The Savior, Child of the Tardis, Son of a Madman
by blackcatkuroi

Summary

Out in the Universe there is a bright blue box. Inside this box is a fantastical world. Inhabiting this fantastic world is a strange man called the Doctor, an immortal human from the 51st century, a pink and yellow human who isn't really human anymore and the savior of the wizarding world.

But this isn't the start of our story, though when the Doctor gets involved in anything the start of a story is all rather fuzzy.

No. Our story starts on a deserted street, in front of a ruined house, for every story must have a start. This beginning opens with a funny old wizard in bright-colored robes and a pointed hat, holding our protagonist and wondering what he was going to do with a baby. Now, on we go.

Edit: Previously titled Harry raised by the Doctor a.k.a. The Wizarding World is not ready for This

Notes

This is a test of a story I've been working on for a year. Italics are flashbacks, ~~~~ are scene breaks. ^_^
In Which Dumbledore hands over the Boy-Who-Lived to a complete Stranger

Number 4 Privet Drive was once to be the home of a very special boy. A boy in whom an entire world placed their hopes in, their futures on, would swear their lives by. A boy who was currently just over a year old and had barely begun to toddle well on two tiny feet but had already saved the world. A boy whose name was, as we speak, being written into history books.

Yes, this is Harry Potter I speak of. Unfortunately for him, or fortunately, since we all know the story of Harry Potter raised at Number 4 Privet Drive and it wasn’t a very happy one, all in all, the family who lived at Number 4 Privet Drive, The Dursley Family, had died recently in a tragic car crash at a round-about in London. Very unfortunate, the whole thing. Grunnings was out of a mediocre worker, the street had lost their nosiest neighbor and future playgrounds would never be terrorized by the small whale known by a rather monstrously horrid name, Dudley. Harry Potter would also not be placed on their doorstep the morning of November 1st, 1981, mere hours after the deaths of his parents.

So this is where this story must start, for every story has a start. Ours starts with a funny old wizard in bright-colored robes and a pointed hat, holding our protagonist and wondering what he was going to do with a baby. Now, on we go.

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Halloween night of 1981 was turning into a bittersweet celebration for one Albus Dumbledore. Voldemort, the darkest wizard to rise to power in centuries, had been vanquished. The cost of the victory was a hard one and the deaths would be soon remembered, as soon as the hangovers and partying stopped.

At the moment though, Albus was standing in front of the burning house of the family who had died to destroy Voldemort, and the only survivor was nestled in Dumbledore’s arms, sleeping, his magic exhausted. Harry Potter, the only child of Lily and James Potter, had become a sensation and a hero in a matter of hours. The same hours he had been orphaned and his only remaining guardian arrested for murder. Long, spidery fingers traced the vivid lightning bolt on Harry’s forehead, blue eyes dimmed with sadness.

“My boy, I only hope that we can provide you a better future than the tragedy you have suffered already.” The sound of displaced air drew the headmaster’s eyes upward, landing on the tall, lean figure of his Deputy Headmistress and he furrowed his brow in confusion. “Minerva, I was under the assumption that you were watching Harry’s relatives. Has something gone wrong?” The flashing of Minerva McGonagall’s eyes and the strides she took towards him had Dumbledore rethinking his plans. Something was terribly wrong then.

“The Dursley Family is dead, Albus. They died three days ago in a….motor accident? They crashed, in any case. All three of them died instantly. But that is not the problem I have with you. I spoke with some of their neighbors, as a friend of Petunia Dursley’s sister. That family, Dumbledore, was absolutely horrid. Lily’s sister was nosy and rude, Vernon was more often drunk and violent and their son was indulged with anything he wanted. You were going to leave Harry with that family?” Minerva stopped just short of being in Dumbledore’s personal space, eyes flashing and sharp. Dumbledore blinked slowly, centering himself and avoiding looking directly at his old friend. Minerva, when angry, was a very dangerous person.

“It was because of the magic Lily performed to protect Harry. He would have been safe from Voldemort with the wards I would have set up based on the magic. Now, obviously, I have to find
something else.” He turned his gaze back to the sleeping child.

Minerva’s ire decreased, but she was still glaring at Dumbledore. “I was under the impression that You-Know-Who was killed. Are you saying otherwise?”

Dumbledore turned to look at her, eyes sharp. “Tom Riddle performed so many dark rituals that, in the end, he wasn’t human anymore. So when the killing curse backfired on him, it killed only the mortal part of him, his body. Turned it to dust, actually. But a shade of him, a sliver of his spirit, ran. And he will grow stronger. He will return one day, and this child will face him again. That is why I wanted to place him with his relatives. I could lay blood wards, tie them to Petunia and the protection on Harry would be infinitely greater. Now I must find another option.”

Minerva blinked. “You must be kidding.” Dumbledore shook his head. Minerva groaned. “So Harry will have to…are you certain Dumbledore?”

“A prophecy does not lie. Little Harry has been marked, and he will have to fight Voldemort again.”

Harry’s fingers gripped Dumbledore’s pinky tight. “The world will rest on the shoulders of this child for many years to come. I do not envy his burden.”

The two old magicians looked down at the child sleeping peacefully in the headmaster’s arms, blissfully unaware of his destiny, his fate. His future, already plotted by a prophecy told before he was even a year old. He gurgled sleepily, not even realizing the absence of his parents, too young to care. Minerva melted.

“Can I hold him?” Dumbledore smiles and shifts Harry into Minerva’s arms. She holds him gently, smiling. “He’s so little. It’s hard to believe he stopped the Dark Lord. And now without parents. Poor boy.” She looked up at Dumbledore, sadness in her eyes. “What are you going to do, Dumbledore? What are we going to do?”

“I don’t know, old friend. I really don’t.”

Albus Percival Wulfric Brian Dumbledore, Headmaster at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, Order of Merlin, First class recipient, Supreme Mugwump of the International Confederation of Wizards, Chief Warlock of the Wizengamot, most powerful wizard in the UK, was sitting behind his desk, rocking a crying baby and trying frantically to think of any possible way to calm a child. All the children he cared for were of an age where they could be reasoned with and spoken to. This young tyke understood not a word and school was going to be starting up again soon. After the fall of Voldemort, parents were sending their children back to Hogwarts in two days and he would not have the time to care for Harry.

After the tragedy of his parent’s deaths, Harry was forced by circumstance to come with Dumbledore. Dumbledore was seriously unprepared for child-rearing, and he was coming to this conclusion after four days with the boy. Fawkes had tried his best to calm the child, but even the phoenix’s song failed and the crying level increased. The fire-colored bird had retreated at the beginning of this particular tantrum and he hadn’t returned yet. Dumbledore had tried everything he could think of to placate the boy, but little worked for long. He simply wasn’t stopping.

Madam Pomphrey had checked out Harry after the first three spells and assured Dumbledore that it was merely the return of Harry’s severely depleted magic that was upsetting him and it shouldn’t last more than another day. It had been three days since, and Harry was still crying.

Dumbledore rocked the sobbing savior and narrowed his eyes. How powerful was the child, if his
magic was still returning. He reached for his wand and twirled it above Harry’s head, muttering in gaelic a spell to reveal the boy’s aura. There must be something unusual about it.

The magic rippled down from the wand and enveloped the now quiet and curious Harry. Tiny fingers reached out to touch the bubble of silvery energy, and Dumbledore watch as Harry’s own magic reached out to examine this new thing. The brilliant thing about this spell was that it would make a person’s magic visible and would bring their aura into the visible spectrum. As Harry’s magic spread out around him, examining the new, strange spell, Dumbledore’s eyes widened.

A person’s aura was very specific to their power and skill, their personality and their potential. Each one was unique, but they were only fully unique after a certain age. Most children’s auras under the age of ten shared a similar shape. Occasionally, there were those that carried the visions of their future power or potential, but many children shared an innocence that caused a formless or shapeless aura that whirled around them, free and joyful. Dumbledore’s aura was full of shimmering threads, shifting into various pictures and images, changing depending on the particular problem he was faced with. Little Harry’s was….different.

Shimmering glimmers of light, almost like stars, spun around him, colors twisting and mixing and forming new spheres of color as it interacted with the magic around its host. Harry’s eyes lit up as his hands played with the orbs, and his magic happily complied and created colorful balls for him to play with. Dumbledore could barely see Harry through the bright shine of the magic surrounding him, and as he let the aura revealing spell go, the floating balls stayed and Harry’s giggles filled the office. Dumbledore blinked, stunned. Harry was….his magic was amazing. The colors reminded him of a miracle he had seen so long ago, and to see it here, surrounding a slip of a boy, was something….something else entirely. He sat and watched Harry play and giggle until he drifted off to sleep.

He gently lifted Harry up and laid him down in the crib transfigured from a once well used book shelf. It had been a worthy sacrifice. Dumbledore gazed down on Harry, knowing that he couldn’t raise him, knowing that he would have to find someone else to show the child his path, and it broke his heart just a little. He returned to his desk and pulled out the scroll he had requested from the goblins three days before.

The Potter will. Every person on that list was either Dead, Ineligible or in prison. Sirius Black, in Azkaban, and such a horrible tragedy that was. Peter Pettigrew, Dead. Frank and Alice Longbottom. In Saint Mungo’s incurable wing. The Fleatings, Dead. Remus Lupin, a werewolf, not allowed to have Harry by Ministry standards. The Bones, Dead and Madam Bones was in no position to care for both her niece and Harry after losing her entire family. The Kingstons, Dead. And the resort Dumbledore had planned on turning to when he had discovered the spell Lily had used to protect Harry, the Dursley’s, had fallen through when Minerva told him they were dead. Little Harry was all on his own in the world.

Many magical families would love to take the child in, would be glad to, would open their hearts to this possibility, but in the wake of the destruction of the battles and the tragedies, Harry needed a stable home, one that wouldn’t praise him, raise him on a pedestal or bow to his every whim.

Fawkes swooped in, landing on Dumbledore’s chair and whistling softly. Dumbledore sighed. “Yes, I know. I can’t take him Fawkes, it isn’t within my power. Hogwarts is not equipped to deal with a small child. It just isn’t possible. I am unable to care for him like I should. I can’t raise him knowing full well I might be sending him to his death. I need someone to take him. To care for him, raise him into what he is meant to be.” Fawkes whistled again, louder. “Shhh, the child. He just fell asleep…” Fawkes shrilled impatiently, pointing with a wing at a small cylindrical device on a nearby table. A relic from Dumbledore’s past.
The old man’s eyes, now wide behind his half-moon spectacles, sparked in comprehension. Yes, yes, if he could find that man…such a strange and powerful man would be able to care for Harry, would be able to keep him safe. He was an unknown factor, Voldemort didn’t know of him, no one knew him. Dumbledore had done his research on the man after he had woken from his drunken stupor. There was no information on him, just rumors and mystery. Such a man who was able to keep his identity from being discovered, but with such power was someone who would be able to help him.

He stood and retrieved the object, examining it carefully. He remembered the day he was given it, the reasons he had been handed the strange device.

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The last spell ending the duel flew through the air, a simple and almost unremarkable spell, one taught to all first year students, a simple petrification spell. But the duel had dragged on so long it was all he could do to send it at his old friend, his former love, and watch the man who had terrorized Europe and almost caused the destruction of the planet fall, still and silent, unable to move, the Elder Wand now scattered feet away from his hand.

It was over. The war, the duel, was over, and Dumbledore had ended it. He swayed on his feet, lowered his wand, and with silent tears, watched as the remaining aurors stunned the most dangerous Dark Wizard in history, trussing him up to be carted to Nurmengard, a cruel irony that had Dumbledore chuckling weakly. Yes, he had defeated Gellert Grindelwald. He felt his heart tear just a little bit more.

When the wand that had started their obsession flew to his hand and he heard the song of its power claiming him as its master, he couldn’t help the laughter that bubbled out of his throat. Yes, the horrid irony of it all. He was now in possession of this powerfully ancient weapon. Of course. He ignored the stares from the crowd, the whispers as he staggered away to collapse at the edge of the charred and ruined landscape. He had made the biggest mistake of his life, he had nearly caused the destruction of life on earth because of his pride, his hesitance, his absolute confidence in his intelligence. The tears slipped down his cheeks.

“You are a brave man, Albus Dumbledore. I commend you.” The voice, unfamiliar but lilting with an odd, northern accent, summoned his attention fully. He looked up.

The man who had spoken to him looked young, wide face, broad smile, big ears, but Dumbledore had learned the value of looking past the features of someone’s face. His eyes were ancient. Old and powerful and infinitely sad. The smile on his lips contradicted everything he saw in his eyes. “Who are you, friend?”

The man laughed. “Yes, I suppose that would be the question, wouldn’t it? I’m The Doctor.” Dumbledore blinked. Doctor? Was this man a muggle? He couldn’t be. This area was spelled with muggle-repelling charms. He wouldn’t be able to see him.

“Doctor who? I have never seen you before and I am certain I would remember you if I had.” The man smiled, lifting Dumbledore to his feet. The Doctor had an inch or so on him.

“Just The Doctor. And no, never met before. But I must say, that was rather fantastic. And even more so, you didn’t kill him, despite everything he had done. All that misery he had dealt out. That I can only compliment you on. Any other wouldn’t have the strength to keep him alive.”

Dumbledore shook his head. “Not strength, cowardice. He is my mistake, something I must take responsibility for. Killing him wouldn’t absolve me of that burden. I have to try and help him, give
him the chance to see the error of his ways, and if not, let him die of old age where he can’t hurt
anyone else. He is a reminder of what I could turn into if I let myself forget that I am fallible.”

The Doctor smiled wider. “You are fantastic. The epitome of fantastic. Amazing.” The Doctor
looked Dumbledore up and down. “Come on, let me get you a drink. The champion deserves that at
least.” The Doctor grabbed Dumbledore’s hand and headed off, towards Hogsmeade and the pub.
Dumbledore blinked at the sudden exuberance of the man who was dragging him, and wondered
why he wasn’t taking offence to it, or even arguing. He decided he was too tired to raise a fuss, and
if this man was going to get him a drink, well, who was he to argue? He could do with a drink. Soon
he would be descended upon by the flock of reporters just waiting for him to make an appearance, to
tell him of the brilliance of his duel, to compliment him on defeating Gellert, saving the world. He
wasn’t quite ready for it.

The man with the old eyes wouldn’t praise him with empty words, something in Albus knew that.
Every word this man spoke felt as if the world took its next breath based on it. He was still thinking
when he was dragged into an empty pub. He could have sworn the door had been locked; nearly
every door was locked and barred right now, considering the proximity to the dueling site, but
apparently not this one. Or the Doctor had managed to open it without him realizing. Albus looked
at him with a new appreciation. This man was powerful. Strangely powerful.

A chair at the bar was pulled up and Dumbledore was ceremoniously pushed into it. The Doctor ran
behind the bar and pulled out a few bottles of fire whiskey, opening two and handing one to
Dumbledore. “To responsibility then, Albus Dumbledore.” Albus raised an eyebrow. An odd one,
this man.

“To responsibility.” He drained half the bottle. “Who are you, Doctor, to look so young yet have
eyes so old?” The Doctor smiled a half smile.

“One who has lived through a war. You too have old eyes, eyes older than your age suggests. At 62
years, you have very old eyes. War and conflict can age someone past their years Albus
Dumbledore. And one who has to fight for an entire world against someone who was once a dear
friend will be aged even more so.”

Dumbledore blinked. “How do you know so much of me when I know nothing of you?”

“It doesn’t matter, really. Besides, you are the one who has just won.” Dumbledore shook his head.

“I have won nothing of consequence. I have merely defeated my own mistakes.”

“That is a victory in itself. It is never too late to realize your mistakes and to learn from them. I
watched as you dueled your old friend, watched as you tried to change him, and realized its futility.
As you hardened your heart and defeated him and sentenced him to imprisonment rather than
death. And that was fantastic. You humans continue to surprise me. The valiant effort some of you
go through to try and make things right, it never fails to astonish and surprise me. And you, Albus
Dumbledore, are just fantastic. Absolutely brilliant. You are why the human race is so absolutely
fantastic. You strive to fix your mistakes, to help, to change the world to be a better place. It is an
honor, Albus Dumbledore. An honor. In every possible way.”

Dumbledore jerked back at those words and looked for falsehood in the Doctor’s face. There was
none. Only honesty and a small amount of awe, as if he couldn’t believe Dumbledore was real.

“Who are you? You say things as if you aren’t human, yet I can plainly see you are. You don’t have
characteristics of any creature that would be nonhuman.”

“Doesn’t matter. I want to hear about you. You and Gellert Grindelwald. There is an interesting
Dumbledore took another drink, feeling the fire whiskey slipping into his bloodstream and fuzzing his brain just a bit. Well, it would be a weight off his chest, and this man wouldn’t berate him for it. None of it. “Gellert and I were good friends, the best of mates. I loved him, long ago. Before we parted. I still do, in fact. He was the only one I could relate to. Only one fast enough to keep up. I was such an arrogant fool then, thinking I was above everyone because I was smarter than them. I was so angry too, at the world, at the muggles for their intolerance, at the wizards for their incompetence, and the government for its blind obedience to the public masses. We thought we could change it all. Make the world better, even if we killed some people to do it. It was for the greater good, what did a few people mean in the end.” Dumbledore looked up at the man he was speaking to, saw no judgment in his eyes. He was listening, really listening. Dumbledore finished off the bottle, reached for another. “My sister, Ariana. She had been attacked by muggle boys when she was little, when they saw her playing with magic. They beat her, she was so traumatized she couldn’t control her magic anymore, she was barely coherent most of the time and when she was, she made little sense. My dad went to Azkaban for attacking the boys and Ariana killed my mother accidentally some years later, not long after I got out of school. I met Gellert around then, when we went to live with a relative.

“He was brilliant, his mind was absolutely brilliant, maybe smarter than me. His ideas were intoxicating. They captured my attention and we planned. We would find all the Deathly Hallows, we would rule the wizarding and muggle worlds, we would make them better. Then, something changed. We fought over something in the plans, myself, my brother and Gellert. There was a duel, and Ariana was caught in the middle. She was killed. I still don’t know who killed her, but when she died, all the plans we had made fell apart there. Gellert left, off to fulfill the plan himself, and somewhere along the way he changed. He changed so much. Rituals, dark magic, it corrupted him so completely. He found the Elder Wand, he started gathering followers, capturing their minds and imaginations with thoughts of a wizard-ruled world. Then, when the muggle world broke into war, he turned Europe into a battle field.

“I couldn’t help, I just watched, kept Britain out of it, and ignored the pleas for help. Gellert had been the one person I had seen as a friend, and now I was the only one who could defeat him. The whole world cried for me to fight. When I heard of the destruction he had wrought, the muggle war he was manipulating, the deaths he had caused, I knew I had no choice. I had to fight him. He was my responsibility, my mistake, my past. I drew him here, to Britain. I challenged him, taunted him with the invisibility cloak, the location I knew well of. He came, just as planned. And we dueled.” Dumbledore paused. Looked at the almost empty second bottle in his hand, then across at the Doctor. The man’s eyes weren’t pitying, weren’t accusing or reproving. Instead, they were filled with understanding. Dumbledore let the tears he had been holding back fall down his cheeks.

“The man I had once counted among my friends, the one I have loved, I had defeated. But I couldn’t kill him. I couldn’t condemn him to death, despite his offences. It isn’t my place to decide who lives or dies. I can’t be that powerful. It was what once blinded me to the world and what it was. I couldn’t do it again. So I let him live. I let him live. And I have to live with my mistake for the rest of my life.” The bottle was empty and Dumbledore swayed in his chair. “Did I do the right thing? Was it the right choice, letting him live?” He looked across at the man with the ancient eyes.

The Doctor smiled at him. “The curse of intelligence, Albus Dumbledore, is to ask that question and to not know the answer. Gellert Grindelwald was powerful and corrupt, would have destroyed the world if you hadn’t stopped him. But in not killing him, you proved you are the better man, for he would have killed you, if in your position. You have the chance to fix your mistake, to make the world a better place. And that, Albus Dumbledore, is fantastic indeed.” The Doctor stared at Dumbledore intently, eyes peering into what seemed like his soul. The ever smiling mouth furrowed,
not quite frowning but not smiling either. Dumbledore swirled the remainder of the fire whiskey in his bottle, waiting. This man would not be rushed, not unless he was the one rushing.

Then without any warning, the Doctor ran around the counter and grabbed his hand. “Come one, I’ve got something to show you.” And, just as he had been pulled towards the pub, Dumbledore was pulled out of it and towards the woods. His feet were frantically trying to keep up with the energetic man’s pace and he could barely see where he was going, aside from brushing twigs and branches out of his way.

Still, he missed a few and felt them slap his cheek. Vines dragged at his robes and his shoes, not made for running, were beginning to chaff. “Where are we going?” Dumbledore yelled once. He received a smile, wide and full of mischief, in return.

“Somewhere fantastic,” was the response. Dumbledore would have sighed if he had the breath for it. Instead, when he came to a sudden halt in front of a blue box with ‘Police’ written across the top, it was all he could to bend over and breathe hard. The enigmatic Doctor smiled and gestured grandly towards the blue box, smiling widely. Dumbledore looked up.

“And you have brought me to a muggle police box because…?” He was a little too drunk to remember his manners properly. This didn’t seem to faze the Doctor, who just smiled wider and opened the door.

