissa was holding the flower vase from the table in her arms. Cups had fallen over and the table was disheveled. He looked around at everyone’s worried faces and then at Lucius “I’m sorry. I guess I was thinking too hard.” he said trying to laugh it off.

Lucius nodded as if in understanding and asked “it’s been a long time since you slipped, what were you thinking about?”

“Phan Thi?” He said as if Lucius would understand.

“Phan? Why would she upset you? We haven’t even seen her in weeks.” Lucius asked not understanding his line of thinking.

Narcissa placed the vase back on the table and pulled her wand out. “You promised Hermione that you wouldn’t think about that for a few days.” She stated calmly as she began clearing the table with her magic as if nothing happened.

Draco and Astoria took their seats again. “You have got to get out of your head, Harry.” Astoria chided as she poured him more juice “Try and relax. Let’s go to the beach today. We can sit and watch the waves for a bit maybe take a nap and go for a swim.” She suggested.

Harry nodded numbly and said “I think that sounds nice.” A he took a sip of the pumpkin juice she had poured for him. “I’m sorry I upset things.”

Two weeks after they returned from France all of the council members had been called together to discuss the assassination attempt. Some of his advisors had thought they might be able to rat out those responsible by confronting them in person but no one had come forward. The witches and wizards, centaurs, goblins, a giant, two sasquatch and a few other creatures that he had gathered to
discuss the happenings in the magical world had all seemed shocked. The meetings were slow going as translators argued about correct translations of different terms. It was extremely frustrating but he felt as though it was a necessary evil and that once they all got over this hump of a language barrier it would be easier. Harry wasn’t even sure all that were in attendance understood what they had been asked.

After the assassination attempt his meetings were being kept on a need to know basis. Phan Thi had allowed herself to be questioned under veritaserum and had proven to be trustworthy. Harry had felt guilty for mistrusting her but she was understanding and honestly concerned when she heard that someone had tried to kill him. They hadn’t been able to figure out who had sent the assassin and that put everyone on high alert. People and other beings avoided being around him as much as possible for fear that they might be accidentally hit in an attempt.

After they were unable to find the assassins it was decided that Harry would be assigned a security team when attending public functions. He now had several security guards watching out for him when ever he went to meetings that had been publicized. Harry had reluctantly agreed but he found it extremely aggravating. Everyone assured him that it was necessary and Harry could see that other public officials had the same sort of protection so he relented.

Today he had woken up early and slipped from the bed he had shared with Draco the night before without waking him. He was grateful for the time he could spend with him and now that Astoria had gone back to Hogwarts Draco had taken to sharing his bed and spending more time with him again. After Harry changed the marks that Lord Voldemort had left Draco hadn’t wanted to speak to him again. He kept his distance for several months and avoided seeing him as much as possible. On Halloween the Malfoys hosted a ball at the manor and Astoria had tricked Draco into a confrontation with Harry. Harry had begged for forgiveness on several occasions but that night due to Astoria’s urging Draco finally relented and forgave him.

As he showered he thought of Astoria. She was beautiful and smart. Not a prude but definitely not a slut. She was everything a proper Purist should be. He was in falling in love with her but she was meant for Draco. Draco would love her and give her the life that she deserved. Harry could only give her chaos. He showered feeling a little off as he thought about the direction his life had taken. He had wanted to serve the magical world but he couldn’t help but think about the other options he had had. He could have married Ginny and gotten a job some place and had kids. He supposed he could have been happy with that but somehow he felt he was meant for something greeter. He could have left England entirely and started fresh somewhere new like Ron was doing. He had plenty of money for that but that direction seemed lacking also. He dressed for the Wizengamot meeting later that day feeling completely comfortable in the Wizard robes that used to feel so strange to him. Formulating a plan for his morning he left the manor before anyone could question him. It had been months since he had been able to walk around freely without an entourage and today he planned on making the most of his little escape.

Arriving at a known appparation point just outside the ministry he made his way down the street towards the muggle part of town. From there he planned on finding a store that sold baby things to get Hermione a gift. Severus and her’s baby was due in about two weeks and he hadn’t had time to really shop for anything as he always had people with him. It was a cold October morning and the wind was blowing through the street kicking up dead leaves and dust. Harry pulled his cloak around him a little tighter as he made his way down the street.

After walking a few blocks he found a street vendor that was selling crepes stuffed with fruit and cheese, and coffee. There was only a few muggles around and they only glanced at him in his strange attire before looking away and going about their morning business. With a bag of crepes and a fresh hot cup of coffee he started for the block with the boutique. If his memory was correct it just
one block over from the street vendor. He was rounding a corner when he saw something out of the corner of his eye. He took a few more steps before he stopped and to consider what he saw. Turning he scanned the street looking for the strange site. He wanted to play it off as his mind being tired. He hadn’t slept much with Draco last night but he had a sickening sinking feeling in his stomach that he was beginning to recognise as vision related.