“This, Albus Dumbledore, is my home. Come on, come aboard. I want to show you something.” Dumbledore stood up and regained some of his motor functions, enough to walk into the blue box. He blinked.

“These are magnificent Expansion Charms. I must compliment you. I couldn’t detect them from outside, which is quite a marvel.” Dumbledore stumbled. “Then again, I am also quite inebriated, so that is understandable.” The Doctor shook his head.

“Of course. Wizards. You lot always expect the unexpected. And here I was waiting for you to dash outside again. Ah, well, never mind. Can’t always get what you want.” The doors behind Dumbledore closed unexpectedly. “Well, you gonna stand there or come up here and join me?”

Dumbledore took a second, proper look around this place the Doctor called home. The walls were rounded, with what looked like lights peering out from almost every spot imaginable. A ramp led upwards towards a round deck, supporting an amazing array of knobs, pulls, buttons and screens. A few chairs were stationed at one side and a long column with some sort of mechanism pulsing within the casing.

Dumbledore gripped the railing upwards, keeping his balance by sheer will alone. Two bottles of fire whiskey could do a lot of damage to someone whose magic was drained, and at the moment, Dumbledore could barely summon light even if he was in the darkest of rooms. He set himself on a chair as the Doctor grinned madly at him from the other side of the decking.

“So, what do ya think of her? A beauty.” He patted the table-top, smiling at it with a fondness that filled Dumbledore’s heart with happiness. He could only nod in agreement. How could he disagree, when this man so clearly loved….whatever it was. But it was, in its own sense, beautiful. Strange and odd, but beautiful.

“What is it?” he asked softly, gazing at the buttons. He was hesitant to press them, uncertain of their function. He had learned to be cautious with someone else’s things over the years.

The Doctor paced around it, turning things and pressing buttons and pulling levers. “She is what
“My, this is a rather violent contraption, isn’t it? All this shaking and rocking and spinning. Is it always like this?” The Doctor grinned.

“Yep. Failed my test, actually, but she still works like a charm! Here we are.” Dumbledore felt the room stop abruptly, stop shaking and rocking and spinning. All of it, all at once, expect for a feeling of floating. The Doctor raced for the door, rushing past the still recovering wizard. “Come on, come see. It’s what I brought you out here for.”

He let the sticking charm go, stumbled off the seat and wished he could remember the words to a Sober-Me-Up spell. They were escaping him at the moment, so he tottered off towards the Doctor and his mysterious surprise. He was expecting to see some landscape or other. It was a magnificent, large-sized portkey. Now he wondered where it had dropped him off at.

If the Doctor hadn’t grabbed his arm, he would have fallen out into the blackness out of the door. He stopped, stunned. If he wasn’t mistaken, he was in outer space. But that was impossible. Some sort of brilliant illusion. A wonderful one.

“What kind of magic is this? I am unfamiliar with it. The illusion is perfect, I can’t detect a single spell holding it together. Marvelous. Absolutely amazing.” Dumbledore heard the Doctor sigh, amusement trickling into his voice as he spoke.

“Wizards, always thinking of spell work. This is no spell work, no magic of the kind you know. This, this is creation Albus Dumbledore. Look at it, at the clouds of gas swirling together, creating and building and starting a whole new solar system. Really look at it Albus, because you, who have seen so much death and destruction, are watching the earth being born. You are watching the first beginnings of the star Sol, forming the nine planets of your solar system, creating the elements for life. This is the magic of the universe, working and moving and pulling and pushing in the infinite miracle called creation.”

Each gesture and word from the Doctor rang with certainty, with truth, with absolute conviction, that Dumbledore couldn’t help but feel them ring in his soul, the echo of these words colliding with his mind, his heart, his thoughts. He looked closer, looked again, out the doors of the strange little blue box.

A cloud of multi-colored gases spun together around a bright, yellow light, folding and furling and spreading out into discs, to rings, to create the planets. The colors, reds, blues, greens, yellows, browns, oranges, blacks, every color in the world, in the universe, collecting and colliding and mixing, throwing clouds into the inky blackness, collecting and scattering, spinning furiously around and around for millions and millions of miles, farther than Dumbledore’s eyes could see.

The darkness that had been lingering behind his eyes since he had fought Grindelwald, since he had watched his sister die, since he had seen the errors of his mistake, were banished for just those minutes he gazed upon this creation, this brilliant, fantastic birth of life itself. This miracle. He felt his feet give out beneath him and sensed the Doctor lowering him to sit on the edge, dangling his legs over the door frame.

“This…this is amazing,” he breathed, just taking it in. The Doctor hummed in agreement. “This is birth, creation, where everything starts. In among those gas particles are the ingredients for life on
Earth, for flowers and birds and trees and water, for kittens and clouds and every human life. The possibility for laughter and smiles and joy. It’s all here, swirling around us. This is….” He stopped, unable to find the words to describe it.

“Fantastic,” The Doctor said, kneeling behind him. “The word you’re looking for is Fantastic. It’s absolutely fantastic.”

“Yes, it is. I couldn’t agree more.” He turned to look at the remarkable man behind him. “Why are you showing this to me? Why am I the one you chose to see this?” The Doctor smiled softly.

“You, Albus Dumbledore, needed something to remind you that not everything is dark and destructive, that there is beauty in the universe. You are important, more important that you could even begin to imagine. It is my pleasure to show you beauty again, to show you the wonders of a universe killed with more life than you can begin to imagine.” The Doctor gazed out at the swirling mass of elements. “I always love watching the creation of life, there is something so uplifting about it that it never fails to remind me that there is goodness out there. I wanted to share it with someone who needed it as much as I have.”

Dumbledore looked at the man who had dragged him into a brilliant and bright world, looked at the lines on his face, the softness in his eyes. This man…his life must be remarkable, to see the hope in one as dark as he, to listen to his story, to take him to a miracle, to never once ask Dumbledore of anything. His eyes were so old, so ancient, so full of rage and sadness and anger and joy, with an impossible hope and wonder lingering behind the devastation so plain on his face. If one could ever capture the emotion his eyes communicated, Dumbledore was sure it would overwhelm some people to the point of insanity. So, instead of gushing and kow-towing to a man who had probably been bowed to by kings, he laid a hand on his arm, waited for those remarkable eyes to focus on him, and softly said,

“Thank you.” The smile he got in return was brimming with ecstatic happiness.

“You are absolutely welcome, Albus Dumbledore. Absolutely welcome.”

For a few hours, the two just sat and watched an entire solar system being born, taking in the beauty of it, basking in the fantasticness of the universe. As Dumbledore began to doze, head drooping, the Doctor led him back inside, setting him against the control panel.

“Thank you, Albus Dumbledore, for everything.” Dumbledore blinked. Those were not words he had been expecting to hear.

“Why…are you thanking…me? You have done so much for me…I cannot repay you…” The Doctor chuckled.

“Albus Dumbledore, the greatest wizard since Merlin himself. You gave me hope again. Watching you duel an incarnation of evil and spare his life, you gave me hope that I could change, that I could find that in myself again. It is a wonderful thing, to see you and your existence and your future. You are fantastic, Albus Dumbledore.” Dumbledore smiled.

“You are…a remarkable man, Doctor. Your…eyes. They are so old, so full of despair and grief and hope. I…I hope you will find what you…are looking for.” Dumbledore’s eyes dropped almost closed. The Doctor laughed softly.

“Truly fantastic. Worthy of your genius.” Dumbledore felt something cylindrical being pressed into his hand. “This will call for me, if you ever need my help. Even remarkable souls need help sometimes. You can call me with this. If I am able to, I will come to give what aid I can.” He closed
Dumbledore’s hand around it. “Good bye, for now, Albus Dumbledore.”

Dumbledore’s eyes closed, asleep, dreaming of swirling clouds of dust and life and creation. He woke up next to a tree, his hand still clasped tightly around the device the Doctor had given him. He smiled. Whether it had been an illusion or not, magic or real, the Doctor had given him something he hadn’t had in a while.

Hope. Hope, joy, wonder. A wonder that only small children possess, except for the man with the ancient eyes. Dumbledore pulled himself up and clutched the silver cylinder tightly. One day, one day he might see that remarkable man again, and he would be able to thank him properly, ask him why his eyes were so old, ask if things like that he had seen in the blue box were real. But until then, he would live and hope and see the world with wondering eyes for as long as he was gifted with life.

He staggered towards the sound of voices. He could deal with the horde of reporters now, now that he had that wonder in his heart. Reporters had nothing on the Doctor, they were just a nuisance.

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He still remembered those hours, watching creation whizz by him, the colors. In his darkest hours, he would peer into the pensive and relive it, see it again, watch the worlds being born.

Now, in the present, with a sleeping child who had no home and only a slim chance of a future, Dumbledore turned the strange little device over in his hands. It looked as if it had not aged a day since it was given to him. The silver casing, the three bright blue buttons on the top, all still shining in the light. The remarkable man who had given it to him was powerful, powerful and dangerous and compassionate and fantastic. He was one who could raise Harry, show him the wonders of life. Now all he needed to do was call him and convince him. He had a feeling that would be harder than it seemed. He hesitantly ran his finger over the top button, pausing. He looked at Fawkes.

“Calling him is the right thing to do, right?” Fawkes chimed brightly. Dumbledore nodded with more compunction. He pressed down. As the device pulsed, he could only hope the Doctor came soon. Little Harry was starting to wake, and Dumbledore did not know how long he could take care of the small child. He rocked the cradle, hoping to lull the child back to sleep. The boy fell into a fitful slumber, fists balled beside his head. Fawkes flew over, landing at the head of Harry’s cradle, singing softly and sending the boy into a deeper sleep. Dumbledore looked gratefully at his familiar. That had certainly saved him time and a headache.

He returned to the desk and the device that had been with him for years, decades. He hoped it wouldn’t take that long for the Doctor to turn up, or that the Doctor wasn’t dead. That would be rather unfortunate. He sighed and laid his head in his hands.

“Fawkes, my dear, how are we ever going to solve this? I don’t believe anything could be as challenging as raising a child.” He heard the alert from the guardian statue chime. “Ah, that should be Minerva with the list of returning students. Something to take my mind off this whole mess.” The knock at the door followed shortly and he summoned the guest in. “Yes Minerva, I do so hope you have that list ready….” Dumbledore looked up. Yes, that was Minerva, but another person was with her, a young man in a dark blue suit and a long brown coat, glancing around his office with avid interest.

“I must say, this castle of yours is rather spectacular Albus Dumbledore. All those moving stairs and talking portraits. Brilliant, really. Such inventive use of psionic energy. You all really have manipulated it rather extensively I almost can’t recognize it. Strange things, you humans. You change so much about something so commonplace that it is so uniquely you. Brilliant!” A wide smile full of white teeth flashed across the room. Dumbledore stared in wonder.
“Dumbledore, who is this man? He just showed up, wandering through the hallways and asking for you. I must admit, he is a strange one, worse than you, if that’s possible. Talking on and on about energy and particles and stopping at all the portraits and asking them personal questions. Rather strange, if I do say so myself.” Minerva stood near Harry’s cradle, hand on the wooden frame, sharp eyes demanding answers from behind flashing spectacles.

Dumbledore stood up. “If I am correct, this is the man who once listened to my foolish rambling many years ago. Strange, though. I remember you with larger ears and less hair.” The Doctor smiled widely.

“Ah, that was a lifetime ago, really. Quite a lifetime ago. I must say, I like this face better. The hair’s thicker, though I really wish it had been ginger. Never been ginger before.” The man tugged at a lock of his hair. Minerva raised an eyebrow.

“Am I needed then, Albus? I do have that list to finish.” Dumbledore glanced back at Minerva.

“Yes, yes, that’s all good. Thank you for showing him the way. I rather suspect he would have wandered for a while otherwise.” Minerva looked sharply at the Doctor, then at Dumbledore.

“Alright then. I’ll be back later with that list.” She smiled down at the sleeping Harry. “Night Harry. Sleep tight.” She left the room, leaving the Doctor and Dumbledore alone.

“So, you’re really, him, the Doctor who showed me my miracle to me all those years ago. You look different. Any reason?” Dumbledore settled back behind the desk, looking over the man standing in front of him. He was tall, though maybe an inch shorter than he had been before, with a smaller frame and an angled face. His hair was wild, standing on end and his smile was bigger, if possible. His eyes though, were still so old, older than before. This alone convinced Dumbledore that it was the same man. No one could fake the age in this man’s eyes.

“Ah, well, you know. Things happen, change comes and goes. Time’s all wibbly-wobbly, really. Too many threads to keep straight. Spend too much time trying to figure out when things happen you’ll go mad. You just keep moving forward. All that works, in the end. Can’t change too much, otherwise it all comes back to bite you.” The Doctor picked up a whirling gizmo spewing red smoke. “This is fascinating. Monitoring the state of all the wards on this castle from the ones moving the stairs to the defense wards at the edges. Brilliant. The flux of energy around this castle must fuel the ions within the core, keeping the mechanism, spinning rapidly. The color must change depending on which ward is down. Must be the….student monitoring ward then? Since there aren’t any student here, right? Sounds right, right spin and everything….oh, and this one! You are brilliant! Keeping tabs on the ministry. Little messenger straight to you. Must be out of whack, your government. Wouldn’t have this little gadget active if it wasn’t.”

The smile wasn’t as bright when he directed it at the Headmaster, the edges were dark, grief hung around his cheeks, depression lurked in his eyes. Dumbledore resisted the urge to send a legilimacy probe towards the man, to see what had happened to dramatically alter this man’s emotional balance, his mood, his mental stability so drastically. He was sure it would be detected and he couldn’t afford to have a man as powerful as this one angry at him. So he kept his mind to himself and hoped he would find an opening to ask. He instead looked over this stranger who had saved him decades ago.

The face was young, angled and with high cheekbones. That ever smiling mouth revealed bright white teeth and tanned skin was pulled tight on a skinny frame. His shoulders were smaller, well fit in a dark blue pin-striped suit and long brown duster. In fact, his whole frame was skinny and long arms tucked hands into pockets. But still, that ancient, ageless pain still hid in his eyes, a desperation for something that Dumbledore couldn’t name. The wonder and joy he had been so inspired by were masked over by rage and pain and self-loathing that he hid well under a smile and shrug of the
shoulders as he moved around the office, marveling over this spinning thing, that spewing thing, the other beeping thing. It was astonishing, how well he could hide it. He turned back to Dumbledore, hands back in pockets, wide smile on his face. “So, Albus Dumbledore, Wizard-kinds answer to Genius. Most brilliant wizard to grace the earth since Merlin; what did you call me for?”

Dumbledore cleared his throat and waved his wand, conjuring a cushioned chair. The Doctor smiled brilliantly. “You may look different, but you are much as I remember you, with your cryptic knowledge and old eyes. What ages you so fast for one who looks so young? Most with eyes that look ancient are old men with white hair and wrinkles. Their faces and their bodies show their pain. You hide yours so well behind your youthful appearance and brilliant mind that the only thing that shows your pain is your eyes. It…inspires a certain curiosity, a drive to know the man behind the mask, if you forgive the cliché.” The Doctor smiled softly, more of a lip quirk than anything else. His eyes found a small, spinning golden sphere and then looked beyond it, falling into a past that Dumbledore would never know.

He was silent for a number of minutes, mind far away from here, so far Dumbledore wondered if he had the ability to spirit-travel. Then his presence returned and Dumbledore watched the awareness return to his eyes. They looked tired now, so old. The Doctor sighed. “I apologize. A trip down memory lane is always a long trip with me.”

“Where did you go, Doctor?” He said it in a voice that was low, soft, just barely carrying over to the other’s ears. It was a voice that coaxed words out of diplomats and ten-year olds, the darkest of lords and the most mischievous children. The look he received in return was one of amusement and despair.

“I am far older than you Albus Dumbledore. Memories are a painful thing when you have lived so long. So much wrong, so much pain and guilt. Everyone has their fair share of it.” The tone wasn’t accusing or reprimanding, just soft and firm. And as close to a perfect non-answer that Dumbledore had ever heard.

A number of questions sprang to the Headmaster’s mind, probing and curious questions, and all these questions Dumbledore was nearly dying to ask, but when he saw the look in those brown eyes now looking directly at him, he bottled them up and hid them.

“Sorry. My troubles aren’t yours.” The Doctor ran long fingered hands through his hair, breathed hard, then smiled. “Alright then, you didn’t call me here to talk about me. Let’s get on with it.” The Doctor leaned back in his chair, smile affixed.

Dumbledore sighed, steepled his fingers, leaned on them. He gazed at the Doctor, the seriousness of his eyes wiping the smile off ever young face. “The wizarding world is in shambles, just now recovering from devastating loss and destruction. Times are desperate for me, despite the celebration sweeping the wizarding world. Another burden of genius is knowing when foes are still alive and dangerous, despite all evidence to the contrary.” Dumbledore gazed down at the desk as the Doctor leaned forward on his knees, eyes now serious.

“I was concerned when I received your call. I had wondered if you would ever need to use it, considering your conviction to help the world and your own personal power. When I got the message, well, I couldn’t resist coming to see what it was that you called me for.” The Doctor leaned back in the chair, sighing. “You really have a talent for chair making, don’t you? Really comfortable, these. Brilliant.” Dumbledore smiled slightly.

“Yes, I am rather proud of that skill. Took me quite a while to master getting the cushioning just right. First it was too hard, then so soft I almost lost a student in one, but eventually I got it right.” Dumbledore smiled serenely, then shook his head. “A well, old matters for another time. Onto more
serious matters. You remember what I told you of Grindelwald, all those years ago?” The Doctor nodded.

“His goals for the Deathly Hallows and ultimate dominion. I remember. Has he returned?”

Dumbledore shook his head. “No, not Grindelwald. One of his former followers though, followed his footsteps, then went further. He sought not only the Deathly Hallows, but immortality itself. He named himself Voldemort,” The Doctor snorted. Dumbledore grinned darkly. “Yes, Flight-from-death. A bit of mutilated French now a dark stain upon language itself. Not entirely creative in the naming process, but his mind is brilliant. Twisted and corrupt, but brilliant all the same. He managed things no wizard has in centuries and twisted himself beyond humanity. He became a thing of nightmares, cloaked in dark magic and searching for an escape from death. He searched so far that he created rituals. He became the darkest wizard in history.” The Doctor raised an eyebrow.

“And how can I help? This sounds a little beyond me, really. Magic isn’t my area of expertise.”

Dumbledore shook his head.

“No, He has been defeated rather recently, which is why I am in this predicament, really. It is his defeater I need your help with.” A shrill cry rang through the air. “And there he is, awake again, so soon. Come, Doctor, meet the savior of the wizarding world.” Dumbledore reveled in the confusion on the Doctor’s face as he headed for the crib.

“What?” Dumbledore picked up the crying Harry and patted him on the back, settling the babe into hiccups and sniffles. Large emerald eyes peered at the Doctor. “What?” Dumbledore chuckled. Harry reached out for the tall man, giggling. “What?”

“This, Doctor, is Harry Potter, orphan of Lily and James Potter, the Boy-Who-Lived.” Dumbledore held out the small tyke. When a panicky expression passed over the Doctor’s face, he laughed openly. “Hold him Doctor. I am sure, in all your time, you have held a child.”

The Doctor raised an eyebrow. “Yes, but it has been many years, many lifetimes ago. Before you would even imagine…” The Doctor trailed off, taking Harry from Dumbledore. He held him on his hip, watching as Harry clutched his jacket. A smile crossed his face. “You certain this little tyke was the one who defeated this Voldemort character? He looks a little on the young side.”

Dumbledore settled back behind his desk. “Yes, Tom Riddle, his name before he took on the moniker, was defeated by this child. I must admit, Lily did perform a spell, old magic, that gave Harry some protection, but there is no true protection against the Killing Curse. That is what the scar on his forehead is from, the curse backfiring. Tom was forced out of his body, his mortal shell collapsing, and he exists as a shade, a weak shade, whose anger will fuel his growth. Little Harry is the one who has been prophesized to defeat him completely.” The Doctor, who had been watching avidly as Harry gnawed on his finger, looked up sharply.

“A prophecy of one so young? Do you have a copy?” Dumbledore nodded.

“I was present when it was delivered. Here, I can let you see it.” Dumbledore turned to his cabinet and rifled through, before returning with a stone basin. “This is a Pensive. I can show you the whole thing. One second.” Dumbledore raised his wand to his temple, drawing out a silvery-white strand and depositing it into the bowl. He stirred once, the mists following the wand tip, then tapped the side.

The Doctor watched as a figure of a woman with large glasses, wide eyes, too much jewelry and layers of clothing rose from the bowl and began speaking in a low, guttural tone of voice.
"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..."

The Doctor narrowed his brows. “That is both specific and unspecific. How do we know it is this young one here?” He gestured at Harry, who was now tugging happily on his coat. Dumbledore sighed.

“That was the conundrum. At first, it could have referred to either Harry or another boy, Neville Longbottom. However, Neville was never confronted by the Dark Lord, his parents were driven into a coma by his followers. Harry here survived the Killing Curse and that lightning bolt scar marks him. His parents faced and defied Tom three times and he was born on July 31st within months of the prophecy’s reveal. Now he is all that survives of his family.” The Doctor nodded solemnly, then blinked.

“So, Voldemort is gone for now, this is the prophecy child, what do you need me for? Has to be something important, otherwise I wouldn’t have gotten a call. What, nearly thirty eight years since I saw you last, give or take?” Dumbledore nodded.

The Doctor watched as Dumbledore tapped the table speculatively with his fingers. How to best ask this question? “Harry here is without parents, yes? His other family was killed a few days ago in a motor accident, and others on his parents will as caretakers are either dead or ineligible for the position of caretaker. So, well, Fawkes here...” Fawkes, who had sat and watched the proceedings with interest, squawked indignantly. Harry giggled, Dumbledore looked sheepish, and the Doctor looked like he was starting to catch on.

“Oh no, you have got to be kidding. A joke, right? No no no, this isn’t going to happen.” The Doctor looked between the child on his lap and the old man seated across from him. “You cannot just ask me to raise the savior of the wizarding world. I am not qualified. No no no no no, not happening.”

Dumbledore smiled. “You have to understand, Doctor, you are my last hope. The wizarding world is in shambles. His mother’s family was killed a week ago, all his father’s family is dead. His father’s friends are either dead, in prison or banned from having children due to idiotic laws. Those named on the will are dead or insane. There is no one I can turn to to keep Harry safe. You, Doctor, you whose name isn’t found anywhere, you, who can change your face and appear in Hogwarts, you, who have seen so much of life, can keep him safe. I know you can. I need him safe, raised well. Raised to become who he is meant to be.”

The Doctor looked at Dumbledore with sharp eyes. “And I can do a better job than you? You run a school full of children, practically run the government, and are rather brilliant. You can’t think of anything to keep him safe besides giving him to a complete stranger? Are you daft?” Dumbledore smiled widely.

“Daft is probably the least offensive word used to describe my state of mind, but no matter. The brilliance of the plan, Doctor, is that you are an honorable man who is also brilliant and could probably run a government if you put your mind to it. The fact that you are a stranger is a bonus, because if I could not find any information on you, I am certain Voldemort would be unable to as well.”

The Doctor grimaced. “And why would I be a better choice than you? I have destroyed more of the
universe than you will ever see, I have lost more people to my own actions than exist on Earth. I couldn’t even take care of my own friends, their family. Why am I, someone who Death follows, a better candidate for child raising than you?” Dumbledore blinked. He felt like he was blinking a lot with the Doctor around. But the emotions he had seen in the man’s eyes were harsh. Dumbledore knew that Harry would give him back his hope and wonder just as he would keep Harry safe.

“Besides the fact that I have no idea on how to handle children younger than ten for any extended period of time? I am a busy man. I can’t keep him close or safe, and I am too easy a target for Tom. It would be obvious of Harry’s location, and I can’t very well leave my responsibilities behind. I am unfit to raise a child. I failed with my own sister and with Tom himself. I don’t trust myself to raise him properly.” Dumbledore looked to the ground as Fawkes trilled sadly behind him. “And you, Doctor, you say such harsh things about yourself, but even I can see you flinch at your own words. Your regret and guilt inspire the best in you, something I have a hard time doing. You can teach Harry so much I cannot.” ‘and he can teach you’ he thought.

The Doctor looked at Harry pensively, looking deep into his soul. The energy of the Time Vortex swirled around the small child, more energy than he had seen in years. The boy’s emerald eyes stared back at him from within the energy, bright and green. The power within this child, his capabilities, they were beyond belief. He looked back at Dumbledore. “You know how powerful he is, the strength of his magic?” Dumbledore nodded sharply.

“Yes. It is a reason I wish him to go with you. His own power is much like a beacon, and without a shield he is visible for miles to those who know how to sense him. You, with your mysteries and impossible existence, would be able to hide him. Of that I have confidence. Please, Doctor, you are my last chance, my last hope for him. Young Harry deserves to have a life, one I could not provide him with. His own future, already foretold, is dark. I don’t know if I could raise him in good conscious, without corrupting him irrevocably.” The Doctor’s eyes flashed dangerously, and Dumbledore shrunk back in his chair at the intensity.

“So you would ask me to raise him, ready him for a battle he may die in, so you would not have to?” The Doctor searched Dumbledore’s face for an answer, saw the truth of that statement, and frowned sharply. “You, Albus Dumbledore, have grown too complacent with your life over the years, comfortable in your position behind the desk, manipulating the strings and never on the frontlines. You fear it, your own power, your ability to destroy utterly whatever is in your path and you haven’t learned how to harness that strength. If I didn’t fear what you would turn such an innocent into, I would leave him with you out of spite, to make you learn.”

Dumbledore sat up in his chair, hope in his eyes. “So you will take him?” The Doctor looked down his nose. For a moment, that feeling of absolute submission he swore he would never feel again, not after Grindelwald and the death of his family, made his breath catch and he resisted the urge to fall to his knees and beg forgiveness.

“What has happened to the courageous man I met all those years ago? That man wouldn’t hesitate to raise Harry into a wonderful man, but you call a complete stranger to take him off your hands because you don’t trust yourself?”

Dumbledore frowned. “The years have not been kind. My mistakes have given me food for thought, and you are right, I don’t trust myself to raise him. I fear I wouldn’t do him justice, that I would impart too much of an old philosophy on a world that needs new eyes, new perspectives.” Blue eyes looked up into brown. “You are a dynamic, changing and brilliant man, Doctor, one I would trust to give that perspective to the future of this world.”

The Doctor laughed softly, before hoisting Harry higher on his hip. “I will take Harry, but you will
have no part in his life. He will be beyond your reach, even with all your gadgets and gizmos here.” The Doctor took a moment to inwardly curse his need to protect the innocent. “Harry will not be what you expect him to be when you see him next.”

The elderly wizard frowned. “What do you mean, beyond my reach? He is to be schooled here when he turns eleven. Will you bring him back then?”

The Doctor looked down at the child he was holding tightly to him. “He will be back when he needs to be, not a moment earlier. Good bye, Albus Dumbledore. I hope you regain some of that brilliance I saw in you when I met you all those years ago.” Dumbledore watched the door close and Harry leave his life, held in the arms of one of the most dangerous men he had ever seen. The Doctor was probably more dangerous than Voldemort; infinitely more compassionate, but infinitely more dangerous.

He ran a hand through his beard and stared at Fawkes, who was watching him with amused eyes. “I suspect that, while I was successful in my endeavor I was also outsmarted in the end. It has been a while, my friend, since someone got the better of me.” Dumbledore frowned. “What a remarkable man. Harry shall be rather magnificent, raised by such a man.” Fawkes trilled his agreement. The guardian alert went off, and Dumbledore sighed. Minerva again, most likely. Hopefully with the list and not asking why the man she had escorted in here scarcely and hour ago was now leaving with Harry Potter in his arms.

Unfortunately for him, she did not have a list. She instead had a stern expression that turned sharply downward as she glanced at the empty cradle. “What did you do Albus? Why did I just see that man walk off with Harry? Who is he? What is he doing with the boy? How do you know him?”

Dumbledore gestured to the chair still in front of his desk.

“Sit, Minnie. I expect I shall have a bit of explaining to do.” Minerva huffed, but sat anyway. She spun her wand and conjured some tea, pouring two cups before leaning back.

“So then, start Albus. I have plenty of time.” Dumbledore sighed.

“That man is the man who is going to be raising Harry Potter. He is the man who, when I had defeated Grindelwald, took me out for a drink and made me tell him my story. He listened and didn’t judge. He showed me beauty in a world that, at the time, was endlessly dark. He was….he was remarkable. And he came when I called for him, and he proved once again how remarkable he was. He is the only one to have ever seen so easily through me, through my plans, outsmarted me, and proved just how insignificant I am. And I trust him to raise Harry right.”

Minerva held her cup close to her mouth. “But who is he?”

Dumbledore shrugged. “Honestly, I am not really sure. His name is The Doctor. Other than that, I don’t know much. But if I don’t know much, then neither will Voldemort, and that means Harry will be safe. He will be kept safe and raised well, beyond the reach of whatever Tom Riddle has become. It is the only hope we have left, Minerva. I took it. I only hope that, in the end, Harry will be what he was meant to be.

Minerva stared at Dumbledore. “For all our sakes, I hope you are right Albus. Because you just gave the savior of the wizarding world to a stranger whose name we don’t even know. If this ever gets out, I can’t imagine the outrage the public will express, not to mention the ministry.”

Dumbledore sighed. “I imagine it wouldn’t be pretty. But right now, and for the next few years, they will be too busy setting it all to rights so by the time they come asking me for the location of Harry, he will be hidden with his mother’s relatives in a remote corner of England. I have time to create a
believable story. Now we can only hope Harry will reappear by the time he is to start Hogwarts.

Minerva frowned but didn’t say anything. She sipped at her tea and stared at the wooden cradle that, for four days, held the savior of the wizarding world. Now, he was who-knows-where with a stranger. She wasn’t seeing a happy ending.

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Dumbledore stared at the calendar on the wall. It was September 1st, 1991. The day Harry was to start Hogwarts. Unfortunately there had been no sign of him at Platform 9 3/4s, the owls that held his letters merely circled around the castle, flying absolutely no where, and all of Dumbledore’s scrying equipment had failed dramatically. So he was now hoping that The Doctor would return with Harry sometime before the feast, showing up mysteriously as he had last time.

He reached for the cylindrical device he had used last time to call the Doctor and pressed the top button. Maybe he would respond to the summons. Dumbledore would only hope.

But, as the Sorting took place and the feast passed with no sign of Harry Potter or the Doctor, he sighed. Minerva’s glares from the stool, then from beside him, were overwhelming. The ‘I-told-you-so’ look had him glancing away. Dumbledore searched the hall again, connected to the castle. No activity, no mysterious appearances. The Doctor had not returned with Harry. The Headmaster could only hope that he would bring the boy soon. Maybe a minor delay. He could only wait and hope.

The first week of school passed, and with it, the whispers had spread. Where was Harry Potter? Was he going to a different school? Was he dead? Was he captured? Killed? Imprisoned? And those were the normal rumors. There had been one that declared Harry had gone to live with the mer-people of the Mediterranean and had turned into a fish, and another that swore Harry was in retreat to the Tibetan mountains with monks and was training to become a priest.

Unfortunately for Dumbledore, Harry Potter’s absence meant the Ministry got involved. He had to sigh at the idiocy of the people. An entire world praising and idolizing on a boy barely eleven years old and panicking when he wasn’t at school. Now the might of the wizarding government was coming to bear on the shoulders of the one who was responsible for taking care of the boy, and his own staff were beginning to send looks his way. Minerva was the worst of them all. She had been spitfire after the Sorting, he recalled. Yelling all sorts of words at him, at letting Harry go with that ‘strange man’ then losing track of him completely. She had broken a few of his whirring devices and had a good hissy fit before collapsing in a chair.

“What are we going to do Albus? Harry Potter not coming to Hogwarts not only causes a spectacle of you, but soon, when He returns and Harry is not here, the moral of the wizarding world will fall.” Dumbledore looked at his Deputy Headmistress and sighed.

“Honestly, Minerva, I really don’t know. I haven’t managed to get in contact with the Doctor and not even Fawkes can find Harry. We will just have to hope he returns soon. It is early in the year yet, there is still time.”

Minerva gave him a glare over her spectacles but said nothing. She just sunk further into the chair. Together, they sat and contemplated the future.

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October 31st, 1991. Almost two months with no sign of the Doctor or Harry. Minerva had been ignoring him, Severus had been gloating and Hagrid was beginning to worry. The Ministry was beginning to question Dumbledore’s competence and the man himself was wondering if he had
made the right choice all those years ago. The Great Hall, filled with floating candles, enchanted pumpkins, flying bats, was merely informing Dumbledore that Harry was still missing.

He toyed with his glass of pumpkin juice, staring into its depths. Harry was missing, the Doctor hadn’t answered his summons yet, and anyone of importance in the world was sending him daily letters and missives and a few Howlers. He needed to find the boy soon, very soon, before his sanity gave out.

He was so lost in thought that he didn’t realize the hall had fallen silent until he felt a wind blow, rustling his beard, and a strange, steadily increasing sound, like waves of a soft alarm, fill the room. He followed the gazes of every student until his eyes landed on a slowly appearing blue box with ‘Police’ written across the top.

He would never forget that sound, that noise, that box. The box that showed him creation. He rose to his feet, ignoring the questioning glances sent his direction. That was the Doctor’s box, the Doctor’s home. The one that Harry left in ten years ago. He was back. Slightly late, granted, but he had returned.

The door creaked open, and a small, black-haired head peered out, bright emerald eyes glittering in the candlelight. “Um…Dad? I think we’re a couple months late. It’s…what’s that holiday with the pumpkins and bats?”

“Halloween Harry, Halloween. Jeez, it’s like you all forget about these things.” A deeper voice answered the boy. Harry smiled, stepping out into the hall.

“Sorry we don’t have a calendar in the TARDIS Uncle Jack.” Harry glanced back, a sneer on his face. “So yes, we landed on Halloween, October 31st, by the looks of things. Weren’t you aiming for late August?”

The face of the man Dumbledore knew as The Doctor appeared. “Ah well, a couple months late, right? Not like I’m a year, or a century, off. Done that before. Met the queen then. Brilliant time. Lupine wavelength variform. Anyway, it’s 1991. Besides, I love Halloween. The costumes, the candy, it’s brilliant.”

“Is there anything that isn’t brilliant to you Doctor?” a female voice said, its ownder sliding out of the door. She looked young, blonde and pretty. The Doctor wrapped an arm around her waist.

“Nothing at all!” he said brightly.

Harry rolled his eyes as a man in suspenders and boots stepped out the door. “It’s like they forget there’s others in their vicinity,” Harry complained. The suspendered man chuckled. Said something in reply.

He was too far away to hear their conversation clearly, especially now that the students had begun clamoring again, until the door slammed open and Professor Quirrel stumbled in, shaken and reeling. The four interlopers looked at him, eyes bright and interested.

“Tr—troll…in the dungeon.” He swayed. “Thought you aught to know.” Then he fainted dead away, loud enough that the crack of his skull on the floor echoed around the room.

“Oh, that had to hurt. Stone is not friendly to pass out on,” Harry said. The students had stayed quiet longer than he expected them to. Dumbledore had lifted his wand in preparation to cast a quietus on the room. “Hey Dad, can I go check it out? I haven’t seen a troll in ages!”
The Doctor raised an eyebrow but he wasn’t saying no, which was what Dumbledore expected from him. A look at the gentleman in the overalls.

“Only if you take Jack with you.”

Harry sighed, put out, then smiled and bounced on his feet. “Awesome! Come on uncle Jack!”

“Oi, you two, no technology! You remember Diagon57!” Harry flushed suddenly, then nodded. They dashed out the still open doors before the staff could say anything.

“Was that really smart Doctor, sending those two? You know what kind of damage they do.” The blonde haired woman said, turned to look at the Doctor. The Doctor sighed, looking up and around, then froze as he saw all eyes on them.

“Oh, Rose, People.”

Rose sighed and shook her head.

Minerva wondered what had just happened.

Dumbledore smiled jovially. “Doctor, welcome to Hogwarts!”
The irritation and anger The Doctor felt welling up in him towards the headmaster lasted all the way down the moving staircase from Dumbledore's office and an extra three flights of stairs. It had been a long time since someone had managed to manipulate him so thoroughly. And Dumbledore had done it almost unknowingly on his part. He still believed the Doctor was a powerful wizard of some sort, hiding out on Earth and in possession of limitless power. Well, in that frame of mind, the Doctor could see how his words were chosen. That didn't make him any less irritated at the man.

However, when he realized he was suddenly going up stairs instead of down, the ire was lost and the laughing child on his hip drew his attention back as well. He refocused on the boy. The light in the bright emerald eyes and the smile was enough to let the anger fade slowly. His temper, already running hot and cold, fell flat on its face as he stared at the toddler. One couldn't fault the young for the elders choices. Besides, trying to find your way out of a maze while blindly rushing past everything around you was a very good way to get extremely lost. So he twirled the anger into a small ball, swirling up and around and ready to be tucked into a corner of his mind for when something other than arrogant humans deciding to play puppet master appeared. It would be more fruitful.

Harry giggled at his side, hands clutching the Doctor's jacket. "Well, aren't you just a bundle of joy?" He lifted Harry up in front of him, holding him out as if for inspection. Little feet in footie pajamas kicked the air and Harry squealed with laughter. "Alright, let us find our way back to the TARDIS. We most certainly are not sticking around here. Up you go." He swung the child up and around, over his shoulders till he could grab the tiny feet on either side of his neck. Harry's hands gripped pieces of his hair, tight but not tight enough to make the Doctor wince badly. He smiled, loving the bright laughter coming from Harry. Happiness was such an anathema to anger.

Now that he wasn't as blind to his surroundings, he looked around, hands holding tiny feet. The staircase he was sure was heading down previously was now going up. What a wonderful use of psionic energy. None of the other races he encountered that could manipulate psionic energy ever did anything as wonderful as these humans.
"This is brilliant. Absolutely brilliant. I can barely recognize the original energy signature, it's been so thoroughly manipulated. You lot are so wonderfully magnificent, do you know that?" He bounced the child on his shoulder, loving the joyful squeal he got in return. "All this energy makes it impossible for me to find my TARDIS, too much interference. Come on, let's go. We can ask one of the paintings." He climbed up with steps on spindly legs. "Another of you lots brilliant creations. Animated portraits without technology. Just a dabble of energy. Two signatures, if I must say so." He peered at a picture of a castle among meadows and shrubbery. "The subjects signatures, and the painters. Wonderful bit of magic there. Oh, hello!"

A knight dressed in full armor holding a sword bounced out of the shrubbery, waving his weapon at the admirer. "You there, foul sir, have you come to challenge the great Sir Cadogan?" He bounced from foot to foot, brandishing his sword and scowling heavily. "I must warn thee, I am a fair hand at the sword!" The Doctor smiled, delighted. A knight! What brilliance!

"Ah, Good Sir Cadogan! It has been a fair while since I met a knight! Lancelot was always too busy staring at Arthur to get anything done properly, and Tristen couldn't take four steps without bemoaning his fair Isoult. Too much romancing for my taste." The Doctor tilted his head up, recalling his traveling days with the knights. "Ah, but Arthur was one for the legends. Always rushing in brandishing sword and smile. Not too bright, but brave." Sir Cadogan was staring at this stranger who knew the knights of old. He lowered his sword and instead affected a salute. "Good sir who knows of knights, Sir Cadogan is at your service." He bowed. The Doctor smiled. AH, yes he loved knights. Too much bravery and brawn, not enough brains between the nearest pair but always polite.

"Well then, good knight, I am looking for my steed. She is an odd one, a large blue box rather than a horse, but she is my own. If you can but help me find her, I shall be most grateful. I believe I left her near a painting of a bowl of fruit. Sir knight, can you help this lost and lowly one?" He would have bowed lower if Harry hadn't been on his shoulders. As it were, the giggle of the boy drew the attention of the knight to the child.

"Brave master, Sir Cadogan will be most honored to lead the tall master and his childe to the blue box. And I know exactly where you left your steed, for the fruit bowl guards the most wondrous place. Follow me good sir!" And with that, Sir Cadogan darted out of his painting and into the neighboring one, pushing the rather large lady in blue silks out of the way to rush onwards. The lady hmphed in irritation. The Doctor smiled grandly.

"Isn't this exciting! I love running!" He kept in mind that he could only keep it at a mild trot otherwise the child on his shoulders wouldn't be there long. "Sir Cadogan! If you might not hold steady a while, I must confess I am unable to keep up." Sir Cadogan, three paintings ahead and yelling encouragement, stopped.

"Ah, yes, the lad. I profess forgetting the childe, to my chagrin. I shall hold a while, so that you may catch up!" He grinned at this last bit of speech, proud for having picked up some slang. The Doctor grinned manically.

The knight led them down numerous corridors and countless stair cases until they were walking past a large set of doors, doors the Doctor was sure wouldn't open without the aid of magic. Once more, he found the imagination of humans limitless.

"My good sir, I am compelled to warn you, a man with a most unsettling brow is approaching from the pathways we must take to return you to your blue box. He is a cruel and capricious fellow, Sir." The knight wasn't looking so splendid anymore, having returned from a few paintings up with a frown on his face, and the Doctor tilted an eyebrow.
"I shall speak to him, good knight, then we may continue our quest." This seemed to stem some of
the anxious temper of the knight.

"Good sir, if we were not so insistent on our quest, I would have spoken to him myself, challenged
him to a duel. But my words always ring foul in his ears. I hope your words shall ease his foul
temper better than mine." The Doctor nodded, smiling.

"I shall do my best, good Sir Cadogan." As he finished speaking, the man the knight spoke of
rounded the corner and the Doctor was put into mind of a giant bat.

The man had sallow skin, a young face that was aged well beyond his years by wrinkles, worry
lines, tired eyes and little sleep. The sheen lingering on his skin and hair wasn't helping the healthy
glow either. The Doctor, eyes taking in as much information as possible, smiled brightly.

"Hello there! Fine day, is it not?" The startled look he received in turn was amusing. Then it turned
into a hostile glare, and the Doctor felt the need to raise his hands in a supplicating gesture. If Harry
wasn't on his shoulders, he would have. As it were, the Doctor took a few more steps towards the
black-robed man. The man looked wary.

"Who are you? And why do you have that irritant's spawn on your shoulders?" Well then, foul
temper indeed. Sir Cadogan was right.