He headed back the way he came looking at all the faces of the people walking around him. None of them looked at all familiar. He handed his bag of crepes off to a bum sitting on the sidewalk as he began frantically retracing his steps. The more he searched the more he felt as though he recognised the person he had passed. He searched all the way back to the street vendor before he saw the figure again. He ran towards the man and called his name “Sirius. Sirius Black.” The man kept on walking as though he hadn’t heard him. Harry finally caught up to him and grabbed his shoulder turning him around. The man put his arms up defensively shoving Harry backwards. Harry held his hands up “It’s me, Sirius. Harry.”

The man with short hair had a full beard that was neatly trim but his mustache was so slight and thin it was hardly there. The man looked at Harry and his strange clothing as though Harry was some sort of freak. “I’m sorry, kid. I think you’ve got the wrong person.” He turned to walk away.

Harry was certain he was his godfather so he tried again. “Sirius. Don’t you recognise me?”

The man looked at Harry again before saying “How old are you, kid? And why are you dressed like that? Is there some sort of convention in town?” He asked staring at his strange attire with disgust.

Harry frowned and said “I’m nineteen and this is how I always dress now. You were there when I was born. Lily and James were my parents.”

“I was friends in school with a James.” The man said frowning. He wondered how Harry could know that sort of thing but figured it was probably some sort of trick. There were lots of people named James.

“I know.” Harry said getting a little excited. “James married my mother. You were friends with Remus and Peter too.”

“Peter?” He asked. “Now that’s a name I will never forget.” He said getting a far away look in his eyes. He shook his head as if to clear it and said “I don’t know who you think I am kid but you are better off not knowing me.”

He turned to leave again but Harry stopped him. “I know who you are, Sirius Black. Where have you been for the past five years?”

The man looked around the street before taking Harry’s arm roughly and pulling him to the side. “I’ve been in a mental hospital for the past few years and before that I was in prison for killing a few people along with my best friend Peter.” He said before shoving Harry away. “Like I said kid, I don’t know what stories your father told you, but you don’t want to know me. Now get lost.” He turned and stalked off down the street.

Harry didn’t know what to do. He watched him storm off. He couldn’t even fathom how it could be that Sirius was still alive let alone seemingly having no memory of him. When Sirius was thrown into the archway everyone just assumed that he was dead but his body had never been found. What if someone else found him and did something with his memories. Harry ran down the street and caught up with him again “Sirius or whatever your name is now, wait up.”

He paused and groaned “Listen, Harry is it? Listen, I don’t want any trouble. I served my time for
my crimes and then after I was released, I suffered an injury and spent several years in the hospital. I left whatever life I had behind me. I’ve got a chance for a new life and I don’t want anyone to mess it up. Please, I don’t want any trouble.” He said angrily.

Just then another man approached them “Is everything okay, Lord Potter?” The auror asked looking over the stranger with a nervous eye. He didn’t like the crazy look that he was giving Lord Potter and although he knew he wouldn’t be happy to be interrupted he felt as though he should for Lord Potter’s safety.

Harry looked at the auror angrily.”Are you following me?” He looked at his surroundings and noted several other witches and wizards trying to not stare at him and Sirius. It had been months since he had let his magic slip but today he found the air around him crackling with power. “Why are you following me?” He asked trying to contain his emotions. He had wanted to spend the morning alone shopping for his best friend but still he was being followed.

The auror took a step back and put up his hands “I’m sorry, Lord Potter, but Mrs. Snape gave us orders to ghost your movements in muggle areas for your own protection.”

“Hermione!” He bit out angrily. “The security team is just for public meetings this isn’t a publicized meeting.” He growled out to the auror motioning to Sirius angrily.

The auror frowned and looked around to the other aurors for support. “Well, ever since that bombing she’s had us trailing you whenever we can.” The auror glanced to Sirius. “Who is this? Is he giving you any trouble.”

Sirius took a step backwards and said “I gotta go. I don’t know who you are LORD Potter,” He said putting the emphasis on the Lord part. “but I really can’t have anything to do with this.” He turned and sprinted down the street calling for a taxi.

Harry frowned and said “He didn’t have anything to do with the bombing. You wanna do something to help me out?” He said as he stepped closer to the auror. “Follow that guy but don’t cause him any trouble. I want to know who he thinks he is and where he has been for the past few years. I have the sneaky feeling Voldemort is somehow involved.”

The auror frowned “Do you think he was a DeathEater?” He asked looking at the man as he climbed into a cab. He was certain he didn’t recognize the man but he also didn’t know everyone of Voldemort’s people.

Harry shook his head “No, he wasn’t a deatheater. What I think is, that he’s not dead, and he should be, or at least we all thought he was.”

Forgetting about the gift for Hermione and the coming baby he headed back towards the ministry apparation point before he arrived he said to the aurors that were still following him “I’m going to Hogwarts. You don’t have to follow me there.” And apparated away before reaching to designated spot. The muggles in the area were probably doing double takes questioning their eyesight. Harry didn’t care at that moment as he apparated directly into The headmaster’s office. He was relieved to find Severus sitting behind his desk and alone. He wasn’t really in the mood to be kept waiting or to explain his sudden appearance.

Severus looked up not really surprised to see him appear in his office and asked “Harry, what’s happened that you couldn’t wait another half hour to see me?”
“Did you know that Hermione has aurors following me around in the muggle areas?” He asked as he began pacing the office, his magic still crackling in the air around him.

Severus smirked and answered “If you just today noticed them then it is good that she has had them do so. You don’t pay close enough attention to the people around you.”

“I don’t need an armed escort to follow me 24/7.” He said angrily as he flopped down into one of the chairs. “It’s bad enough that they follow me to all those public functions as though I can’t defend myself. I should be able to walk out of the ministry and get a bite to eat from street vendor without needing to be followed.”

“Obviously!” Severus said dryly. He could tell that Harry wasn’t in a mood to argue this topic right now. “What brought them to your attention this morning?” Severus went on ignoring the Dark Lord’s petulance.

Harry leaned forward and said “I found him!” excitedly. His demeanor changing completely.

“Found who?” Severus asked a little surprised at Harry’s excitement.

“Sirius Black. I found him just walking down the street as alive as you and me. Only he doesn’t seem to have his real memories. He didn’t even recognise me. He told me he spent time in prison for killing Peter and a few other people and then a mental hospital. He doesn’t seem to remember anything.

“Sirius Black died when he was sucked into the arch, Harry. No one ever lives through that.” Severus said worriedly. “I don’t know who or what you saw but it couldn’t have been Black.”

“How do we know that no one ever lives? We never found a body. How do we know that all the people who went through the arch didn’t just have their memories lost and laid in a bed somewhere as a John Doe?”

Severus frowned thinking of the implications of something like that. “How can you be certain that it was him?”

“I’m certain. It was him. I have the aurors looking into it for me. Do you recall any mention of him being taken care of? I was thinking that Voldemort must have had someone find him and fix his memories.”

“If Voldemort’s people found him he’d have been brought back and tortured even if he was completely defenseless and didn’t know who he was. Voldemort wanted him dead in the worst way. A pureblood from an ancient wealthy prominent family. Sirius was a representative of the worst of the blood traitors. He could almost forgive the Weasley’s because they weren’t wealthy but not Sirius.”

“The Order then?” He turned to look at Professor Dumbledore’s portrait. The old Headmaster was absent from his frame. “Where is he at?”

“He’s taken to visiting the portrait of Aryana. They go to her other portrait in the Hogshead and have morning tea with Aberforth. I think that all the people that might have had a hand in something like hiding Sirius and changing his memories are dead. Remus, Albus, Tonks. Maybe Shacklebolt he might know something about it. We could ask him later.”

Harry nodded his head absently. “I can’t believe he’s alive. If we get his memories restored he can go back to his life.”
“And what life is that, Harry? All his friends are dead. It might be better if he doesn’t have those memories. Before you make any rash decisions you need to think about what’s best for Sirius.”

“I hadn’t thought about that. What if he is happier not knowing me or my new family?”

“Or your new found fame in the wizarding world. He may not like the direction you’ve taken. Your support for the purist cause has moved our part of the wizarding world forward. As a blood traitor he might just take up the pro muggle position again and you could find yourself fighting with him.” Severus sighed and stood up. “We better get going or we’ll be late for the Wizengamot meeting.” He said as he pulled his black robes on.

Harry stood and said “I think I’ll not say anything to Shackleton until the aurors give me their report.”

“That would probably wise.” Severus said as he opened the floo. “How did you get out of the Manor without bodyguards?”

“I wanted to get Hermione and the baby a gift so I woke early and left before anyone else got up. I was killing time walking around the city when I saw him.”

Severus smiled thinking about Hermione. “What did you get them?” He asked noticing that Harry held no packages.

“I never made it to the boutique.” He said in frustration. They arrived at the ministry lobby where his usual security team was waiting. He went on saying “I was so shocked from seeing Sirius and angry about the escorts that I stormed away forgetting about the gift.” They started for the lift ignoring the security entourage that fell in around him and Severus.

They were joined by Percy who was practically sprinting towards them. “Lord Potter, I have information for you from a Nigerian ambassador. They think they found the assassin.” He said excitedly then greeted Severus. “Good Morning, Severus.” He fell instep with Harry displacing Severus and added “I have the ambassador in a conference room waiting to speak with you.” The security guard rushed ahead calling the lift so that it arrived just as Harry and his entourage. “I already informed the Wizengamot reporter that you would be delayed. Percy said as they stepped into the lift. “Auror Malone and his service team are waiting to hear what the Ambassador has to say.”

Severus frowned and asked “Did you say Nigerian ambassador? I had no idea that they were working with you, Harry. When did that change?”

“They are not. They aren’t really organized over there and those that are refused to cooperate with my plans to unify the wizarding world.” Harry said as he considered this new development. “I’ll meet with him briefly but I really don’t want to delay the Wizengamot meeting. I want them to vote on this new proposition today. I won’t let it be delayed any further.”