The Doctor looked up towards Harry, who gripped his hair tighter. "Oh, this little one? Albus
Dumbledore asked me to raise him. Gave to me free of charge. Bright little tyke, this one. Always
smiling and laughing. Great for the heart, really." He tickled one of the feet in his hands. Laughter
filled the air. The other man glared harder. "Oh, I'm sorry. I'm the Doctor." He shifted his hands
around so he could hold one out to shake. The other raised an eyebrow at him.

"Severus Snape." Snape didn't offer his hand, but that didn't deter the Doctor.

"I love what you lot have done here, really. Manipulating the psionic energy to backtrack itself and
quantify the random pattern movement of the staircases is positively brilliant. And to allow the
 genetic encoding of paintings without using technology, then allowing the subjects of the painting to
move by filtering the encoding through the medium until you've practically created a new life form
by charging the particles with enough energy to move a lift is absolutely fantastic. Really and truly
amazing." Snape looked rather like he had been run over by Santa Claus and his twelve giggling
chipmunks by the time the Doctor was done speaking.

"Who are you?"

"I'm the Doctor. Didn't I say that already?"

"Doctor of what? Doctor is a muggle term, but you are obviously not a muggle. Who are you?"

The Doctor canted an eyebrow. "Just the Doctor. Oh, wow, that layer of bio-gaseous residue on
your skin is rather interesting. A mix of hallucinogenic and biological materials heated and spewed
into the air as a gas and settling on the closest dead cells. Most chemists have that look about them.
Usually takes a while to build up to that level of shiny." The Doctor took out the sonic screwdriver,
still grasping Harry's feet tightly, and clicked it on, pointing the blue end towards Snape. "Oh, and
looky there. Nasty piece of work on your left arm, that. Who did that to you?" Snape reflexively
clutched his left forearm, sneering at the Doctor.

"Please don't tell me you haven't heard of the Dark Lord? His fall a week ago is the news of the
century." He paused. "And he's gone, so how do you know of this mark?"
The Doctor blinked, then his eyes widened. "Oh, you mean that Voldemort fellow. Yeah, Dumbledore just told me about him. Quite a character that one. Seems like he keyed whatever it is on your arm into his own genetic code and interfaced it with your nerves, tying it into your own core. Brilliant piece of work, twisted, really, but brilliant." Harry kicked at his shoulders. "Oh, well, I've gotta run. See you again, Severus Snape. Bye." And with that, the Doctor left behind a stunned and confused Snape.

Sir Cadogan saluted the Doctor, smiling brightly, and continued onward, leading the Doctor into warmly lit tunnels and corridors. The Doctor laughed, holding Harry tightly and listening to the giggles of joy. He could get used to this.

As they rounded the corner, the blue police box that the Doctor called home sat beside the fruit bowl portrait.

"AH, there you are! My good sir knight, I offer my sincere thanks for your help." He bowed slightly, towards the knight blushing in his armor.

"It was nothing, good lord. Always willing to help those who know of the valiant knights." The knight bowed. "Beyond that portrait, tall lord, is the kitchens, if the youngling is in need of food. All one must do is tickle the pear for a door knob. Now, I must return to my castle before that wanton woman next to me moves in. She knows how much I despise her yet she still tries her womanly wiles on me." Sir Cadogen left the Doctor with a salute and ran back through the portraits, leaving the two in the hallway with the TARDIS.

The mention of food reminded the Doctor that he was going to have to find that kitchen he had lost because Harry was going to eat quite a bit more often than he was used to, and chips weren't acceptable foods for a baby. He pulled Harry off his shoulders and settled him on his hip, unlocking the TARDIS doors and stepping inside.

As soon as the doors shut behind them, the TARDIS blinked happily, a purring sound filling the large space. Harry giggled, clutching the Doctor's coat tightly and kicking feet. This action was repeated by the TARDIS in her own way, and she rattled happily. The Doctor freaked out rather spectacularly and rushed to the console.

"What are you doing? I didn't press anything. What's going on old girl?" The TARDIS burbled and the center column moved, gears gyrating. Harry's laughter and the TARDIS's twinkling tune filled the air and the Doctor's panic attack was reaching epic proportions just as the movement stopped and the TARDIS settled down. Harry's laughter decreased until he was just smiling happily. The Doctor was holding onto him with one hand and typing madly away with the other at the video screen.

It was made plainly obvious that they weren't in Hogwarts anymore when an image of an enormous forest filled the view screen. The Doctor tapped at it furiously.

Harry giggled at his side. The Doctor sighed dramatically, then threw his hands metaphorically in the air. "Alright then, let's see where we are." The minute the Doctor opened the door, the humid, hot air of the jungle outside. The Doctor looked around, blinking. "AH, I see! The Forests of Hadroona. Way back in your past, little one. About, oh, a thousand years before you were around, yeah? One of the most beautiful places in the galaxy, full of life and teeming with energy...." He trailed off at this word, looking between Harry and the TARDIS. "Oh, no, you didn't. You activated my TARDIS. She found the closest source of psionic energy matching yours and sent us there and you let her! Sneaky bugger." He tickled Harry, who laughed even louder.

"Ah well, might as well go explore then, since we're here. It's been a good while since I came to the Forests. Beautiful place, really. Compliments on the choice of location. Only ten thousand light years
away from Earth, this planet. In your time, the forests are all gone. Wiped out rather mysteriously. Never knew what happened to them. They just vanished, the whole planet turned into a barren wasteland. Millions of years of evolution, preservation by the council, and it's all gone in a night. I've always wondered what happened to it."

The Doctor babbled on to the child on his hip, who was looking around with wide eyes. He found it comforting to speak to someone about this, someone who wouldn't question it or look at him as if he were nuts, though he did enjoy those looks. He was just showing the wonder of a beautiful world to a being who would appreciate it. The boy's laughter was overwhelming.

As were the small, colorful lights that appeared around Harry's hands, dancing over his skin and casting an ethereal light on the child's face. Little spheres of energy shining and swirling around the toddlers form. The Doctor hadn't seen them in ages, and he daren't disturb their play. They were shy things, coming out only when attracted by a source of energy to play.

The little lights, children of the Guardians and protectors of the Forest, accompanied them through the trees. Large, gorgeous, amazing trees, that reached for the sky with branches and leaves of silver and green and gold and yellow. A rainbow of natural colors that altered the light until it danced on the ground.

The little lights led them through a gap in the trees and through to a clearing. The Doctor was content to watch Harry play with his newfound friends, hands clapping and waving and twirling through the air with the children. When his feet hit the stone, he stopped and sat cross-wise, setting Harry in front of him.

The glade he was in spread out around him in a perfect circle, forty meters in diameter and surrounded by forty trees at equal lengths from each other. He had walked right into a sacred circle without even realizing it. The tree's trunks were a deep, beautiful brown and gold, with shimmering emerald leaves. The drapery of leaves and moss fell around in a lattice pattern. He sat on a platform of pure white stone ringed in black soil, small silver flowers peering out from under roots and stone. He was truly in a powerful place of the Forests. It was a wonder he hadn't been confronted before by those that guarded this place.

Little Harry must be powerful indeed, he thought, if they had come to the center of the glade unaccosted. The little spheres squeaked happily, and The Doctor felt the change in the atmosphere before he saw the light shift as the guardians approached.

There were two of them, brilliantly colorful beings. They were tall, slender creatures with butterfly-esque wings that shimmered in jewel tones. Their bodies were semi-transparent and black, moonstone eyes, all four they possessed, peering at the strangers sitting in the stone circle. Their wings glowed emerald and sapphire colors, beautiful calming tones that filled the glade with radiance unmatched. They approached slowly, each step taken with measured deliberation, one set of hands crossed over their chest, the other set clasped in front of them. Their wings were outstretched, eight meters wide.

The Doctor would have stood to greet them, bow before their elegance and purity, if his hands weren't full keeping Harry upright and laughing brightly. He did incline his head, feeling the peaceful energy they radiated. When they drew to a stop mere feet from his position, they also incline their heads.

"Time Lord," they spoke, their voices blending together as once. "and young Magician. We are overjoyed to see you. Our children have found a wonderful playmate." They turned their heads to Harry. "He is powerful, Time Lord. You could not have entered otherwise. His energy thrums with the beat of ours."
Harry giggled and twirled his hands around, swirling bits of gold and silver following his fingers paths. "Yes. He was recently given to me to care for, Great Guardians. He is of human descent."

Lipless mouths smiled. "You know that to be untrue, Time Lord. He may be human, but his ancestry is much more so. He is a catalyst of time in ways that those who travel time cannot be. He will be invaluable. Our eyes can see this."

The Doctor blinked. "I was unaware that the Guardians were far-seers. You can see his time line?"

They shook their heads. The one on the right spoke, voice sweet and melodic. "No, we cannot see the future, Time Lord. That gift is not given to us. But the energy that twines around his body is strong, and even you can see his life energy, the strength of it." She paused, looking at the Guardian to her right. They exchanged a silent conversation, then she turned back to the Doctor. "Time Lord, if it is alright with you, may I hold your young charge? His energy is so bright. It has been many years since I have witnessed such as he."

The request startled the Doctor, who blinkingly turned to Harry. The small light spheres had all left, now fluttering around the two tall Guardians. Harry was looking at them with wide eyes and wonder on his face. The Doctor lifted Harry up and rose to his feet, before lifting Harry out towards the Guardian on the right. She reached out her upper set of arms, taking the boy and bringing him close to her chest. Harry reached out a hand, trying to touch the fingers now circling his face. He grasped one of them and bright it close to him, better to look it over.

"Our young are not quite so inquisitive as human children are. And he reaches with his energy as well, feeling me. It is unusual for one so young to unconsciously do so." The Guardian smiled and twirled her fingers around in the air, creating golden paths that Harry reached out to touch. They dissolved into mist and Harry giggled.

"The young Magician is strange, Time Lord, almost as impossible as you are. Your existence is one that changes the very vortex of time, the last of your race, without constraints. Little Harry here holds an impossible potential within his body, and as he grows, so will his strength." The other Guardian looked at the Time Lord, eyes sharp and bright. "Time Lord, I hope you know what you are doing, taking this child out of his time and into a timeless environment. His power will be changed just by your presence."

The Doctor smiled, though it was hollow. "I know. I just need...he is something I can believe in for a while, at least, something tangible in a way that possibilities and may-haps are not. At least, not anymore. So I will raise him, and as I am the last Time Lord, I don't have to answer to a council. And I won't raise him a weapon for humanity. He deserves better than that."

The three stood in silence in the glades, Harry laughing within the Guardian's arms, until she finally handed Harry back to the Doctor.

"Here, for this will be the last time we meet, Time Lord. This gift, for Harry, is to be given to him when he is able to consciously control his power. It will help him harness the strength and will prevent destruction due to miss-used power." She unfolded her hands and held all four out towards the two humanoids. She closed her eyes and began to trace shapes and patterns in the air, the shimmering gold solidifying into a twisting, elegantly woven string of shimmering power. The folds and curves framed a circling pattern with a wonderful style, and the Doctor, taking it from her outstretched hand, could only blink.

"This...this is brilliant. The energy conduits, the back feed loops and encoding circuits, this is beautiful." He paused in his admiration. "You want me to take it, to give to Harry? Why? This is a gift of unparalleled magnitude for a child."
"Yes, but it is not often that a child with such power is able to enter out glade, nor one who entertains our children so. One who has such energy will need help when he discovers it, and it could overwhelm his spirit completely. He will need such a gift, to prevent him from losing his identity. We are near the ending of our life here, and now is the last time we shall see you."

This last sentence struck the Doctor, and he shook his head furiously. "Oh, right. The Forests vanish. Why is that?" The Guardian gestures toward the sky, and the Doctor tilts his head upwards.

A large, violently blue beam of light filled the sky.

"Ah, discharge from a hypernova explosion. Julio 56-795, if I'm right. Gamma ray burst, heading straight for the planet. Largest explosion in a couple centuries, if I have my date right. Why it hits the atmosphere, in approximately three hours, it will fuse with the atoms and superheat them, burning the air and the…. " The Doctor trailed off, his thought process catching up with his babbling. "Oh, right. Not good. At all. Is there any way to stop it…no, you can't. Not a hypernova. To strong, too much energy. Just destroys planets in its path." He looks at the Guardians. "I am sorry. So sorry."

They shake their heads. "It is all right, Time Lord. The inevitable march of that which you avoid passes for us all, and this is our end. The council left us a year ago, when the final remnants of the Galactic Battle required a government to step in. They have no knowledge of this, and they will not remember the explosion of Eria with the end of the Forests. But thank you Time Lord, for bringing little Harry here. His energy gives us strength to face the oncoming end with peace." They raised their hands towards the sky. "Go, Time Lord. You do not belong here as this world ends. You will see the rise of the next one, and the one after that."

The Doctor hesitated once, before leaving the glade with the Guardian's gift held tightly in his hand, Harry on his hip, silent and blinking away the sadness that comes with watching the end of such a beautiful race. But there was nothing he could do. Nature was not something that could be subverted just because one wanted it to change, he had learned that. Some things had to happen, for life to move forward. The Forests of Hadroona would be replaced by lush, gorgeous, protected wildlife in scant millennia's time. This had to happen. And he had to leave.

He rushed into the TARDIS and shut the door, sagging heavily against it. "I am sorry, little one, that the first friends you meet must also meet their end. But we can't be here. Not now." He rushed to the center console. "Hold on tight, Harry, It's gonna be bumpy." He flipped knobs, switches and levers, spun dials and, as the TARDIS started the shake, held on tightly to Harry and the railing. It wouldn't do to go knocking about with a child in his arms.

Off into Parenthood he went. It had been a while since he had been in that position. Many, many years. But Harry, with his smiles and laughter, just might be what he needed. And Harry most certainly needed someone as well.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks again for reading! If you can, leave a comment! I have thoughts about doing a side story with the Guardians but I don't know. Thoughts?

Thank you again! You all are wonderful!
In Which Harry Does Strange Things

Chapter Summary

Harry's growing Up. He's also Learning everything he can about everything he can. The Doctor likes to take adventures.

Chapter Notes

To all of you who read this, thank you so much for enjoying it!

Harry had been with the Doctor for a number of months now, or at least it seemed like months. Time was judged by how much Harry grew, and at the moment, he was looking somewhere around eighteen months or so. Human children grew fast for being so small. They also managed to find an inordinate amount of trouble for their size. Harry managed to discover the missing swimming pool (by falling into it. The Doctor, thankfully, was just behind him), a room with zero gravity (he enjoyed this one immensely, giggling as the Doctor tried to get him back down to the ground) and a playground. The Doctor kept this one in mind for when the boy was older and able to enjoy more of the equipment. As it was, he was still too small to do much on it other than fall.

The Doctor also kept to places with minimal levels of danger. Harry was just too little to be getting into trouble, and he couldn’t very well leave him on the TARDIS. Especially since the first time Harry entered the ship, she took them to a planet hours away from being obliterated by a gamma ray burst.

He had also gotten unnaturally attached to the child, more so than he had assumed he would. The boy was easy to fall for, laughing, smiling, playing with baubles that appeared and disappeared. For a while, the Doctor wouldn’t let Harry down on his own, not without joining him on the floor to play. The Tardis had also restored the kitchens and a bedroom he had never seen before, but it was stocked with clothes for a small child and a bed that would fit Harry rather well.

The old girl knew when he needed things, didn’t she?

He had also gone through a number of jackets, having discovered Harry’s love for throwing food around. Some of the foods, especially a few fruits from the Andromeda Galaxies, stained clothing completely. Those fruits, after the first encounter with them, he decided could wait until Harry was old enough to eat them without making a mess.

He remembered the day Harry spoke. He was old enough to speak when he was first given to the Doctor, choosing not to or still unused to the new surroundings to speak. But when he finally did, his first words sent the Doctor into a mild panic. It would have helped if they hadn’t been directed at the Doctor.

“Daddy!” Harry had joyfully squealed, clapping and pointing at the Doctor. Wide eyes and a suitably shocked face accompanied this proclamation.
“No, no, Doctor. I’m the Doctor.”

“Daddy!” And, after a few more fruitless attempts to get Harry to say Doctor instead of ‘Daddy’, the Doctor gave up. Children were wont to be stubborn, and Harry was more determined than most to have his way. Following this declaration of fatherhood, Harry began to babble incessantly. His word list included ‘TARDIS’, ‘Brilliant’, a gleeful ‘Hold On!’, various food names and some obscure planets he had picked up, along with normal words. He was, thankfully, potty trained by the time the Doctor took him, so that was one hurdle he didn’t have to jump.

Harry was also fond of walking and wandering around. He wasn’t very stable on his legs at first, staying upright mostly but tipping over here and there (kept carefully confined to his room by the Doctor), but soon he was a mobile machine. The Doctor did the smart thing and attached an energy leash to the tyke, when he realized he couldn’t lock Harry in his room to keep him safe. That wouldn’t work out well for the boy.

He was rather thankful of this leash because not long after he rigged it up, Harry stepped out the TARDIS doors while she hung in space, giggling and shouting “Whee!!!” He was alerted by the TARDIS when a loud alarm rang through the hull, and when he ran out to see the lad dangling over the edge, he felt both hearts leap for space in his throat.

His perfectly rational response was the flip out. Loudly and violently.

Harry was pulled back into the TARDIS, much to his disappointment cause ‘the staws are pwetty Daddy!’ argument went over so well with the Time Lord who was currently trying to calm the racing of his two hearts. Harry was hugged to the point of wriggling, then he looked at The Doctor closely.

“Please please don’t do that again, okay Harry?” Harry’s large green eyes were as solemn as a small child’s could get.

“Daddy sad?”

“Daddy scared,” the Doctor clarified. Harry looked confused, but nodded.

“Sowwy Daddy.” Harry put a tiny hand on the Doctor’s cheek. The Doctor smiled.

“It’s okay Harry, You just scared me.” After that, Harry tended to stick close to the Doctor, nearly attached to his pant legs; it reduced the need for the leash drastically, and Harry began to curl up with the Doctor whenever he sat down, often times falling asleep. The Doctor took those times that Harry decided to use him as a pillow and a bed to start teaching him the names of stars and planets, telling him of the peoples of those planets and places, the times they come from, what they do.

Harry especially loved stories about those who could use energy to change the world, sometimes trying to imitate legends of old with his hands. Most of the time he achieved sparkles and colors, which delighted him none the less.

Another side effect of these stories was Harry’s unfortunate habit to repeat names of obscure stars and planets to people he met whenever the Doctor took him out for supplies. The TARDIS couldn’t provide everything they needed. Eventually they ran out of basic necessitates, such as milk or apples, a favorite snack food of Harry’s as long as they were cut into small bites.

Harry’s habit of naming stars in a sing-song voice tended to cause people to look at the tiny boy strangely, as if wondering if there was something off about him. The Doctor didn’t notice these looks, being used to receiving them all the time, and absently corrected Harry’s pronunciation or even adding in a star or two. Harry himself was too young to notice the looks, and instead would
sing parts of his song to anyone who would listen, or stay still long enough to let him tell them. It became Harry’s favorite game, seeing how many he could remember. It was also something the Doctor enjoyed teaching him immensely. They boy had a prodigious memory.

Harry’s magic (the Doctor, after having spent quite a while having a debate with himself (literally. He found a hologram he could argue with) decided that calling it magic would cut about five words from every sentence he used) had caused some problems in the beginning. Especially the accidental stuff. When Harry was upset (which happened less frequently than the Doctor could have ever hoped for) Harry’s magic would, undoubtedly, act up. The first time, he turned the Doctor’s hair orange, an act that immediately cheered him up. The Doctor was stuck with vibrant orange hair for about three days (give or take a week. Time wasn’t all too specific in the TARDIS). It was the closest to being ginger he had ever been, and he reveled in it. He was slightly less impressed with the striped look he adopted once after Harry hit his head on a stair case. Actually, the whole TARDIS was striped blue and green for a while. Once, they even had talking sparkles, but they only lasted long enough to twinkle brightly and introduce themselves before Harry passed out and they popped.

Soon though, the mood-induced accidental magic that usually resorted to color changing and animating odd things turned into colorful balls and blocks that Harry created to play with, and those soon changed to small galaxies Harry created as he learned more and more about stars and planets (granted his solar systems tended to look amusingly like ten miniature suns with twenty planets all rotating in different directions, but they kept Harry amused. A chore the Doctor learned wasn’t as easy as it seemed.)

He hadn’t had children around in well over a few centuries, not young children anyway. His companions over the years were all old enough to talk fluently and take care of themselves, and to have another being that he was required to look after actually helped him, gave him a purpose rather than just surfing the stars and finding as much trouble as possible, however often as possible, just to be able to feel alive. Trying to juggle a crying Harry and a finicky TARDIS kept him on his toes often enough.

From what he knew of small human children (his knowledge in that area was rather limited, as it wasn’t a subject taught at the Academy and he hadn’t been around much when his children were young, and that was a long time ago. Besides, they were children of Gallifrey, not human), they were usually not supposed to learn this fast, or remember as much and Harry did. For just being under the two year mark, Harry was remarkably talkative and had a rather brilliant memory. That could have been altered by his proximity to the Time Vortex at such a young age, but that couldn’t be all. His own mental make-up must be rather extraordinary to remember the names of stars and planets as well as he did. It made for fun and interesting times in the TARDIS. It also meant that when Harry was upset, he expressed it far more verbally than a child as young as him should. It made for interesting tantrums.