“I don’t think they will be able to do that. There is too much at stake.” Severus said. “Shall I go on ahead and have them start without you?” The lift doors slid open to the office level.

“I’ll just be a few moments, Severus. Let them start the debating but I want to be there for the vote.” Harry said as he stepped off the lift with Percy and the two security men.

Two more security guards joined them as they walked down the hall. “I have him in the Minister’s conference room.” Percy said as he lead the way down the hall.

Auror Malone waited at the door for them. “Good Morning, Lord Potter.” He said. “We are anxious
to hear what the supposed Nigerian ambassador has to say.”

Harry stopped outside the door and looked around. There were eight people standing outside of the conference room wanting to speak to the man inside. Harry frowned not wanting to doubt his staff but he had to ask to be sure “You checked his credentials?” Malone nodded “And he’s not using anything to hide his identity?”

“They checked him as soon as he requested to see you. He flew here via muggle transportation he has a muggle ID card. And we had curse breakers check to make sure he wasn’t under any curses. No imperious spells or anything. He’s clean.” Malone said proudly. “My team has covered all the bases. He claims to be a village shaman.”

Harry nodded and said “Thank you, I’ll speak to him in private.” He entered the room and closed the door before the guards could follow. The mad stood up when he entered. Harry smiled and said “I hope my staff has treated you fairly.”

The man bowed and said “Lord Potter, it is a great honor to be in your presence.”

“Please, you don’t have to bow. Have a seat. Do you need anything? Water? Tea? A bite to eat?”

The man shook his head. “No, My Lord.” He said bowing again.

Harry took a seat wishing the man wasn’t prostrating himself so. “I didn’t catch your name.”

The man stood up straight “My name is Ammon. I am the Shaman to my village.” He said proudly. “It’s a pleasure to meet you. How many people live in your village?” Harry asked, courtesy winning out over his annoyance.

“It is a very small community. There are several witches and wizards but I am the most powerful and was elected Shaman after the last shaman, my Great Uncle, was murdered. There are approximately 2500 people living in my village.”

“Please, take a seat.” Harry said again. Ammon was very tall and Harry was getting a crick in his neck looking up at him. “Did you have some information for me?”

The man hesitantly took a seat a few seats down from Harry. He looked around nervously as though he expected someone to jump out at him. “My village has run into a bit of trouble.”

Harry nodded sagely. “I see.” he said “And let me guess you were hoping to sell me the information.”

Ammon cleared his throat. “Well, not exactly.” He said nervously.

Harry was already starting to lose his patience with this man. Someone had tried to kill him and he might know who but was going to withhold the information. Letting his anger become clear he said “I have, at my disposal, one of the most gifted Legimens to have ever existed. If I wanted I could call him in here and he could pull out the information and there wouldn’t be anything you could do to stop him.” Harry hoped that this man wouldn’t call his bluff. Ripping information from a foreigner probably would fall under something Severus would find morally reprehensible and he would hate to make him do something like that.

Ammon stuttered trying to get out his next words. “P-p-p-please. You don’t understand. We need your help.”
“My help?” Harry asked incredulously. “What could I possibly do to help you?”

“The people who are trying to kill you have infiltrated our community and they are taking our gifted children.”

Harry sat back in his chair. He hadn’t expected something like that but he guessed it probably made sense. As he considered the possibilities he had a vision of the future of these children. Making a quick decision he stood and asked “When are you expected to return to your village?”

Ammon stood worriedly when he realized that Lord Potter was going to end their meeting without offering him any help. “They think I am visiting my father in Cambridge. He’s a teacher at a private school there.” He answered hoping that the rumors of Lord Potters position on children were true.

Harry went to the door and opened it. “Auror Malone, I know we are needed elsewhere in a few minutes but could you please assign someone to find Shaman Ammon a place where he can get comfortable. I’ll need to speak with him further later. He’s to be treated as a honored guest. Also, I’ll need to speak to you directly after the Wizengamot meeting regarding another matter, if you wouldn’t mind.” Malone nodded in understanding. Lord Potter was quick to make decisions and didn't waste time. Harry started down the hall with Percy at his side and the guards trying to keep up. Once out of earshot he said “Percy, can you see to it that he’s kept alive and Healthy. I don’t want him accidentally getting poisoned or something.”

“Sure, Lord Potter, I’ll speak to Malone personally. What did he say?”

“My assassin’s are training children to kill me.” He said bluntly. Thoughts of Dumbledore and his training floated through his mind. “We all know what a bunch of children can do to a person of great power.” Percy nodded grimly.
Auror Malone lead the way down the hall to the first floor office at the Malfoy Manor. He had visited the Manor on several occasions since Potter had been named Lord but this was the first time that he was here unannounced. After arriving via floo, the House elf that greeted them informed them they would be seen in the lower office. The man he escorted was a former Death Eater and had only been to the Manor once during Voldemort’s occupation. Since Voldemort’s fall he had been working for the Ministry, mainly the Auror Department, in an advisory/secret detective position. Not many people knew of him or what he did for the Ministry department.