“Daddy! I wanna see Siwius and Betajuice! Pwease pwease! Daddy!” At which point the Doctor would have to explain to his charge that they had just seen them. This fact didn’t seem to matter to the screaming toddler. Actually, most logical arguments didn’t matter to Harry, who usually screamed it out in his room, then curled up in sniffles next to the Doctor, saying ‘Sowwy’ and asking for another story about the stars.

Eventually the companionship he longed for when he picked up those humans and aliens he took with him faded as Harry squirmed his way into his life. Harry was his reason to live, with his bright happy smiles and echoing laughter. Harry, tottering around with beakers full of non-toxic science experiments where one liquid changed another into a different color or billowed out smoke or made noises. Harry, who dragged his toys from his room or the play room or the lab or wherever he managed to stash them into the console room because “that’s where Daddy is!”. Instead of showing
companions a whole new world he raised this child, this bundle of life an energy and enthusiasm in a never ending Universe.

Harry didn’t quite understand the concept of time. Minutes, hours, days, years, they didn’t mean much to him. Where most two and three year olds knew the concept of days and hours, Harry could care less. There was eating time, sleeping time, playing time, adventure time, don’t disturb daddy while he’s working on this very very sensitive time rotor and he doesn’t want Harry to get hurt time, learning time. Time was defined by what Harry did instead of a measurement created by sentient species.

The Doctor carefully steered away from any life changing events in the Universe. No wars or battles or planets with civil disputes. He couldn’t leave Harry in the TARDIS indefinitely if he had to go running off to save the world again and again. He was careful about which planets they visited, which star systems they traveled to, what dates they hit. The TARDIS was also helpful. Instead of dropping the Doctor off at turning points, she kept him out of the major events. He lay low.

There was a bit of a misunderstanding with Queen Elizabeth though. The Doctor did finally learn why he had been shot at when he had visited Shakespeare. He hoped Harry’s memory wouldn’t keep this tucked away to torment him with later.

Harry was two. Almost exactly two when the TARDIS landed with a soft whump and the Doctor gleefully picked Harry up off the chair and spun out towards the door, snagging his jacket on the way out. Harry’s tiny feet, clad in sleek, light Air Streamers from 2457, kicked out and he laughed.

“Where are we?”

“Let’s find out, shall we?”

The Doctor swung the door open dramatically, all about the flair, only to be confronted with the business end of an arrow. He swallowed and angled Harry behind him.

“Who are you?” The Doctor blinked. It was a female voice, imperious and commanding and definitely not from the bloke standing in front of him.

“Um…I’m the Doctor. Can you ask your man to stand down? I really don’t want Harry to get hurt.” Harry peered curiously over his shoulder, eyes wide.

“Daddy, what’s that?” he asked, pointing towards the weapon aimed at them. The Doctor looked down at him.

“It’s called a bow. The pointy bit aimed at me is the arrow, which is used as a weapon. The archer, the man holding the bow, pulls the string back, keeping the line tight and giving the arrow a lot of power, so when he lets the line go the arrow flies through the air.” He glanced back up at the archer. “An arrow I would really like not pointed at me, please.” The Doctor was still angled so Harry was on his far side.

The archer had hesitated at seeing Harry peer at him with curiosity in his eyes. He wasn’t prepared or willing to shoot a child. The female voice, hovering behind the archer, spoke again. “Lower your weapon. I would like to meet this doctor and his child.”

The archer gratefully lowered his bow, eyeing the Doctor with suspicion but smiling at Harry. The Doctor finally saw the woman who had been speaking and he blinked before smiling widely.

“Harry, I would like you to meet Queen Elizabeth the First of the Great Empire of Britain, daughter of Henry the VIII and one of the greatest rulers in history!” Harry stared at her with wide green eyes.
“Pretty clothes,” Harry finally said. The queen raised an eyebrow.

“You are a most impertinent child.”

Harry frowned. “Imp…imp…imper…” He looked up at the Doctor.

“Impertinent,” the Doctor said slowly, emphasizing the syllables. “It means you say what you think even if it isn’t appropriate.”

Harry nodded. “Impertinent. I like that word. Impertinent.” He slurred it slightly but it was still understandable. Queen Elizabeth watched with fascination.

“Who are you, sir Doctor? And how did you get into the throne room?”

The doctor looked around. “Oh is that where we are? I wasn’t sure. It was a mistake, honest. Didn’t mean to. I was aiming for the gardens but the Tardis rarely actually listens to what I want to do. It’s quite frustrating in all honesty.” The Doctor smiled again.

The queen tilted her head at a funny angle, unsure of what to make of this Doctor with his weird words and odd child and strange box. He had an English accent, but there was something in his voice that didn’t sound right, a note or a tone that was off. She looked at the guards, gesturing down the hallway, and they nodded.

“Sir Doctor, if you and your child would come with me, I would like to talk to you in a more private location.” She nodded towards the end of the throne room. “This way.” It might have been phrased as a request but it was anything but. The Doctor smiled at her and followed.

“Well, we aren’t really…oh, what’s the word. We must have snuck in. Yes. We must have. Only explanation right?”

The Queen raised a well manicured eyebrow. “The what is stopping me from throwing you in the dungeons and taking your child from you?”

“I’m sure we can come to some kind of agreement your Majesty. It was an honest mistake.”

“How can sneaking into Buckingham Palace be a mistake, Doctor….what is your name sir?”

“Just the Doctor. Honest.”

“That is not a name. That is a title that must be earned to be worn fairly.” He looked at him. “Did you earn yours or are you misusing it as well?”

The Doctor looked pensive. “Well, depends on your definition of doctor really. Crap at surgery but brilliant at medicines and all around good in sciences, I think. I did get my degree though. University of Mars, class of Zero star Apple 789.” He grinned.

Queen Elizabeth looked taken aback. “You are quite mad, sir.”

“Oh yes, that’s me. Mad as a hatter!” He grinned.

“Are you fit to raise your child then, mad man?”

The Doctor looked amused. “He’s mine, so that is none of your concern.”

The Queen tutted softly but gestured for them to follow her. The Doctor did so with relish, gleefully pointing out things to Harry in a soft whisper as the Queen’s guard trailed alongside them.
“We must have landed in the throne room Harry! Right in the middle of it! I wonder if we’ll get to see the state rooms. I hope not the dungeons. That would be distinctly unpleasant, wouldn’t you say so Harry?”

“Is the queen mad?” Harry asked softly. The Doctor grinned.

“Nah, not mad. Confused and curious, maybe, but I don’t think she’s mad.”

“Oh, okay.” Harry yawned at his side. “Tired Daddy. Gonna sleep now. Night night.” Harry rested his head on the Doctor’s shoulder, eyes falling shut. The Doctor shifted him around so he was holding him in front of his body, head slipping into the crook of his arm and chest. Harry sighed and snuggled into it, sticking his thumb into his mouth.

The Doctor made a face, then resettled Harry on his hip before speaking. “Alright Harry. Night night. I’ll wake you up when something interesting happens.”

It wasn’t five minutes later and Harry was snoring softly against the Doctor’s chest. Only a child raised in the Tardis could fall asleep in the middle of being escorted by the queen and her armed guards, thought the Doctor. Well, he was sure infants could and any sleepy child would as well, he shouldn’t go around making these grand assumptions. He assumed it was part of parenting that made you believe your child was the most special one in the world.

He thought that was fine. Harry most definitely was, in his eyes, and that was all that mattered to him.

The queen led them to a comfortable but by no means small sitting room and gestured for the Doctor to take the opposite seat. She glanced at Harry.

“The child is young, I take it.”

“He’s two, two ish. More or less. Around the two age range.”

The queen blinked. “You are a very strange man Doctor.” The Doctor grinned. “I am curious. You bring a blue box into the throne room without any of my guards noticing and walk out with a child. What sort of man are you?”

The Doctor settled back into the chair, moving Harry gently till the tyke was curled up across his lap, thump in his mouth. The Doctor rested a hand on Harry’s back, feeling the breath whoosh in and out. He looked up at the queen, who was watching them with sharp eyes.

“He is a very beautiful child,” she said. “Unusual coloring to be found here. His eyes are very green.” The Doctor quirked a lip at her, understanding the query.

“We aren’t from around here, no,” he confirmed. The queen nodded thoughtfully. “Your accent says London but there is something else there. Something in your tone. I can’t place it.”

“I would be surprised if you could, Your Majesty. Very few in the Universe can.” He smiled gamely at her and she frowned.

“What were you doing in my throne room Doctor? And how did you get there in the first place? You could not have come here by accident, this is one of the most fiercely guarded places in England.” She tilted her head, considering him. “And how did that blue box get in there?”

“Well, Elizabeth the first, I did know your father. Brutal man, he was. Still, he did love a good pint.” He tilted his head and really looked at the queen. “You were a tiny thing. Your mum let you have
strawberries one night. Your face was all red.” He smiled. “You liked my sonic screwdriver. Kept playing with the buttons.” He glanced down at Harry. “Not too different from little Harry here.”

Elizabeth frowned at him. “That is not possible. You...you are not very old sir Doctor. Not much older than myself, if I must guess. What sort of games are you playing? I do not appreciate being played.” Her hands fists in her dress. Her face was beginning to pale and flush at different points. She had inherited some of her father’s flame, the Doctor noted, but she controlled it much much better than him.

“I don’t always look the same Elizabeth. Actually, this is the first time I’ve been here with this face.” He looked speculative. “Been here a few times actually. Might be here more. Who knows.” He smiled.

“You are an odd man. There has been a Doctor here, long ago. My father threw him into the Tower for insubordination but he vanished.” She frowned. “But that was long ago and that man was very very old.”

“First face, I’m afraid. I was young, impulsive. And your father had my Tardis locked up in there. Best way to get to her.”

They stared at each other for a few moments. Elizabeth the queen scrutinized the no-name Doctor with his child and his strange voice and his rambling sentences and his odd manners. The sleeping child in his lap, completely unconcerned with the world at large and napping with his thumb in his mouth struck her as odd. In her presence parents would keep their children behaving to the best of their ability. Alert, genial, smiling. This Doctor had let his son fall asleep on his lap with no care of who she was. It threw her for a loop and she was trying to regain her footing.

“This Tardis...that is the name of that blue box you brought into the throne room, is it not?”

The Doctor looked pleased. “Yes, yes it is. I knew you got the brains in your family.”

“What exactly is that box, that Tardis? It looks like a small container and it says it belongs to a Police. Did you steal it from this Police?”

The Doctor smiled in amusement. “Not really. Though I did steal it. Borrowed, more like. Doesn’t matter, long in the past. Just stopped by to show Harry 16th century England. He likes castles and kings and queens. Fascinated by royalty. When he wakes up he’ll probably pester you with questions and ask if he can sit on your throne and wear the crown or what not.” He smiled fondly down at the child.

Elizabeth looked slightly shocked. “But...he is so young. He is barely old enough to talk and walk, much less hold intelligent conversation.” Ah, the age where children were to be seen and not heard. The Doctor had always forgotten how often children were overlooked by the adults of their time. Humans, always a contradiction. Ignore the child until they are old enough to take responsibility, chastise the adult for not knowing enough about their responsibility.

“Harry is rather different, I imagine, from most children you have met. I daresay he is quite like you were as a child. Did you know that I held a conversation with you in French when you were naught but four? I was very impressed. Women of the 16th century rarely receive so much attention to their education outside of those practices deemed acceptable. You were an astonishingly bright child.”

Elizabeth frowned at this. She remembered a man talking with her when she was a child. He was funny, dressed in a strange suit with some sort of food item attached to it and he was always smiling. It was odd, but he talked to her like an adult and never thought she was in the way. It had been one
of the best days of her young life, to be taken so seriously by an adult that wasn’t a member of her household, especially after she had been stripped of her rank as heir to the throne.

“Sir Doctor, that was many years ago and a different man. He had a piece of food on his lapel. It was very striking, but you cannot be that man. You are not he.” The Doctor smiled that amused smile that said he was indulging your fantasy but he was right and you would probably believe him too. It was a very odd smile, the queen thought. She thought over her impressions of the man from long ago. It was a hazy memory, somewhere in the garden of her home in Hatfield from a time that was chaotic and not always happy. Her French tutor, Jean Belmain, had let her out early to play and a strange man had been walking along the path with a young woman, chatting about something she couldn’t recall.

He had stopped when he caught sight of her and spoke to her as if she were and adult. She had just come out of her French lessons so she had responded automatically in French. The man had smiled delightedly and talked quite enthusiastically to her in French for a while. She had even learned new words and he had shown her how to make a whistle out of a piece of grass and how to braid flowers into a necklace and had given her one and one to his companion, a girl whose name she couldn’t remember. He had introduced himself as The Doctor. Just as this stranger had to her.

And he had struck her as odd even at a young age. He was a memory that, no matter how old she had grown, he never left. She had met him for a fleeting two hours but somehow he had refused to vanish from her memory, a stationary object in a sea of change. But, could this Doctor be that strange man from her childhood? And how? He was different, taller with spiky brown hair and brown eyes, with a blue suit and trousers and a long brown jacket. There was no food on his person.

“Doctor, I do not understand. If you are who you claim to be, how is that possible? You look different, I have aged twenty two years in the interim and you…you are different. It isn’t possible by any stretch of the imagination. No human can do such things.” She paused at her own words, looked at the Doctor consideringly. “Are you human?” she finally asked.

The Doctor hadn’t said a word as the queen pondered over his impossibility. He knew she was smart, would reach the conclusion eventually, or come close enough to it that it wouldn’t be hard to fill in the details. He watched her think everything over. She was a smart woman, she ran an empire for forty five years. So when she finally looked at him, eyes wide, and had asked if he was human, the smiled that stretched across his face was genuinely pleased.

“Knew you would get it. Right square on the nose. Amazing brain you have there. Astonishingly intelligent young woman you are. All you needed was some time and you come straight to the right conclusion.” She looked at him, blinking.

“You haven’t answered my question Doctor. You very carefully didn’t answer my question. It’s one of the most skillful misdirection’s I’ve ever seen and I’ve sat in on the treasury council several times.” She smiled at him politely and the Doctor shrugged, not overly concerned.

“Well, you are right. I’m not human, not even remotely close.” He grinned at her. She looked down at Harry.

“And your child, Doctor? Is he human?”

The Doctor looked down at Harry, frowning slightly. “He’s mostly human, I supposed. Though with Harry you never can tell. It’s always a question of what you consider human, really. The moral? The genetic? The ethics? The unpredictability? Human is such an interesting term to apply. I’ve always found you lot fascinating. Always changing, challenging the universe, the view of what a sentient species can do, what they can achieve. The bounds of good and evi-“
“You’re rambling, Doctor. Is this something you do often?” The Doctor blinked at the interruption. It wasn’t often he was interrupted anymore, but it wasn’t often he was around someone like Elizabeth the first either. Harry was usually keen on listening to him, as long as possible and often quite at length, asking questions and such as he went along.

“Well, occasionally. I mean, when there’s something to talk about, I like to talk. And Harry here loves to listen. Great listener. Asks the best questions, really. Knows the names of at least the twelve top visited galaxies in the universe, the fifteen most popular planets for vacations and a couple dozen stars and…” the Doctor trailed off. “Sorry, rambling again.” He smiled.

“You are a most odd man Doctor. I would very much like it if you stayed for a while. Your blue box, the Tardis, it is your transportation is it not?” The Doctor nodded. “Very unusual method of transportation. It must be very small inside for you and your child, Harry. We can provide rooms here for however long you wish to stay.” She looked at him enquiringly. It sounded like an offer, but the Doctor could hear the demand underneath and though he could turn it down and the queen would probably let him go, it would be interesting to stick around for a little while. And Harry would love it. He always loved royalty and famous people and seeing shiny things, almost as much as he loved running and asking questions.

“Sure, why not. I could do with a bit of a rest and Harry would enjoy it. Not long, mind you, but it would be alright for a little while. I suppose.” He gently shook Harry awake and waited for bleary green eyes to look at him.

“Daddy. Something fun happening?” he asked, words slurring with sleep and the edge of alertness. The Doctor smiled.

“Indeed. How do you feel about staying in a palace for a little while? With a queen and everything.”

Harry sat bolt upright, eyes wide and mouth open. “Really? We get to stay? Can I sit on the big chair the queen sits on?”

The queen cleared her throat, staring at Harry. “Little one-“

“Harry. My name is Harry,” he said firmly. The queen smiled.

“Harry then. Your father says you are intelligent. I have a tutor who would love to teach you things and if he says you do well I might let you sit on the throne. The big chair,” she clarified. Harry’s eyes went wide and he looked up at the Doctor.

“Can I daddy? Please?” The Doctor laughed.

“Of course. Anything. I’m sure it will be interesting, learning from this tutor.” He leaned down to whisper in Harry’s ear. “Just remember Harry, you can’t tell him about the future.”

Harry nodded, though the Doctor knew he would probably have to explain a few things away anyway. Harry loved to talk and tell anyone who would listen anything possible.

Harry turned back to the queen. “Okay! You promise if I do good I can sit on your chair, the throne?” Harry tried out his new word with confidence.

“If you do well, Harry, I promise.”

“If I do well,” Harry corrected himself. Elizabeth smiled.

“You do learn quickly. Roger will be pleased to have such an apt pupil, and one so young will be a
pleasure for him. He does take fondly to bright minds.” She smiled at Harry, who looked at her curiously.

“Is your name Queen?” he asked. Elizabeth laughed.

“No, that is my title. My name is Elizabeth, young Harry.”

“Oh. Okay. Eliz.Eliza…Eliza”

“Elizabeth,” she enunciated, wondering why she was teaching a small child her proper name rather than ‘your majesty’. It must be the unconventional meeting, she supposed. It wasn’t every day one met a visitor from another world and Harry’s obvious enthusiasm to learn whatever he could was heartening. Harry frowned and tested the word quietly before saying, with confidence,

“Elizabeth. Elizabeth. I like your name. It sounds cool,” he said. Elizabeth smiled and held out her hand, standing up. Harry glanced back at the Doctor, looking for approval, before wiggling from his father’s lap and unsteadily landing on his feet. He walked over and took the young queen’s hand, smiling delightedly. “You have nice hands, Elizabeth,” he said. Elizabeth laughed delightedly.

“And you are an impertinent child, Harry.”

“Impertinent. To say what you think even if you shouldn’t. Is it okay for me to say you have nice hands?”

“Yes, yes, it’s fine Harry. Do you want to meet Roger? He will love to meet you.” Harry nodded, looking back at the Doctor who was watching him with a fond smile on his face, still sprawled in the large armchair he had claimed. “Are you coming Daddy?”

“Yes, yes, I’ll be right behind you and Elizabeth.” Harry nodded, then started walking forward, tugging on Elizabeth’s hand with all the impatience of the young and energetic. Elizabeth smiled and walked after Harry’s tugging.

“Young Harry, do you know where we are going?”

Harry looked back at her, eyes sparkling and a wide grin. He looked astonishingly like his father in that moment. “Nope! We’ll go somewhere though, right?” He tugged her forward and she followed with a tinkling laugh. It had been a long time since someone had put her so off kilter, it was refreshing. The Doctor followed along behind his errant child and the queen of England. This was bound to be an interesting adventure.

Harry soon became a regular sight around Buckingham Palace. It had been barely three days yet the sight of the small, black haired boy in the strange clothes was now a common occurrence in hallways, the library, empty rooms and in the throne room. He sat on the queen’s lap when she received visitors, listening to them intently and occasionally asking for definitions of words he didn’t know.

“Elizabeth,” he said, interrupting the good local minister, who looked aghast at the child’s blatant informality. “What does ‘unin…uninhab….uninhab…” he paused, trying to say the word properly”

“Uninhabitable?” Elizabeth said gently. She enjoyed the boy’s gentle questioning.

“Yes. Uninhabitable. What does it mean?”
“It means that people can’t live in those places anymore. Usually because they aren’t safe and people can get hurt.” Harry nodded solemnly.

“So the people that Mr. Jacob are talking about don’t have homes?”

“Not right now. That’s why he’s here. He’s asking for help.” Harry nodded in understanding.

“Cause you’re the queen and you help people, right?”

“Yes, I do.” She proceeded to direct Mr. Jacob’s to the funding department to get money for the poor section of London that had collapsed. She started planning a way for the poor to receive help and not just stay on the streets and starve.

Roger Ascham, her old tutor, had given her nothing but praise for the young boy. Harry was smart, articulate and he picked up lessons as if he breathed in the text books. He read with the skill of a child much older than himself and his math skills were breath taking. He seemed to swallow whatever he was given to do and always wanted more. He loved stories of adventurous souls and anything fantastical he delighted in. Roger had asked her where she had found the child. Elizabeth had told him he wouldn’t believe her before smiling mysteriously.

The Doctor was fascinating to talk to. Elizabeth had deigned to ever meet a man who would treat her as an equal rather than bowing and scraping or talking to her with condescension and scorn. The Doctor avidly enjoyed their discussions and challenged her. Her views on the world, on the philosophy and religion she had grown up with. He was a being from another planet, a visitor to this Earth, but he seemed so human sometimes. He held Harry as any parent would, close and protectively. He kept an eye on him, made sure Harry was with someone all the time, either himself, Roger or Elizabeth. Harry was good at sneaking out of their sight but the Doctor never lost him.

And he was a genius. Elizabeth had heard that term before. It was used for her by Roger and William when she was a child. She now felt like a child, talking to the Doctor. A child who knew very little at the feet of a wise old master who had the world’s knowledge at his fingertips. He never treated her as a child though. He would prop those glasses on his nose and play chess with her as they talked about humanity and ethics and morals and religion.

He believed in Time, its constancy. How it would always be there, maybe not in the same way Elizabeth knew it, as Minutes and Seconds and Hours, but how it would always exist. He believed that humans would strive towards good even if they did such terrible evil. He believed that everything changed and everything moved forward towards some inevitable point somewhere, and that even if it all ended something new would start. He had a faith in the universe that Elizabeth couldn’t find in herself in her own religion. It was inspiring.

And he never belittled her beliefs. He always listened to her and valued what she had to say and never told her she was wrong. He would give her a different view and let her decide, give her another option, if she so chose. It was refreshing.

If Elizabeth was honest with herself, and she always tried to be, in the privacy of her own mind, she was falling a little bit in love with the Doctor. The mystery, the quiet, endless knowledge. His adorable child and his protective adoration of Harry. His directness and clearness. Treating her like an equal, an intellectual in her own right and one to be admired. It wasn’t hard to fall in love with him. But she could also tell he wasn’t hers, nor was he for her to have.

They had been in the palace for a week and a half. Harry was getting along famously with Roger Ascham, he was enjoying the throne and sitting on it with Elizabeth and listening to people talk about their problems. He liked the library and running around with the servants and he loved the
kitchen. Sometimes he sat in with Elizabeth and the Doctor's evening talks, watching them play chess and listening to the Doctor explain the rules.

It was two and a half weeks when the Doctor had that look that Elizabeth knew meant he would leave. He wasn’t one to settle down, not unless he had a very very good reason. He was getting fidgety, despite Harry having a wonderful time, and he was getting ready to leave. Elizabeth could tell, just looking at him. Their last night before he left, she leaned up and placed a chaste kiss on his cheek. He looked astonished.

“You’re leaving tonight, aren’t you?” she asked him, a sad smile on her face. He couldn’t have looked more shocked.

“You could tell?”

“Doctor, I may not be as smart as you, but I have talked with you for a couple weeks. You aren’t used to settling down for so long, I can tell. You’ve let it go so long because of Harry but you’re ready to leave. I just…I just wanted to say goodbye, before you picked up and vanished.” She hesitated, looking like all of her young twenty-five years rather than the most powerful person in England. “And I wanted to say thank you.”

“Thank you? For what?”

Elizabeth smiled. “It might seem strange to you, but most people here are still uncertain of how to treat me. They either try so hard to ‘suck up’,,” she used the word with a lilting amusement. “Or they are too busy think I am still a small child, unable to walk on my own. You’ve treated me like an adult with a mind of my own. It’s refreshing. I have enjoyed it.” She smiled, dimples flashing. “And I might have fallen just a bit for you, sir Doctor. You are easy to love.” Her eyes twinkled at him.

“Oh…um…well, right then. I forget how direct you are, your majesty.” He smiled. “I should thank you for all the games of chess, for letting Harry sit with you and learn from your tutor and for teaching him. Not many in your position would.”

“I was remembering a kind faced man with a vegetable stuck to his clothes talking to a four year old girl in French for hours. It was only paying back the kindness you showed me Doctor.”

The Doctor smiled at her before leaning down and gently kissing her, just a slight press of lips on lips. “Thank you, then, for paying back this old man’s kindness to my child. I won’t forget it.”

Elizabeth blushed lightly. “Come back and visit again, Doctor? Sometime?”

The Doctor smiled that half smile. “I can always try, Elizabeth, Queen of England. Though I can’t promise anything.”

The queen sighed, smoothing her hands down her elaborately brocaded dress and stepping back. “I guess I will have to live with that hope then, Doctor. I hope to see you again, and Harry. I would love to see the man he grows into. He is going to be a wonderful person.” She grinned at him. “And I hope he gets that special skill of his under control. The first time I had to explain why the ceiling of the throne room looked like the night sky was amusing. The tenth time was with a raised eyebrow at a smiling Harry. I had him change it back that afternoon.”

The Doctor looked sheepish. He hadn’t realized. “Then my apologies for my son’s aberrant behavior, your majesty. I will do my best.”

The queen smiled before nodding towards the door. “I have asked Roger to bring Harry here. He should arrive any moment. I wish you happy travel, Doctor. Keep Harry safe, won’t you? And
yourself.”

The Doctor nodded. “I will.”

Harry rushed into the room and straight for the Doctor’s legs, babbling.

“DADDY! Daddy! Roger said that the Romans used to have battles in the Col…col…Coliseum where people were on ships on land and they would flood it full of water! Can we go see? Please?”

The Doctor smiled fondly. “Maybe Harry. Why don’t you say goodbye to Elizabeth and Roger okay?”

Harry looked at the Doctor, green eyes wide. “Leaving now?” he asked. The Doctor nodded. Harry sighed. “Okay. Time to leave.” He was set gently on the floor and walked over to his tutor. Roger looked at him. “Bye bye Roger. I liked learning things from you. The poems were lots of fun! I liked Baewolf a lot.”

Roger smiled. “You were a pleasure to teach Harry. I would love it if you came back sometime.” He leaned down to give Harry a hug. Harry then turned to Elizabeth.

“Roger says I should call you Your Majesty but that sounds funny. I like Elizabeth.” Elizabeth bent down and picked up Harry.

“It’s fine to call me Elizabeth, Harry.”

“Alright. Bye Bye Elizabeth. I really liked sitting when you had people come talk to you. And you always explained words to me. I’ll miss you.”

“And I you. Have fun Harry, and be safe. Alright?”

Harry nodded, smiling. “Maybe we’ll come back. The Tardis always likes it when I’m happy so maybe one day.” He smiled, then looked at his dad. “Alright daddy, we can go.”

The Doctor took Harry from Elizabeth and smiled at her, before he left the room, leaving Elizabeth and her former tutor behind.

They heard the sounds of the Tardis through the empty halls a few minutes later and Elizabeth felt tears slip down her cheeks. She would miss the Doctor and his little son.

The Doctor looked at Harry, who was sitting in his chair. “Alright, ready for a new adventure Harry?” he asked. Harry squealed with delight.
Thank you for reading! The information on Elizabeth I comes mostly from her childhood and teen years. Elizabeth was a prodigious learner and could speak six languages before she was eleven. She came to the throne when she was twenty five.

Harry's speaking skills are not overly exaggerated for his age. I have been informed by my mother that I would tell anyone and everyone who would listen to me my entire day's adventure before I was two. I was a very off putting child, i was told.

Thank you! Any reviews, kudos you leave are welcomed with love and appreciated!
The Doctor was excited. They had just packed in for Harry’s birthday from the Leisure Platform of Emerald Sky and he had something special planned for Harry. There was this planet he loved, one he didn’t get to visit as often as he wished to, but he would take Harry there now. The moving crystals on the planet of Cryoth in the Salesian Galaxy were a wonder to behold, the Cryotheens, profoundly kind beings with open arms and open doors.

The TARDIS, now running a little smoother in consideration for the small child on board, landed with a soft bump. “Here we are then Harry! Cryoth, home of the walking stones! Come on, then, up you go!” The Doctor swung a laughing Harry into his arms and headed out the TARDIS doors, locking them as they left.

“Walking stones? Really Daddy?” Harry peered at him curiously. The Doctor smiled and immediately launched into his prepared spiel about the new planet they had landed on.

“Very interesting race, the Cryotheens. Crystal beings whose life comes from the core of the planet, radiating out from the center. The flux of energy is remarkable, every ten years, so the creation of the next generation is all simultaneous and the death of the oldest generation follows in the wake of the energy flux. Extremely peaceful, for the most part, though they have been known to become dangerous when threatened. They are very protective of their youngest members, going to great lengths to make sure nothing harmful befalls them.” Harry nodded. The Doctor knew he didn’t understand everything and he would answer whatever questions Harry came up with.

“Cryotheens? Is that right daddy?” The Doctor nodded.

“Absolutely.”

“So, Cryotheens are nice, right? And they like children?”

“Another correct one Harry. Brilliant.” Harry beamed up at him as they walked along the rocky outcropping, following the trail. “Right up here Harry. See, take a look around. All this is the home of the Cryotheens.” Indeed, their surroundings were interesting and different. The stone was a bright, sparkling silver, beginning to form the dips and curves of a city. “This stone is inanimate. The energy flux doesn’t activate life within them so the Cryotheens use them as a foundation for their cities. They feel a bond with stones, so the use of them as building blocks is more natural. Ah, look the
gate!

Indeed, rising up in front of them was a large, looming gate made from the same, shiny silver stone. The doors were closed, something that made the Doctor’s brow furrow. The gates had never been closed before when he came here. Two guards were outside, and these The Doctor pointed out to Harry.

“See the clear, smaller stone on either side of the gate? Those are the Cryotheens. Very peaceful, most of the time. I have never seen the gate closed before though, so I don’t really know what’s going on.”

Harry could see the concern on his father’s face and frowned. “Something wrong?” he asked. The Doctor half-shook, half-nodded.

“Something…something isn’t right.” He paused, knew he should turn back round but couldn’t. The Cryotheen were peaceful, welcoming. Something was very very wrong. He glanced at Harry, who looked just as concerned as him, mimicking his facial expression most likely. He steeled himself and walked up towards the gate.

They arrived at the gat unmolested but once there, the Cryotheens rose and one walked towards them, an inner light pulsing quietly.

“Who comes before the Gate?” The capital on gate could be heard. The Doctor smiled.

“I’m the Doctor, this is Harry. I was just going to show him your beautiful city…” he trailed off uncertainly. “Why is your gate closed?” One could almost see the Cryotheen blink, if they had easily discernible eyes.

“How does one who comes to Cryoth not know of the invasion of the Stone-Killers? Those that come from the stars and seek our Heart to use for power are strong. We close our gates to protect ourselves.” The stone creature leaned closer. “You do not feel like a stone-killer. Your young one is also unknown. Are you friends of the stone-killers?”

The Doctor shook his head. “No, no, nothing like that. We’re just tourists, really. Now, who are these stone-killers? Where are they from?” The Doctor’s ‘Danger’ alarm was going off, and he felt his blood pump just a little faster. It was something he had been away from for too long, helping the underdogs. Harry’s hands tightened on his sleeve and he spared a part of his brain for concern. He should take Harry back to the TARDIS, leave. Harry was still too young to be involved in these situations. But his blood was pumping. These peaceful beings were in trouble and he could do something to help them. Harry….the Elders would have somewhere safe for Harry to stay. They protected their young fiercely.

“We do not know. They came in ships made of metal, with weapons that shot different kinds of light. They destroyed half a city before we realized they had come to kill us. Now we fortify ourselves. We must protect the Heart.” The Gates opened slightly. “Doctor, please bring yourself and your young one within the walls. This is the oldest and strongest city. It has protected us for many cycles. I shall send word of your coming to the Elder. He wishes to know of those entering the city, so he may greet them properly and warn them of dangers.” The Guard opened the gate wide enough for them to step through. “The Dome is where the council gathers, and where the Elders will be. Please head towards it.” A long arm pointed at the large circle rising out of the mass of buildings.

The Doctor nodded at the guard and slipped through the Gate, holding Harry close.

The Cryotheens were not space-goers, they were too tied to the ground. They needed their Heart,
what gave them life. The center of their world. But they knew of space and planets, they welcomed
travelers and showed them hospitality within their cities. They listened to tales of far-away places and
peoples, sent those who were leaving off with gifts and memories of wonders. They were a peaceful
and gentle race, one of the most open-minded in the universe. For that, they had always held a
special place in his heart. Still, they weren’t the first place on a person’s must-see list. The food a
Cryotheen offered was made specifically for a Cryotheen, created out of energy set to various
frequencies for different purposes. Tourists needed to carry their own food with them if they wanted
to stay any length of time. Still, this never stopped the Cryotheens from giving whole-hearted
hospitality.

To discover that they were now in danger of falling victim to genocide because someone wanted to
use their Heart as a power source was not sitting well with him. Harry had remained silent, hands
gripping the brown duster. They entered the city more withdrawn then they had been upon arrival,
the Doctor troubled by the news of invasion and Harry feeding off those negative emotions.

The city was as great as it had ever been, large towers and walls all around, housing the families and
business that kept the city running. Now, however, an unnatural quiet had settled into the structure of
the city, none of its inhabitants were about, talking laughing or making noise in general. There were
a few passers-by’s, but many of them walked quickly, heading for shelter nearby, their homes or work
places. The city seemed deserted, but the feeling of its inhabitants pressed down, suffocating in the
fear and panic. It weighed heavily on the city, and the Doctor did not like it one bit.

The Doctor turned around, looking with drawn eyebrows at the lack of people. “Where is everyone?
Last I heard this city was crawling with Cryotheens, noise and talking, the brave tourist or two.
Where is everyone?” Harry turned his face into the Doctor’s shoulder and shivered, not looking
around him. “Harry? Is something wrong?”

“Something bad here. I don’t like it. Feels wrong.” Harry shook his head rapidly against the Doctor’s
shoulder as if trying to erase whatever it was he was feeling. This was not good news. The Doctor
looked more carefully around him now, holding Harry close. While he couldn’t take Harry back to
the TARDIS, he knew, deep in the beating hearts in his chest, that Harry would be better protected
then those he had traveled with before, he would make sure of it.

The Doctor hurried through the streets, towards the large dome in the center of the city where the
guard had pointed them. The City Hall, what it equated to on Earth. The place where decisions were
made and laws passed, where someone would know something of what was going on.

Someone had better know what was going on.

The Dome was much larger seen closer up, large enough to fit quite a few 10 Downing Streets inside
rather comfortably. It worked for the Cryotheens, seeing as they were quite a bit larger than humans
in general. The doors were shut, another unusual thing about this entire lay out. Almost no door on
Cryoth was closed, ever. It was just against their better nature to bar someone from entering
somewhere.

This was also probably why, when they were invaded, they had taken such drastic measurements.
Still, the behavior was unusual. Harry pressed himself closer to the Doctor.

“What is it Harry?” Harry just shook his head and stared, wide eyed, at the door in front of them.
The door that opened the moment they hit the top step. “Ah, well, at least we don’t have to pound
away at it then.” Or use the Sonic Screwdriver. Though he doubted that it would have opened the
door for them.

The shiny stone used for the buildings wasn’t used here. Here, the stone was black, so black that all
the light around it seemed to be sucked into the surface. It was disquieting to the normal person but the Doctor found the whole thing fascinating. Enough so that he started to reach into his pocket for the spectacles he kept there before remembering that he had a child in his hip and an invading force threatening a planet. He sighed and vowed to look at the rock later.

He turned to the Cryotheen that had opened the door for them. He (the Cryotheens had two sexes, despite lacking the need to reproduce in the way many normal species with two sexes did. Every ten years, a different gender would be born, so a cycle was created. There were few restrictions on what sexes did, other than age limitations. Often, the government would be wholly male or wholly female due to the ages. This time, it was male, obvious by the noticeably darker cast to the color they pulsed.) was large, larger than many others of his race, signifying his age. He had lived long past his time to cycle back to the earth.

“Welcome, Doctor, to Cryoth. I am the Elder. The guards told me of your arrival, and I could only hope they were not jesting, though I wish your visit could be less troubled than this one. We are currently in turmoil with an enemy we have not encountered before, and they bring little but death and destruction.” The Cryoth reached to touch Harry with a long, thin, brittle limb. “And you bring a young one with so much energy within his body he is almost a little Heart.” Harry, who had almost plastered himself against the Doctor, slowly reached out his own hand and touched the Cryotheen. The cool, pleasantly smooth crystal being pulsed softly. Harry giggled. “He is special Doctor. I would keep him close to you, otherwise our enemies will discover him and may take him instead.” The Cryotheen was eight feet tall, give or take, and his large frame was compensated for by the tiny limbs that perpetuated from several places. His face had two brighter spot of color, were the visual center was located. Within the mass of the body was a large, swirling pool of energy, dark blue, that radiated in small veins around the crystal body. Two limbs held him up.

“You sound familiar. Do I know you?” The Cryotheen, who had turned, beckoning them back into the hall, nodded.

“Indeed, though you looked different then and I was but a small heartling. It was at the time of the Great Shake, when many of my kith from my creation were destroyed. You saved me and took me to the city. Myself and two of my kith. We were the few survivors from that creation. Now I am the only one left, allowed life by leave of our Heart to help against this invasion. Come Doctor, we are in need of someone with your skill and knowledge to help us. Your young one can play with our heartlings. Those that are weak are kept within the inner hall, protected from the invasion. He shall too be protected.”

The Doctor followed, nodding. Harry would be kept safe by the protections the Cryotheen placed around their young but despite his earlier thoughts of cloistering Harry in the inner sanctum, Harry had managed to wiggle his way out of quite a few inventive attempts the Doctor had used to try and keep him contained. “Harry will go with me. He’s a little too smart for his own good sometimes and will usually find a way out of any play pen designed to hold him.” Harry thumped happily on the Doctor’s side.

“Staying with Daddy! Yes!” And that, as far as the Doctor was concerned, sealed the deal. Harry stayed with him. The Cryotheen ahead of them nodded in agreement. It wasn’t their intention to upset the small child.

“So, what is the situation? Why are all the doors closed and locked? I have never heard of the doors closed before.”

“The situation, Doctor, is devastating. Our main city, Haven, has been destroyed along with several of our creation sites. The largest is still hidden deep beneath this city, but it is only a matter of time
before it is found as well. These invaders, these Stone-killers, are unrelenting in their quest. They demand the Heart and threaten destruction if we do not give it to them. They destroy without thought or pause and give no mercy, even when those they have attacked are helpless against them. It is this that drives the others into their homes out from the open, and why the gates are shut and barred.” The Cryotheen had led them into a large stone chamber, a hundred meters high and maybe double that in diameter. There were no windows, the light radiating out from a central point.

Harry giggled and reached out with his hand, wiggling his fingers. Bits of the swirling light flew towards him, lighting up his face and hands with a cool, soft blue glow. The Cryotheens in the room stared, until the one that had guided them spoke, awed.

“You bring a powerful child here, Doctor. You are right to keep him with you. How does he do this, if I may ask?” Harry giggled and wiggled his fingers again, the light fluttered between them as if a lightning bug playing games.

“Honestly, I don’t know. Most of his people can’t, at such a young age, but he’s…special.” The Cryotheen nodded.

“Such is why he was entrusted to you, Doctor.”

The whispers in the room died down as their guide approached. Murmurs of ‘Elder’ followed him as he headed towards the center of the room and the light. The Doctor followed, Harry still playing with his new friend. Some of the others reached out brittle arms to touch the boy, looking at the Doctor before they did. He gave his permission, and little hands touched Harry on his arm or back, careful not to touch his head or hands. Harry giggled each time.

“They feel funny Daddy. Like wings.” Harry giggled but continued to let the crystal arms reach out to touch him and watched the light play between his tiny fingers. The Doctor smiled. Harry really was extraordinary.

“Here is where we can glimpse these invaders, to see if they are familiar to you, Doctor. The Heart can grant us visions of the beings.” All around the room, the Cryotheens reached out to touch each other, forming a large circle. “Let us ask our Heart.” A low hum filled the room, almost intense enough to hurt ears but not loud enough. Harry still pressed his hands to his ears, staying quiet but with a decidedly unhappy face obvious. The Doctor watched the light in front of him, looking closely within its depths.

Then, suddenly, he cursed softly.

“You know these beings, Doctor?” Elder asked, standing next to them. The Doctor turned solemn eyes towards the old Cryotheen.

“Yes. They are an old race, one whose planet was destroyed long ago. They weren’t killed, though I had thought they would have found another planet to colonize. They were always avid travelers, not much for battle. Not when I knew them. They could fight but preferred other methods of resistance. I don’t understand though, they were never fighters….I would have thought they would move on and find another planet.” The Doctor stared at the image in the light.

The creatures weren’t tall, though they were thin as any sapling. With four arms and four legs, all spindly, they looked like large lizards, except for the distinctly humanoid face. Long and oval, with large eyes and a wide mouth, their face was rather exotic. But the blasting gun they held in their hands was significantly more dangerous than it seemed. And with two long tails to balance them out, the creatures looked agile and fast. Faster than the slow, steady pace the Cryotheens took.
“What are they Doctor? Why are they destroying us if they are peaceful?” The note of confusion in the Elder’s voice was heavy.

“I can only guess that after the destruction of Hymnero, their world, those remaining did go look for a new planet, but found little in the universe that wasn’t destruction or death. The universe is a beautiful place, but it is also full of people and beings who want to destroy. The Narionights must have retaliated first out of defense, then they began to attack. They require a certain energy fluxuation to run their machinery, and Hymnero was rife with this source, but with it gone, they had to start looking elsewhere. It seems as if Cryoth is just another stop on their path, and I am afraid they may have gone farther down a path of destruction farther than could have ever been predicted.” He peered intently at the creature pictured.

Harry bounced impatiently on his hip. “Play Daddy! I want to play with the little Cryotheens! Please?” Harry kicked his legs and pointed at the small crystals shuffling around the edge of the room. They were within sight, so the Doctor let Harry down to toddle over to them.

“Stay in sight, Harry, ok?”