The lower office was unoccupied when they entered. That hadn’t surprised Malone as it was 2:15 am. He stood nervously waiting for Lord Potter’s arrival not sure if Harry would be pleased to see him or not this time of night even though it was information that Harry was anxious to have. The man that was with him sat down casually in one of the two arm chairs. Malone considered his casualness to be cocky and knew it wouldn’t be well received by Harry but said nothing. He was sure his part of the meeting would be short and the rest would be up to Caldwell.

Harry entered the office a few moments later. “Morning, Frank.” He said sleepily as he entered the room.

Frank motioned to the other man to stand as Harry entered. He was relieved when Caldwell rose from his seat. “Good Morning, Lord Potter.” Malone said as he took Harry’s hand bowing slightly. “I’d like to introduce you to an associate of mine. This is Gregory Caldwell. He’s a hired specialist that I asked to work on two cases for me.”

Harry took the man’s hand feeding some of his newly learned dark magic through the connection, testing Caldwell’s position and loyalty. Harry smiled at the man as he felt his magic return a positive flow. “It’s a pleasure to meet you.” Harry said releasing Caldwell’s hand. “Please have a seat.” He said motioning to both men.

Mr. Caldwell frowned, not understanding what he had just felt. “Lord Potter, if I may,” he said as he began rolling up his sleeve. His mark felt strange almost tingly. “I was Voldemort’s man….” He started to say feeling as though he should apologize for his past behavior. It was clear to him that Harry must know that he had been marked as a Death Eater.

Harry smirked and said “I know, and now you’re mine.” He casually motioned for him to sit again.

Caldwell rolled his sleeve up exposing the Dark mark that had been painfully burned into his arm by Voldemort himself. Over a year ago the mark had spontaneously changed one morning when he was still in hiding. He had fled England as soon as the Battle of Hogwarts had started and was relieved to have escaped Voldemort’s reign without having been forced to do anything criminal enough to land him in Azkaban. When the mark had changed he learned from others that had fled as he had that there was a new Dark Lord and they were all being called back into service. He had waited a few months before he returned and only did so when it was clear that Harry Potter wasn’t going to rule as Voldemort had. He looked at the mark that now seemed to glow, the snake twisting around and through the symbol of a triangle over a circle with a wand bisecting the design. The snake hadn’t ever moved like that before not even after Voldemort had placed the mark and used it to call him and others to him. He looked up at Harry in awe and asked “What did you do to it?”
“It’s nothing of concern.” Harry said smiling reassuringly. “I was able to change almost everyone’s marks because I had shared magic with Voldemort. I don’t know how I did, it as it wasn’t a conscious change but all those that were marked by Voldemort that were loyal and believed in my cause had their marks changed, marking them as my supporters. When I shook your hand I checked to see if yours had changed. I’m told that when I do, the mark gets, happy, for lack of a better word.”

Malone smirked “Happy isn’t the best word. Euphoric might be better. It feels like it’s elated to have felt Lord Potter’s magic, doesn’t it, Gregory?” Malone asked.

Caldwell held his hand over the mark and said “I thought the only emotion it could experience was fear and pain.” He suddenly wanted to do anything Potter would ask of him so that he could experience that feeling again.

Harry motioned to the chairs again. “Please, have a seat. It’s very early for me and I didn’t get to sleep until very late.” He took the seat behind the desk as he spoke. “Would you like some tea or coffee?”

Caldwell took the seat he recently vacated feeling slightly disorientated. This wasn’t exactly how he expected this meeting to go. He had never met Lord Potter before and had entered feeling confident. Now he felt small and incapable.

“Lord Potter…..” Malone started.

Harry held up his hand and said “Frank, please it’s 2 in the morning, let’s drop the Lord Potter.”

Frank cleared his throat and started over “Harry, after Ammon gave us all the information he knew about the wizard gang infiltrating his village, I recruited a few people to infiltrate their group. Three days ago, under suspicion that they had spies in their midst, they abandoned their village and moved to another location. They are regrouping in Siwa. My spy is going with them. However, they did take several gift children with them. My spy tells me the children are being treated well.” Caldwell nodded numbly as he listened to Malone’s report.

“But they are still being taught that I’m an evil monster that they must stop?” Harry asked feeling helpless.

“I’m afraid that that is most likely the case.” Malone said looking at Caldwell who nodded in confirmation.

Frank nodded sadly. “There’s not anything I can do about it right now I suppose.”

“I feel we are doing everything we can do. If we break them up they will just find other children, At least this way we can watch their movements.” Frank added.

Harry looked to Caldwell and asked, “And how does he fit into this?”

“He’s the contact person for the spies we are using. He is also taking care of another matter that you asked me to assure that it never became public knowledge.”

“Sirius?” Malone nodded. “Did you find something?” Harry asked directing his question to Caldwell.

Caldwell smiled “I found a lot of somethings.” He glanced to Malone. “Malone asked me to not tell anyone not even him.”

Frank stood, “If you don’t have any more questions for me I’ll just wait in the receiving room.” He
said looking to Harry for dismissal.

“Thanks, Frank. I appreciate the information even if it is really early.” Harry said, dismissing him from the office.

Once Frank was gone Harry cast a silencing spell over the room. “There’s only a few people that know I’m looking for him. I had Frank alter the memories of the Aurors that saw our confrontation on the street and after them only one other person knows.”

Caldwell nodded in understanding “I did have a partner working with me to obtain this information, If you like I can have her submit herself to having those memories altered.”

“What did you find?” He asked, choosing not to address the memory thing. He hadn’t been happy when Malone offered to alter the memories of the Aurors who had followed him that morning but he was assured that it wouldn’t harm them.

Caldwell pulled a muggle looking file from inside of his robe. “I’ve got a copy of his medical file from his doctor’s office. The actual file has enchantments on it to make it so that nobody thinks to look further into his case.” He handed the file to Harry. “So after breaking through the enchantments I was able to look into his imprisonment too. The medical file says he was held at Chelmsford prison for seventeen years for a crime of passion. Apparently he killed his best friend after he broke up a relationship with a girl. He inadvertently killed a few bystanders in the process. It was deemed a crime of passion and he was eventually released on good behavior.”

“What did the prison file say?” He asked, wondering who would supply false information about Sirius.

Caldwell smiled and said “Whoever hid Mr. Black covered all the bases and used some pretty tricky magic to do it. I thought I wouldn’t find any record of him at Chelmsford but I was wrong. There was a record and not only that there were pictures of him in their training facility. He’s been trained as a chef. I ate at the restaurant he’s working at and he’s a really good chef.” He laughed and added “Whoever hid him even made court records and a muggle birth certificate. They were really thorough.”

Harry opened the file and started sifting through the pages. “Were you able to figure out who did this to him?” He asked when he saw a picture of Sirius laying in a hospital bed, his head bandaged and angry looking burn marks on his arms.”

“Ah, well if the enchanted false files weren’t weird enough for you wait until you hear about Mr. Wolfe.” He said chuckling “That’s an even more bizarre story. Sergio Blanco was found near Kings Cross train station. Bystanders saw him staggering as though he were drunk but no one saw where he came from.”

“Sergio Blanco?” Harry asked “Who is that?”

“It’s the name Mr. Black is going by now.” Caldwell said, shrugging. “He collapsed in the street and the police were called. He then spent 3 weeks in a coma as John Doe before anyone came to identify him. A man named Bran Wolfe came and said that he was a good friend of his. The nurse there said it was actually Mr. Wolfe who supplied all his information. He visited multiple times while Sergio was in the coma supposedly praying over him. After he woke, Mr. Wolfe only visited once then never came back.”

“Mr. Wolfe?” Harry asked perplexed “Did you see who that was?” He wondered if Remus could have kept such a secret. It didn’t seem possible though.
“No and when I asked to see the video of that time I was told that they had all been destroyed. Seems convenient to me.” He went on, “Several of the people at the hospital recall Sergio’s time there. When he woke from the coma he initially couldn’t remember anything but shortly after his visit with Mr. Wolfe he had most of his memories restored. Except you and I know that those memories are false.” Mr. Caldwell sat back shaking his head “It must have been some obliviate spell that was used to affect so many at once.”

“I know someone who could probably do such a spell but she wouldn’t have been involved in this I’m sure.”

“I then went and spoke to his Psychiatrist. He informed me that Mr. Blanco struggles with flashbacks that don’t fit into his history but most can be explained away. After his meeting with you he suffered a mental breakdown. He had hallucinations about being shot through with a laser of some sort. His doctor had a heck of a time convincing him the had been hit by an electrical bolt and that was what he was seeing in the flashback. They increased his meds and after a few days he was able to return to work.”

“His Psychiatrist just gave you this information?” Harry asked. Some of this seemed very private to him and he worried that he was infringing on Sergio’s privacy.

“Well, not exactly willingly.” He said sheepishly. “We had to use our own personal form of coercion.

Harry frowned thinking about use of magic on muggles and the scandal that it would cause if it ever got out that he sanctioned it.

Sighing he asked, “Could anyone at least give you a description of Mr. Wolfe?”

“That’s another thing, if you didn’t know about magic you would think it was several different people named Wolfe. One person said it was an old man, another a young man, and yet another thought it was an old lady.” He laughed “When I asked the security guard about that one he said, ‘Oh yeah, that is weird why would she call herself Mr. Wolfe?’” Shaking his head he added, “Whoever it was did a brilliant job of covering his past up. If we didn’t know any better we’d never have been able to find him.”

“How are they explaining away the magic though? He must be doing things with it even if he doesn’t know he’s doing it.”