“Ok daddy!” Then in sturdy legs, he ran off to join them in their game of colored rocks. The Elder followed the Doctor’s line of sight, a happy pulse of light radiating outward.

“He is a special child, Doctor. Human, from observance, yet with such strong power. It is amazing he can contain it at all.” The Elder turned to look directly at the Doctor. “You do know that he may one day be unable to control it and he may not survive?” The Doctor looked grim.

“The Guardians of the Forests of Hadroona gave me a similar warning, and they also gave me a gift for him, when the time is needed. I only hope that the inevitable won’t be as bad as you all have predicted.” Still, the Doctor frowned as he stared at the image of the Narionights, his mind thinking of the boy who had become his child, his son, in such a short period of time. Harry, with his laughs and smiles and impossible existence comforted him in ways that he had never thought he needed. Harry, who needed him just as much as the Doctor needed Harry. It was a comforting feeling, knowing that. Many of his Companions over the years, he needed them far more than they knew, and he became some kind of god to them, this impossible being that they loved without truly understanding. He had cared for them all, but many he could not love. Martha, who loved him so much but left because he could not. Rose, who he loved so much that he returned her to a parallel world with his Metacrisis, so she could live her life with him, a copy of him who would grow old and die with her. But Donna, Donna, his best friend, who no longer remembered him. That was probably the hardest thing he had ever done. Erasing her memory killed a part of his heart he had thought would never return. Now, with Harry in his life, he felt the human part of him, the part that the Time Lords hated so much about him, returning. Harry, who was giving him back his happiness, joy and hope. He smiled softly.

“Yes, the boy is special, Elder. He is certainly that.” He could feel the hum of contentment from the Cryotheen next to him.

Then he heard the pop of displaced air behind him, outside of the circle of kneeling Cryotheens, and spun on his heel. No, no, not now. No.

They were gone. All of them, the three dozen heartlings, Harry, they were gone. They had been taken.

He felt his head explode with rage, his hands shake, his hearts race. They had taken Harry. They had taken children, and not just the innocent children of Cryoth, they had taken his child.
The Sonic Screwdriver was tight in his hand. He turned to the Elder. “Where is their ship? Where is their ship?” he shouted, voice harsh, lacking the bouncy and light tone it contained earlier. It was the voice of the Time Lord who had destroyed two races, who had been given titles of horror by his enemies and caused any powerful leader in the universe to bow to his desires. The Cryotheen was no different.

“They….they hover over a large fault on the planet, towards the largest mountain, one leading to the Heart. They took the heartlings….why did they take the heartlings Doctor?” It was a mark of how much the Doctor held the Cryotheens in high regard that he didn’t immediately storm out of the room and head that direction. The Elder sounded devastated and confused, genuinely not understanding.

“Children of any race are precious, Elder. They mean to use them as leverage to get what they want.” He could see the fear and dread fill the Cryotheens, all of them, as they heard his words. “I assure you, I will not let them. They will be returned, unharmed. All of them.” He didn’t mention that the Narionights would probably not escape unharmed if Harry or the heartlings were hurt in any way.

His coat swirled around him as he left the room, the council remaining behind, devastated and wailing. He reigned in the anger and hate swirling through his mind, bottling it up and storing it until he could use it effectively. He didn’t have to wait long, though, because the moment he stepped outside, a small ship, part of a larger fleet, was hovering above the dome. He looked up, his eyes burning in anger, and held up the sonic screwdriver. A small but effective threat.

“Take me on board.” It was said in a calm and low tone of voice, masking the deadly intent behind it. “You have taken hostages. I demand to speak for them. Take me on board.” There was a moment’s hesitation as the ship looked as if it might decide to leave. “In accordance with the Shadow Proclamation, hostages of an age too young to speak for themselves are given leave to have a representative. Take me on board!” He clocked the screwdriver over a setting, pointing it straight up. “Or I will invite myself, and you won’t like it.” He was beamed up immediately.

He reappeared in a ring of Narionights, all pointing weapons at him. He lanced them all with sharp eyes, until one approached him.

“Who are you, representative of Cryoth children? You are not of Cryoth, you hold technology unknown to us. If you mean to get in our way, you will be destroyed as certainly as those walking stones below us will be.” Ah, the Narionight speech pattern. Not something one forgets over the years. A cadence that emphasized all vowels and understated all consonants until it became like a video where one was to follow the bouncy ball and sing along to the tune. The Doctor was far too angry to be amused.

“You have broken all articles of war as laid down by the Shadow Proclamation after the last Galactic War. You have taken children as hostages and you threaten genocide against a race that has done nothing to you. You use weapons against the defenseless and you destroy those who have not threatened you. What do you seek to gain?” The Narionights, all pale with large, dark eyes, laughed outright.

“You have fallen far from your roots, Narionights. There was a time you were the most beautiful crafters in the Universe and made items craved by the farthest planets. What happened to you?” Immediately they all stepped back. “How do you know of this stranger? The history of the
Narionights was lost long ago, the only records are those within our ships and the relics from our past. None know our name anymore.” Then the self-proclaimed leader looked closer at the Doctor, before backing up and raising his gun. “You, you are one of them. Them that destroyed it all. The legends of the universe that exist only as fairy tales and as a warning. A Time Lord.”

“But they all died,” a Narionight whispered. “All of them, in the final battle.”

The Doctor glared. “No, I survived. The only one. And you have broken covenants and even your own species’ code of non-violence, of peace.”

“When the last of a race is shoved into the empty blackness in a universe where beauty is far between and the ugliness fills the space, a species must evolve. You only have your own people to thank for us. Now, we survive by scavenging and ravaging worlds. The monster sweeping in and leaving. We are the last, and we will have this world.” This was said with a finality, and the Doctor clenched his fist.

“I will not let you destroy this world, this race of beings that bring beauty into the world and harm none. And I will have the children back, all of them, even the human child you took on board.”

Confusion filled numerous faces, and one of the Narionights spoke. “We have only the stone beings children, Time Lord. There are no…human children.” A sly look crossed a face. “This human child, is it yours?” The Doctor stiffened. Harry wasn’t here. Harry wasn’t here and he wasn’t back in the citadale. Where was he?

“Let me see the children, all of them. Unharmed.”

“And why should we? What can you do, surrounded by guns?” The Doctor pulled out the screwdriver again and clicked it to another setting, before pointing it at the control board behind the closest Narionight. It sparked and fizzed. “That was the drive mechanism! We cannot go anywhere without it….” The Doctor began to spin around the room, ready to blow something else up. “Right, right, the children. Hold fast.”

A Narionight closest to the far door was sent scurrying off to retrieve the small Cryotheens. He returned with two more Narionights and the thirty-six children clumped between them. Small keening noises emanated from the heartlings. The Doctor approached one of them, the oldest (though not by much). He knelt down and took a small limb in his hands.

“Do you know where the little boy with you went?” A picture of Harry playing with the light flashed in front of the Doctor’s eyes. “Yes, him. He went to play with you. Do you know where he went?” Another image, this one of a hole in the ground, leading far, far underground. Farther than the young heartling could conceive. An image of Harry slipping into it floated across the Doctor’s mind. His eyes widened. “No. No. He wouldn’t be able to survive. He wouldn’t be able to live after a fall like that. He’s just a child, a baby…”

The equations and physics flashed through his mind, giving him the statistics of a child Harry’s size falling that far surviving, and they all came out zero. All of them. The Doctor collapsed to the floor, letting the Cryotheen’s limb fall back. The heartling reached out, touching the Doctor’s forehead. An image of Harry playing with the lights again, though more intense. As if trying to remind the Doctor that Harry was special.

“He’s just a baby though. He can’t, not that far. Not if it’s as far as you say it is.” Another image, one of the Heart. The Tunnel led there. It was an indistinct image though. “I don’t…I don’t…” The Doctor turned to the Narionights. “What were you planning to do to get the Heart? What methods?” He snapped at the nearest Narionight. The being started.
“Um, there were plans to charge up the last laser cannon until it drilled the surface down to the Heart….why am I telling you this? You do not need any information….” That was all the Doctor needed to know, because he knew if Harry did manage to survive through some miracle of magic, if the Narionights did use the drill, he knew Harry would be killed. He swirled on his heels.

He didn’t get far though, because he fell to his knees as a shockwave of emotion and words swept through his mind. Every other single being on Cryoth or above it also fell to their knees, or in the Narionight’s case, all the way down, keeled over. Overwhelmed by the thought-projection. A thought that was filled with the gleeful and happy voice of the boy he had come to treasure, calling to him.

“Daddy! Love you! Daddy! Love you!”

Repeated over and over and filled to the brim with the purity of a child’s love, the unending and unthinking love of a child. It was encompassing and complete, and the Cryotheen heartlings sang with happiness all around him, their voices and inner light pulsing in time with the wave. The Doctor felt tears on his cheeks, a smile on his face, as disbelief of Harry’s safety warred with joy and happiness. The Harry voice giggled, an unmistakable giggle the Doctor had come to love dearly, a clapping sound filtered through, and Harry shouted his words again. “Daddy! Love you!”

“Love you too Harry.” Harry giggled through his mind. The Doctor rose again, a smile on his face, looking around him. Harry was safe. Harry was safe.

It was enough to fill his hearts with joy.

The Narionights around him though, were not so joyful. The emotional wave that had accompanied the words had swept through each of their minds. To the Doctor, it was a soothing, brilliantly amazing feeling. To the Cryotheens it was joyful and energizing. To the Narionights it was like pouring rubbing alcohol on a gaping wound. It had damaged them irreparably. Their minds were insensible, and would be that way for a long time.

It was probably the quickest punishment and the harshest. They were alive, they just couldn’t move, couldn’t think, couldn’t speak. They could feel though, and the love and pureness was slowly killing them. The Doctor sighed. He would send a message to the Judoon, under the Cryotheen’s line, and ask them to come pick them up. The Judoon would handle them. At the moment, that might be the most merciful thing he could do for them. A hand, weak, tugged at the hem of his jacket. He turned. One of the Narionights was still conscious, though only just.

“What…what were we like….back then? When…when we made…art? When we….made things….beautiful?” The Narionight was young, still just barely into adulthood and obviously a new recruit. The Doctor sighed. Yes, this would be one of the ones still conscious.

“The Narionights of Hymnero created the most beautiful works of art in the universe. They used energy stones harvested from their planet to power their machines and clans would specialize in one trade. The Narionight work was sold all over the universe as special collectors pieces. Your planet was beautiful, full of the stuff of legends. When it was destroyed, it was a loss to the universe.” The young warrior blinked large eyes.

“I think…I would have…liked that…” then those eyes fluttered closed, and the hand fell, limp. The Doctor sighed.

“And it is a shame the others could not see that.” He walked over to the teleport, the heartlings gathering behind him, around him, forming a circle. “So, back home we go, little ones. Back home you go.” And to find Harry, for me, he added silently. He ran the sonic screwdriver over the panel,
and the heartlings all popped out of the ship, himself following after. He would ask the Elder for a path to the Heart, and to Harry.

Harry had just left his Daddy not minutes ago, to come play with the little stones that moved. He loved them, these strange creatures that had energy within them. They pulsed and probed and felt wholly new to Harry. He wanted to go see the little ones, the ones only a bit bigger than he was.

He also didn’t get very far before he tripped over a ledge on the floor and fell much farther than the floor was supposed to be.

He fell far, for a long time, down and down and ever farther down. He wasn’t in space, all the blackness with the bright stars in it, because he could feel the ground beneath him, even though he wasn’t getting hurt. It was fun, for a while. He liked sliding, it always felt like he was flying. Now though, he had been sliding so long that he was starting to get bored and nothing new was happening. He couldn’t wiggle his fingers and bring the light back, it wasn’t working well.

Soon though, he could see the end, a light filtering up through the tunnel he was sliding down, and Harry cocked his head. Maybe Daddy was down there, waiting to catch him?

He flew out the end, flying through the air with the momentum he had picked up sliding downward, and landed on top of a large stone. He blinked.

“Daddy? Daddy, where are you?” No answer. He looked around. There were other stone-beings, Cryotheens, all different colors, like the stone he was sitting on. But he didn’t care. He couldn’t see his dad. His tears bubbled up over his lashes and plopped down his cheeks. “Daddy? Daddy? Where are you? Daddy?!” his hands rubbed his eyes and he tried to stand up. The stone was curved, barely flat enough to let him sit on its surface but hugely round. He couldn’t get purchase enough to stand up. He sat back down heavily, sniffling.

Beneath him, the stone pulsed, reaching out towards the child who had landed on it. Such a strange child, it thought. Such power, such energy welling up inside him. A human child. Strange little one. And he was crying. The Heart would have frowned if it could. It did not like tears of children. The pulse of energy it sent out surrounded Harry and brought him within the depths of the Heart.

Harry giggled at the sensation, red-rimmed eyes clearing of tears. He enjoyed the tickling of the pulse. “You are the Heart stone?” he asked. A positive-amused pulse. Harry laughed. “Find my Daddy please? I miss Daddy.” The Heart would have cocked an eyebrow, if it had such things. Instead it searched for the mind-signature of the being Harry called Daddy and found him standing under a large ship, one of the invaders intent on destroying its people. The Doctor was taken on board after numerous threats. Harry’s eyes widened. “Bad. They are not nice. They took the heartlings.” Harry shook his head furiously. The Stone pulsed softly, questioning. Harry looked like he would cry. “Don’t like the lizard-peoples. They hurt the Cryotheens. The Cryotheens are nice.” The Heart felt faint amusement at the declaration of this strange, odd child. He was a child of a machine that was bigger inside and traveled through the vortex of time and he saw the world with strange eyes.

Child, the Heart whispered in his mind. Is there anything you want to tell your Daddy? So he knows you are safe? He thinks you are hurt, young one. Harry nodded, clearing his tears.

“Uh-huh. I wanna tell Daddy Love you. Daddy! Love you! Daddy love you!” The little boy yelled the last words, and the Heart took the liberty of reaching into the boy’s mind and finding the emotions he felt, sending them out, broadcasting them through every mind on the planet and directly above it, as far as its influence would reach. A child’s emotions, the Heart thought, was a much more effective weapon when used as a telepathic link. Harry could feel his Daddy though, and laughed.
Giggled. Clapped. “Daddy! Love you!” he shouted again. The Doctor’s relief was tangible.

“Love you too Harry.” The words were filled with relief and happiness. Harry laughed delightedly. The Heart pulsed brightly, and Harry reached out to touch the crystal surrounding him.

“Nice Heart,” he commented. He wiggled his fingers, his way of calling for the magic that lay under his skin. The bright sparkles tickled the Heart, and the crystal was curious. This child was strong, powerful and different from any other being the Heart knew of.

Harry, child-being, what are these light-sparkles-colors-energy you have? The Heart said, making sure to use its softest tone. Harry’s eyes widened.

“Daddy says magic. I just like the colors. I can make sparkles and planets to play with. See!” Harry spun his hands around and his personal solar system appeared, one that defied all logical laws of physics. The Heart examined it, the energy used and the way Harry manipulated it.

That is a very special gift, Harry-child. Very few can use their energy in such a unique way. The Heart’s mind-voice was filled with awe. This boy-child-human who could change the fabric of reality with wiggling fingers and will was strong indeed. Harry sat and spun the mass of stars and planets around for a few minutes, before sighing.

“Can I go back to Daddy?” he asked, eyes wide. “Miss daddy lots.” The Heart pulsed softly.

Harry-child, I can send you back to your daddy, but I need some of your energy to do so. I cannot with my power alone. May I have your help? Harry nodded. Thank you Harry-child. I need you to think very hard about your daddy, everything, I have to find him. There was a pause as the Heart searched for the Doctor again. I have found him, Harry-child. I will show you an image of him. I need you to wish very hard to be with him. All you have. You will be tired afterward, Harry-child. Harry nodded resolutely and squeezed his eyes shut. He felt energy gather around him, pull him towards a light, then he popped back into reality.

Right in front of the Doctor. Harry smiled. “Daddy! The Heart sent me back!!” The relief evident on the Doctor’s face was clearer than the sun on a cloudless day. Harry was swept into long, skinny arms and held tightly.

“Harry, my amazing, wonderful Harry! Thank the stars you’re alright!” The Doctor privately thanked Harry’s magic as well. The sentience around it was truly amazing, to cater to the whims and needs of a nearly two-year old so well. For now though, he reveled in the feeling of Harry in his arms, safe and sound. Harry burrowed into the Doctor’s coat, yawning.

“Tired now, Daddy. Can I go to bed?” Harry turned his young face up, finding his father’s eyes. The Doctor smiled.

“Of course, Harry. I just have to talk to the Elder again, before we go back. Alright?” Harry nodded, yawning, eyes closing. He was asleep before the Doctor had reached the doors. The elder waited for him.

“Doctor, we heard the voice of a child from our Heart. Do you know what it was? Every single one of us heard it, all over Cryoth. They say that the invaders collapsed at the same time.” The Elder was clearly confused.

The Doctor laughed gaily. “Yes, yes, I know. The Heart, your Heart, drew little Harry to it, through a crack in the citadel. He talked to your Heart, and the Heart carried his message on a wave of pure energy, into the minds of all the beings on the planet. Destroyed the minds of the Narionights, they
couldn’t handle a child’s emotions dialed up that loud.” The Doctor looked fondly down at the child sleeping in his arms. “Little Harry here saved us.” In so many more ways than one. He kept that part to himself. Harry shifted and snuggled deeper into the Doctor’s coat.

The Elder looked down at Harry, pulsing quickly, disbelieving. “This small child? His was the voice we all heard? Whose emotions we all felt?” The Doctor nodded. “He is special indeed. Anything you need of us, Doctor, we are at your service.”

“Oh, yes I do need your communication system. I need to get in contact with the Shadow Proclamation. Have them send the Judoon to come clean this all up. Shouldn’t take long. They owe me a few favors. Well, a favor…well, they should listen.” And with that, the Doctor bounded in towards the central chambers.

Soon, well, as soon as word to the Council was sent and they agreed to come take the Narionights off the planet and out of the sky, the Doctor and the sleeping Harry were leaving, saying their final goodbyes as they left through the outer gates. The Cryotheens were gathered in the streets, pulsing happily and talking amongst each other. The threat was over. They were safe.

The Doctor walked back to the TARDIS, Harry balanced on his hip, the tyke’s eyes still closed. He really was something. The blue wooden doors opened, welcoming them back home, and closed behind them. The TARDIS chirped cheerfully and Harry was laid in bed.

Off on another adventure. Preferably, this time, not so close to something so life threatening.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you! The Cryotheens and the Narionights are of my own creation. I like playing in the universe's sandbox! It's so big!

Thank you all of you who left kudos and reviewed!

The Next chapter should be up soon!
In Which Things Take a Strange Turn

Chapter Summary

When the Doctor has to face the Ood and their message, not everything happens as it should. Well, that's what happens when you throw Harry into the mix.

Chapter Notes

Thank you all so much! Hey guys! This is a tad bit later than I thought I would be posting this but I wanted to get a lot more written on later chapters so I would have something for you all when I ran out of pre-written works!

I have had a few questions I thought I would answer as a whole here for anyone else wondering. Main question: Who will Harry be paired with? Answer: I don't know right now. I have some things planned that would not only put that off for a bit but I am really focusing on Harry as a small child. It's really hard to figure out who to pair a four year old with. Whether it will be with a guy or a girl or something else in the middle or some strange alien character I come up with, I'll be sure to give you all a heads up as to possible plans.