Caldwell shook his head sadly “There’s no magic. Not a flicker of a core, I wouldn’t even consider him a squib. He’s been stripped completely clean.”

Harry sat back stunned. He couldn’t fathom his Godfather not having magic. It was who he was. He was a wizard. Mr. Caldwell brought him back to his attention, “I’m sorry, I don’t have better news for you. What would you like me to do now?” Harry frowned, thinking of all the things that he could do. He could force the memories to return to him. He was sure he could do that but what good would that be if Sirius couldn’t use his magic. Could Harry instill someone with magic? Was he powerful enough to create a core and give someone magic? If he could, isn’t that what the Supremacists were claiming muggles did to create muggle born children. Maybe it was best to not explore that avenue. “Lord Potter, Is there anything else?” Caldwell asked again.

Shaking himself Harry thought about what he wanted done with the information. There were four people who now knew about Sirius or Sergio and he needed to think about his godfathers future. Standing he said “Yes, Mr. Caldwell, you mentioned an assistant, I would like you to ask her to submit to memory modification if you wouldn’t mind. I would also ask that you do the same.” He
motioned to the door, effectively halting any protest that Caldwell had about his own memories being modified. Harry expected him to comply and wouldn’t discuss it further. He led the way to receiving room in thoughtful silence not bothering to speak to Caldwell who was following along. Frank sat waiting in one of the chairs. “Auror Malone,” Harry said, startling him as he drifted in and out of sleep. It seemed like it had been a long wait for Harry and his charge. “Mr. Caldwell has done an excellent job gathering the information I requested.” Harry went on, not addressing Malone’s startled behavior. “I would like him to be compensated generously. He has an assistant that worked with him, both will submit to memory modification.” Malone merely nodded in shock. It was common practice to do so but not to the lead investigators and Harry hadn't liked the idea previously. “I don’t want anyone else to know about this project. I would suggest that you yourself forget about it, also.” Malone paled but nodded in understanding. Lord Potter wasn’t ordering one of his closest advisors to modify his own memories but Malone got the hint that he was to do so anyway.

After seeing Malone and Caldwell off through the floo he returned to the office and began sifting through the information. Sergio had been born October 23, 1959 in Rotherham england. He was the third child of Clara and Jose Blanco. When he was 19 his family died in a house fire that was documented with newspaper articles. The fire had destroyed much of the evidence of his childhood. Then, several years later he was accused of creating a gas explosion that caused the death of twelve other people including his former best friend. According to the court documents an argument had occurred between Peter and Sergio after Peter lied to a woman whose identity was withheld for privacy reasons. The woman broke off her relationship with Sergio after speaking to Peter, Sergio had been furious and confronted Peter. And after an intense argument he left the house but not until after he intentionally damaged the stove causing the explosion.

Harry shook his head in disbelief. Whoever had created these false files had really done a lot of work. Sergio had an extensive history that could be traced easily. Who would go to this extent? What would they gain from it and why did they even care?

Looking through the medical portion he saw that Sergio had been admitted to the local hospital with burns on his body as though he had been electrocuted. The police had searched for electrical problems in the area and hadn’t found any. Where Sergio had been injured at was still a mystery. Harry read through every page of the file for the next few hours.

He was deep in thought and didn’t even hear Hermione enter carrying her infant daughter. She stood for several moments reading over his shoulder before Lily made a gurgling noise alerting him to her presence. Harry jumped and quickly closed the folder, trying to hide its contents.

“I'm sorry, Harry. I didn't mean to surprise you.” She said, frowning at his unusual behavior. Harry tried to blow it off and said, “I didn’t hear you come in you just startled me that’s all.”

She shifted Lily in her arms and asked “Who is Sergio Blanco?”

“He’s no one. We suspected that he was involved in something but he’s not. He turned out to be a nobody.” Harry answered, though it pained him to do so. He picked the folder up and stacked it neatly so he could file it away.

Lily started to fidget. Hermione sighed and handed her to him and took the folder. “You won’t mind if I look then will you?” She asked, not giving him a chance to answer. “That was Frank that came by earlier wasn’t it? Who did he have with him?” She asked, as she took a seat opening the file up.

Harry was shifting Lily in his arms trying to protest her examination of the file. “I’d really rather you didn’t look through the file, Hermione, it’s go nothing to do with you.” Lily was smacking him in the face with her tiny infant hand and cooing happily. Harry couldn’t help but smile down at her. She
looked like a tiny Hermione except her hair was jet black, straight and stood out in all directions. Hermione had taken to smoothing it down with baby oil just to tame it which made her look a lot like her father but it often reverted to the ‘I’ve been shocked’ look. Harry answered her as he bounced Lily in his arms. “It was Frank. He had a private investigator with him. Really Hermione I’d rather you didn’t look at that.” He tried to reach over her head but Lily grabbed a handful of her mother’s hair getting her little hand entangled in it. Harry worked to safely free Lily as Hermione continued to look through the file.

“Harry, this person sounds a lot like Sirius. Is that why you were having him investigated?” She asked quickly scanning through the pages till she came to a muggle photo of him. She held the photo in her hand looking closely at the picture. Turning she looked him in the eyes and saw that he was close to crying. “Harry, this is Sirius, isn’t it?” He nodded and wiped away a tear. She flicked her hand at the door closing it as he told her the story.

“I ran into him on the street a few months ago. That day I snuck out before anyone could follow me.” He sat down next to her “I found him Hermione. He’s alive and well but he doesn’t remember anything.”

“Harry, I’m sure we can fix that. Whatever happened to him we can just reverse it, heal it, or something.”

Harry shook his head and wiped another tear away. “Somehow his magical core is gone. According to the investigator he hasn’t a flicker of magic in him.” He propped Lily up on his shoulder. The baby placed her hands on his shoulder as though she were giving him a hug. “I feel like he’s died all over again.” he said almost sobbing.

“Oh, Harry. I’m so sorry.” She squeezed next to him on the chair and hugged him to her. “He’s alive though. He isn’t dead. Is he happy?” She asked.

“According to Caldwell he’s a chef and a really good one too.”

“So he’s doing something he enjoys. What are you planning on doing?” She asked.

“Nothing. There’s nothing to do.” Lily let out a little burp as he went back to patting her back. “I don’t plan on telling anyone else though. The investigators were having their memories modified and Frank will probably do that too. The only other person to know is Severus. I’d like to keep it that way.”

Hermione laughed and asked “you don’t plan on trying to modify my memories do you?”

“I’m pretty sure I couldn’t, even if I wanted too.” He said jokingly as he handed Lily back to her “Is Severus coming by today? I was hoping to speak to him about Sirius.”

“I don’t think so. They are having that Spring ball at Hogwarts and still hosting Durstrum and Beaubaxton students for the next few weeks.”

Lily burped again spitting up on the front of Hermione’s robe. “Is it spring break already?” He asked as he sent a spell towards the mess before it could even soak into her garments.

She looked down at the scourgified mess and smirked “Next week. The ball is next Friday. Honestly, Harry, it was all Astoria could speak of last weekend when she came to visit. Don’t you remember she’s practically organized the whole thing.” She handed Lily back to him knowing that the wet burp was the reason he had passed her off in the first place.

Harry smiled, happily taking the squirming child. “I had forgotten. In my defense I was pretty busy
and only here for the one meal.”

“In your defense?” She asked dubiously. “Astoria could barely put Lily down all weekend. Draco and you were practically drooling over her ovaries. I bet neither of you heard a word she said.”

Harry blushed and said “I can’t help it. It’s my own fault i guess.”

Hermione laughed “you guess!” she said shaking her head. “Well, I don’t think Astoria will be ready for children on her wedding night. I keep telling them both they need to discuss it before they find themselves in the throes of passion.”

Harry nodded in agreement. “Astoria is still young. I hope they wait a few years.”

Hermione frowned and said “I had wanted to wait a few years, also. But when you get into that position all you can think of is having that child. Even now when we are having sex it pops into my head that I want to be pregnant again. If it weren’t for Narcissa making me take a potion every month I’m sure I’d be with child already.”

“I’ve asked the Wizengamot repeatedly if I should change the runes on the Gate and no one thinks it’s needed.” He said.

“It’s not needed.” She agreed.

Lily yawned and put her head on his shoulder. Harry rubbed her back trying to lull her to sleep. They sat in silence for a few moments before there was a soft knock on the door. Hermione quickly gathered the folder and stashed it away in the desk as Harry opened the door with his magic. Lucius peeked around the corner “Is everything okay? You’ve been in here for a while.”

Harry smiled and said “Yes, we’re okay. Come in.”

“What was Malone doing here so early, if i may ask?”

“He had a report on our Nigerian friends. They moved to Siwa and took our spies and some of the gifted children with them and they are still teaching the children to hate me.”

Lucius sighed and took the sleeping baby from Harry “at least we still have contacts within their midst.” he said as he settled on the couch cradling the child.

Harry nodded in agreement. He glance to Hermione who was beaming at Lucius. Harry smiled thinking how strange things had turned out but how he thought he could be happy. He would mourn those that he lost, the fresh memory of Sirius coming to mind, but he would continue to serve the wizarding world making it a better and safer place for all of them.

Chapter End Notes

So that's THE END. It could be a never ending story but I’m gonna stop here. I had plans for Ron’s part of the story but I think J K Rowling may have ruined some of my plans for that story when she announced that there were Wizarding schools in America. I’ve intentionally haven’t looked into that until I finished this story. Originally Ron was going to have trouble with his gifted daughter in the US since they try and regulate things as part of ensuring freedom and Lord Potter of wizarding world, not just Britain, would come to the rescue but now i don’t know. We’ll see how things go.
So there's chapter one. This story started out as a shorter story but then I got this really good idea and it kind of ran away with me so it's kind of long. I rated it mature because there is some gratuitous sex scenes in some of the chapters and some violence but nothing like part one of this series.

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