River Song, keep, change, what happens to her? And to Amy and Rory, will they still be there?: I was asked this and immediately hit with several different ideas. I wouldn't mind hearing from you all what happens with her and Amy and Rory. I love Amy and Rory and River but, with the way I have changed canon, River and the Doctor wouldn't really become what they became before. I almost want to do something dramatic and shocking to River. O.O

Rose and Jack, when are they going to show up?: They'll be appearing soon. I have a story line to play out and interesting things to toss at Harry and the Doctor (and soon enough, Jack) before all of them show up in the TARDIS. ^_^

This is a fix-it/change the canon chapter. Hope you all enjoy the ways I changed things.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

~~~~~This is a Beginning~~~~~

He had put it off far too long, he knew. The Ood had contacted him before he had been given Harry, and he had studiously avoided any galaxy that had Ood in them, and the Planet of the Ood. He did not want to return. At first it was avoidance of the prophecy he had been foretold of his death, then it became a matter of protecting the boy he had grown to love unconditionally. Harry was too important to trust to his next incarnation, really. Those first few weeks of adjusting to a new face, a new body, a new everything, the memories that could be lost, no, he couldn't trust himself with Harry if he changed. So he had been avoiding the Ood.

But it was inevitable now. The timelines were beginning to converge and he had to see them. They
wouldn't have contacted him if it hadn't been important, and Harry was two now. Two years and a bit more, and much more articulate and his magic responded to his whims much quicker. Little Harry, who was bundled up in warm clothes and nestled on the Doctor's bony hip, smiling and asking questions. Little Harry, who had given him so much hope in himself and in time again that he found the courage to come to the Ood. So, pasting a smile across his face and jogging Harry once more, he jaunted out of the TARDIS with a bounce.

Ood Sigma was waiting in the snow.

"Hello there! Sorry, now where were we? I was summoned, wasn't I? Ood in the snow, calling to me. Well, I didn't come straight here, you know. Travelled, you know me. Had a bit of fun. Named a galaxy Alison, met Queen Elizabeth, now that was a treat, got married, that was a mistake. Oh, and I picked up a friend here. Saved a planet, he did. Little Harry, two years old and already saving planets. Isn't that brilliant?"

Ood Sigma, who had been perfectly composed before, now gazed at the child. "I have heard nothing of the boy you bring, and the Elder Ood sees all. Who is he, Doctor?" Harry giggled and reached out to touch the Ood's light ball. It flashed.

"Pretty lights. It makes you talk. Brain connec…connec…connec…" Harry looked up for a pronunciation.

"Connection Harry. The orb connects directly to the brain and was used to control the Ood when humans used them as slaves. Originally they had a second brain in their hands. The humans, the bad ones, replaced it." Harry frowned at this bit of knowledge.

"Humans are bad. I like the Ood. They're nice." Harry smiled widely. He reached out a hand again and touched the Ood. Ood Sigma looked startled.

"The child is smart. He seems human, Doctor. How is that so?" The Doctor shook his head.

"Not now, Ood Sigma. You called me here, what did you want?" The Ood shook his head.

"Yes, you should not have delayed. The matter we called you for is important." The Ood looked at Harry. "Though with your new charge, I do not know precisely how the Elder of the Ood will tell you of this."

"The last time I was here you told me my song would be ending soon. It sorta makes a fellow not want to come back. Besides, I have a greater responsibility now." He hefted Harry.

The two began their walk towards the city. "Yes, that was told to you. I cannot say for certain if that still holds true. Harry is a strange being. Time does not flow around him as it would any other being. Even you, Time Lord, you have points in your life that were fixed and are now no longer there." The Doctor crooked an eyebrow. "The Ood can hear a person's song. Yours has just become stranger, different, than it was the last time we met. Ah, here is the city."

The three stopped, and the Doctor stared. "Magificent. Isn't it Harry, Splendid. Oh, it is. And you've achieved all this in how long?"

"One hundred years." The Doctor turned to stare at Ood Sigma.

"Then we have a problem. This is way too fast. Not just this city but your ability to call me. You were put back to the 21st century. Something is accelerating your species way beyond normal." Harry tugged on the Doctor's jacket.
"Pretty shiny lights Daddy. Everything's too pretty and he laughs here. Everywhere he laughs."
Harry frowned.

Ood Sigma nodded. "The mind of the Ood is troubled by the same thing Doctor."

"What do you mean?"

"Every night Doctor. Every night we have bad dreams." Ood Sigma looked down at Harry.
"Dreams that your little one describes well. Come, the Elder of the Ood is waiting."

The circle of Ood around the lit incense had the Doctor stopping a bit. Harry tugged on the Doctor's jacket.

"Down, Please. I want to talk to Ood, please." Harry was set on his feet, and he pattered over the stone floors towards the Ood with the most prominent brain, the folds and lobes visible. Harry smiled. "Hello! I'm Harry. You have pretty songs. Can I listen?" Harry held out a hand towards the Ood, who stared at him with wide eyes, before something akin to a smile took over the large eyes.

"Of course, Harry with the strange song. Listen." And he took Harry's hand in his. The Doctor quirked and eyebrow. Harry being able to hear the songs wasn't something unexpected. His innate magic would have let him catch pieces of the melody, filtered through his own energy until it came as if over a distant mountain. Not as loudly as the Doctor heard the songs, but he would hear them. To request to listen to a song was another thing though. And to ask the Elder of the Ood, well, Harry was something special after all.

Harry had closed his eyes and cocked his head, hand enfolded within the Ood's, and he smiled, humming pieces of the melody unconsciously. It was a strange scene he doubted would ever be repeated again, a toddler barely tall enough to come up to his knees holding an Ood's hand and listening to the music of fates.

To Harry, the Music soared and swelled, building up to an infinite point before plummeting to the ground. It was like the stars, building and expanding and sometimes exploding but always continuing on. It's melody was beautiful, and he loved listening to it. He opened his eyes. Daddy had things to do here, but he wanted to hear the music before they had to rush off again. "Thank you. It's very pretty. Like stars, only in sounds instead." Then he smiled and ran back to his dad.

The Elder of the Oods looked towards the Doctor. "We were bringing you even more bad news, Doctor, before your little one came. Now, we are uncertain of your song, even as our news remains the same. Harry here changes much that he touches, like you do. Except Harry can change even you." The Ood composed themselves again. "Join us Doctor, join with us." Around the circle, the chant was continued, as Harry was settled in between the Doctor's crossed legs as he sat. Hands were joined, and Harry placed his on top of the Doctor's.

A flash of a laughing man, maniac laughter and mad face filled his mind. The Doctor jerked back. Harry whimpered.

"The laughing man." The Ood nodded.

"He comes in our dreams every night. I fear all the peoples of the universe dream of him."

"That man is dead. I saw him die."

The Ood stared. "There is yet more. Come see. Things that have happened are changing the now."

The face of Wilfred, Donna's grandfather. The Doctor worried. Then of the Master's betrayed wife,
the two other faces, unfamiliar ones. The Doctor frowned, shared his side of the story with the Ood. They listened. They warned him.

Then they talked to him. Harry sat in the Doctor's lap the whole time, silent. The situation was grave and he felt the mood. "Doctor, do not despair though. Things are coming, things that bring with them the end of Time, but events change even now, as we look upon this small child with strange energy and bright eyes. Do not despair." The Doctor nodded, grabbing Harry up and running out of the cave.

If what the Ood said was going to happen, he had to get there, quickly. Harry held on tightly, barely whimpering at the iron grip the Doctor held him in.

"Alright Harry, It's going to be alright. You'll be fine." The words were muttered like a mantra under the Doctor's breath. The Tardis doors were opened with the clicker key and Harry held on tight to the chair beside the controls. The Doctor took a moment to strap him in tightly. He didn't have the time to be gentle now, so the restraints would hold Harry in place in case the TARDIS had to pull any tricks out to get where he needed to get to.

They landed with a thump. The Doctor turned to Harry. "Harry, I really need you to stay here, in the TARDIS. I have to go talk to someone, but he's very dangerous, ok? Please stay in the TARDIS okay Harry?" He released Harry's restraints and took off the large coat the boy wore.


"I'll be back. Count on it. Love you too." And with that, the Doctor rushed out of the TARDIS. Harry sighed. Now he had to go find those crayons from the Horse Head Galaxy that would make his drawings animated. Where had he dropped them?

The TARDIS locked the doors on the inside, making sure Harry couldn't get out, and found those crayons quickly. And paper. She would keep the little one safe.

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The Doctor ran back to the TARDIS. The Master had left, the drumming in his head was real. He couldn't think straight anymore. Everything he had thought insanity wasn't, not anymore. That sound was supposed to be something he created, something he made up.

The sun was rising above the horizon; he had left Harry alone for almost a full day. Now bad parenthood was being added to the lengthy list of things he was bad at. And he needed to find Wilfred again. Meeting him twice, twice in the same century, the same decade, within the same five year span, was not something to ignore. He knew something.

He unlocked the doors and raced inside, and was greeted by a very enthusiastic toddler running from the kitchen, a piece of apple in his mouth. Well, at least he could get to the food.

"Daddy! You're back!" The Doctor swept the child up in his arms.

"Harry. How are you? Did you sleep alright?" Harry nodded.

"TARDIS made me go to bed. But she got me dinner and breakfast. And I made drawings!" Harry pointed at the now inanimate figures littered in the corner. Apparently there had been a giant battle between the three headed stick people and giant trees.

"I see that. Where are they from, the trees?"
Harry smiled. "They're from Lifria. It has three moons and lots of water. The people are from Galife. They aren't very nice and wanted to cut down all the trees on Lifria." And those names, the Doctor thought, had just a little too much in common with Gallifrey.

"Who won Harry?" Harry shook his head.

"No one. They all died." Harry sadly placed his head on the Doctor's chest, then he giggled. "I like Daddy's hearts. They go thump-thump-thump-thump thump-thump-thump-thump." Harry's hand tapped out the rhythm on the Doctor's chest as he giggled.

"No no no no….it can't be, it can't….no. It can't be that simple….." That rhythm, it was just like the one the Master heard, the one he heard from the connection, one he knew instinctively. It was the beat of Time Lord hearts, amplified and seared into the brain. But why would they do that? Why drive someone insane, someone as brilliant as the Master?

"Daddy okay?" Harry had stopped his tapping and was now looking up at the Doctor in concern. Large green eyes brought the Doctor out of the whirl of his mind and back onto what he needed to do.

"Yeah, I'm fine. Alright, Harry, how about you meet a friend of mine? His name's Wilfred." Harry clapped his hands and held onto the seat as the Doctor raced around the controls. The TARDIS landed gently. "I'll be right back Harry."

Harry climbed out of the chair, modified for him with protective railings and restraints and everything, and back to his snack in the kitchen. His apples were waiting for him.

The pile of drawings in the corner drew his eye. They were sad, all of them. They all lost and all of them died. It wasn't a happy drawing. He sighed. Next time he would have stars that laughed and lots of planets and they would make up games to play with the moons. Well, as long as he didn't make any hit the walls and leave marks. The TARDIS didn't like it when he did that.

The doors opened before he made it to the kitchen, and he turned back. Daddy came back faster, and he brought a person with white hair and a beard, like one that Daddy gets when he doesn't shave cause he's too busy working on a problem with his sonic screwdriver.

"Daddy! You're back!"

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"Daddy! You're back!" Wilfred turned with wide eyes to see a small child, one he would have guessed to be a little over a year if he was running so well, run towards them. Bright green eyes and messy, long black hair were the most remarkable traits, followed by,

"You have a son Doctor?" Harry ran up the gangplank and climbed the step ladder to his chair. The Doctor waved at Harry.

"He's…well, he's not technically my son, but, well, he is, in a way, well, yeah. Wilfred, meet Harry. Now, we have to go. Harry, buckle in. Wilfred, hold tight. Oh, and yes. Bigger on the inside."

The Doctor ran around the console and flipped switches and pushed buttons, the center column lighting up and whirring most impressively. Wilfred stared at Harry, then looked at the Doctor.

"So, wait, if this is a time machine, can't we go back to yesterday to catch the guy you're chasing?"

"Nope, can't go back in my own timeline. I have to stay relative to the Master in the causal nexus."
"Understand?"

"No, I'm afraid not." The Doctor smiled.

"Welcome to the TARDIS. Hold on!" The TARDIS rattled around and spun, causing Harry to giggle uproariously. Wilfred stared at him again.

"Do you take him on all these dangerous things you do?" The Doctor looked over at Harry.

"Not usually. The TARDIS is practically the safest place in the universe now. If it's too dangerous, I leave him here. The TARDIS takes care of him, don't you girl?" A whirring noise answered him. "Harry's a rather special case. Not technically my son, but for all intents and purposes, he is. Had him almost a year now and he's already saved a planet. Not this one, another one. Brilliant child." The Doctor looked at the boy who was laughing and clapping on the other side of the console. Wilfred nodded.

The TARDIS lurched, alerting them to touch down.

"Harry, I want you to stay in here alright? I might not be back for a while, but I will be back, promise. Okay Harry?" Harry nodded. He was stuck here. At least it wasn't boring. He had his crayons again.

"Alright Daddy. Love you." Harry wiggled out of his restraints and down onto the platform, before heading to his paper and crayons. Wilfred and the Doctor headed out.

"He's rather talkative. How old is he?"

"Two and a couple months, I think. Hard to tell when you travel without a good calendar. Never had a problem before, but I guess. He's about two. Bright kid though."

Wilfred could only nod in agreement. When his kids had been two, they were still trying to pile blocks on top of one another in a seemingly orderly fashion.

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"Do you think he changed them in their graves? Did he change them?" The Doctor looked up from the electrical work, eyes grave, face solemn.

"I'm sorry." Wilfred looked down at his hands.

"Your…your son, is he safe? In your ship?" The Doctor looked out at the sky.

"The TARDIS is out of synch with time. It wouldn't have affected him. He's safe, drawing and playing games."

"Forever, Doctor? If you die, what happens to him?" The Doctor looked back, a sad smile on his face.

"Time Lords die, but they become something new. I will die, everything that I am will die, but someone new, with my memories, will take my place. Still the Doctor, still in the TARDIS, just someone brand new. That is death to a Time Lord. Death of a personality, of a body, but not of a soul. Harry will have a protector, but it won't be me."

Wilfred nodded, not completely understanding but the despairing undertones came through. Whatever it was, wasn't good.
Harry, eating a piece of bread covered with Salisberry jam from New Earth, was jerked out of concentration as the TARDIS shook and quivered. The Solar System he had been constructing, containing a large planet with two suns and fourth in line, dissolved and he fell over. The TARDIS groaned softly and Harry shook his head. Something didn't feel right, not at all. The TARDIS didn't make that noise, not usually.

He reached for that weird, colorful energy that would create worlds when he asked it to and asked it to take him to his daddy. He knew his daddy needed help. The Ood told him, when he was listening to their song. It told him that, at some point, his daddy would need him, even when he didn't think he would.

His magic acquiesced. He popped out of the TARDIS.

The TARDIS mourned. Both of her friends were gone now. She hoped they would both return.

Everyone was loud, rushing and screaming and running and Harry pressed himself against a wall. He could see his dad, laying on the floor. And five people in red, and another in black. They were just standing still. One person was trapped in a glass cage. Harry asked the colorful energy to help him. His dad never wanted to leave people behind and the man in the glass cage was banging on the wall. The door opened with a soft click and the man blinked in astonishment before running off. He wasn't one to look a gift horse in the mouth despite the impossibility of the doors opening on their own.

The door hung open for a moment before the Doctor lunged and slammed it shut. Everyone else in the room stared at him in astonishment. He knew what had happened and the Master knew what had happened shouldn't have been possible.

"Harry. Oh, Harry. Stay hidden. Please please stay hidden," he whispered. The last thing he needed was the President using his child against him. Rassilon would, he knew he would. The Master would as well. The Doctor looked around the room and caught Harry's wide, frightened green eyes. Then he shook his head. Harry ducked down.

"Doctor, what was that?" the Master asked, staring at the now empty boxes. The Doctor struggled on the ground.

"I did nothing." The Master scoffed at the statement. Rassilon stared between the two aberrant Time Lords with narrowed eyes. Something was going on here, something he wasn't quite understanding. Something had happened and he had missed it.

Wilfred passed right by Harry, almost through the doors, before Harry grabbed his pant leg. "Wil… Daddy says stay." The old soldier nearly jumped out of his shoes.

"Harry? What are you doing here? I though the Doctor left you in his ship!" The words were semi-whispered. Harry tilted his head.

"Daddy needed help. I asked the colorful energy to take me to him. I am here." Simple, logical progression of events. Wilfred's eyes widened.

"How old are you?"

"Your dad must be proud of you." Harry shrugged. Wilfred hugged Harry to him. The child really was brilliant, if a bit reckless. Then again, small children rarely know when to not do things.

Wilfred peered around the door. The Doctor was on his feet, pointing the gun at the five in red. Then back towards the Master, then he turned again. Like he wouldn't make up his mind. Finally, he swiveled towards the person he had called friend, long ago. Harry saw the tall man in the front raise the glove just as the Master leaned out of the way. The Doctor shot just as the glove came up.

"Daddy!" Harry raced towards the Doctor. Every single person in the room stopped moving. It was as if hostilities ceased immediately.

"Who is that child Lord Doctor?" The Doctor looked up at the President.

"My son in all but blood. A human child with more heart and courage than you have ever had." The Doctor reached down to lift up Harry. "And the savior of the wizarding race. More important to the universe than any Time Lord."

"What?" The Master behind him exclaimed. The Doctor turned sideways.

"Wizards. The only remaining descendents of the Eternals. Eternal blood mixed with humans. Brilliantly ingenious plan. And this child here, is that result." Harry waved. Four of the five Time Lords standing on the dais now slowly dissolving into light were openly shocked.

The President purpled with rage. "You die with us, you and your human child!" The Doctor looked up at the President, mouth open to say something.

"Move Doctor. This is my revenge." The Master looked at the Doctor and Harry. "At least you never lied to me. Ever." He knocked the two of them aside and, as they all vanished into the light, Harry pulled himself closer to the Doctor.

"Daddy. You're safe now, right?" The Doctor smiled, tears in the corner of his eyes.

"Safe now." He pulled Harry close. Wilfred walked up behind them, fumbling nervously, hands wringing.

"Well, then, see, you didn't die." The Doctor turned a smile up at the old man.

"Nope. Now I'm just alone again. But I have Harry. For now, that's enough." The Doctor tickled Harry, listening to the bright laughter and holding the breathing squirming body of the child that had saved him.

He saw, when Harry got that man out of the glass box, he saw what would have happened. He saw Wilfred go in, save the man, he saw his victory, and heard the four knocks. Harry saved him from that, and as the power plant went hot and vented the excess radiation into an empty box, he hugged Harry closer. He got to be himself for just a little while longer. Just a little.

They dropped Wilfred off down the street from his house. The old soldier saluted as the box disappeared, before he walked back to the house that held his daughter and granddaughter. With the man who had saved worlds back in the sky, laughing and smiling with his son, not as broken as he seemed to be before when he had returned Donna, well, he felt a lot safer.

~~~~~This is an Ending~~~~~

Chapter End Notes
Hope you all enjoyed! Drop me a line in the comments if you have any questions, suggestions or anything at all! I love hearing from you!

Kuroi
In Which Old Faces Say Hi

Chapter Summary

The Doctor, alive and happy and high, takes Harry to see some of his old friends. Well, things don't always turn out the way he planned them.

GUYS! HEY GUYS! I'M BACK! Ugh, the supposed internet in that hotel was, well, yeah, not. >>
Now, ENJOY! The moment some of you have been poking at me repeatedly for~ *nudge nudge* (Oh, and for the Torchwood Timeline, follows the events directly after Children of Earth)

~~~~~~~~This is a Beginning~~~~~~~~

The world felt bright and endless and Harry was laughing on his hip as they headed back to the Tardis, alive and healthy and not dying. They had dropped off Wilf and the world was safe again and nothing was wrong in the Doctor's persona Universe. Well, nothing was immediately wrong.

The Doctor opened the blue door and set Harry down as he closed it, watching Harry dash up the ramp to the chair.

Maybe it was time to introduce Harry to some of his old friends, those still around to remember him, in any case. Since he wasn't dying he wouldn't mind seeing some of those who had made this regeneration what it was.

"Harry, what do you say about meeting some old friends of mine?" Harry looked inquisitive.

"Old friends? Okay!" Harry climbed unsteadily onto his chair before buckling the belt with tiny hands. "Allonze!" he shouted, and the Doctor laughed. Switches were flipped and spin, dials were turned. The TARDIS shook and rattled. "Who are we seeing?"

"A girl who once traveled with me named Martha and her husband, Mickey. Hold on!" They stopped moving, and the Doctor picked Harry up. "Alright, out we go...oh, Sontarans. Well, they certainly have a sense of adventure. Got that from me, they did. And not bad work. Nice unconscious little Sontarans. Clean up job, by the looks of it. Ah, there they are, Martha and Mickey. Hello!" The scene outside the TARDIS was of an old warehouse currently playing host to a couple unconscious, small, brown aliens in blue and grey suits. Two people were sitting beside a medical bag, though they were now looking around wildly. The Doctor waved at them, nudging Harry.

Harry was staring at the currently snoozing alien, frowning. Son...sontaran?" he sounded out. The Doctor smiled.

"Yep. And there's Martha and Mickey. Mickity Mick!" Harry turned to look where his dad was pointing.

Martha, her hair now in braids, and Mickey, sporting a mustache and a few bandages, turned in surprise. "Doctor! And...who is he? He's adorable." Martha approached at a run, slowing down and finally stopping in front of the coat-clad Time Lord. She reached out for Harry. "Can I hold him?"

"What do you say Harry. Can Martha Jones hold you?" Harry giggled.
"Martha! Hi Martha! I'm Harry!" He reached over for Martha and Harry transferred arms. "Daddy told me about you. Pretty hair." Martha turned wide eyes to the Doctor.

"Daddy? You had a kid? With who?" The Doctor blinked, then grinned.

"Nah, not mine by blood, but he was given to me. Raise and protect and all that. Hi Mickey. How ya doing? Didn't invite me to the wedding I see." Mickey looked significantly at Martha. She glared at him.

"We tried, yeah. We did! You just wouldn't answer your phone. I left UNIT too. Freelancers now. Work around England. Closer to the rift, 'specially after what happened to Torchwood and the 456's last month. Needed someone, really. So we do the clean-up and protection now." Martha cooed at Harry, who laughed and patted tiny hands on Martha's cheeks. The Doctor's expression darkened quickly.

"What happened last month to Torchwood?" Martha looked up in surprise.

"You never heard? Well, there was an invasion last month, using the children as mouthpieces. The government got it in their heads that Torchwood was somehow the cause, blew up the base. Jack was captured, but his team managed to get him out. The 456's made demands for a tenth of all the earth's children, demanded them. I don't know why, that stuff was so classified that the only people allowed to see it were those who were present when it happened. Not many left either, since most of them are in jail or dead. But Jack apparently did something rather drastic and they left. Still don't know who they were or where they were from. And with Torchwood gone we can't get any answers. Only one I know still alive aside from Jack is Gwen, and she's gone underground. Dunno where she is." The darkening expression on the Doctor's face made it rather clear that he was unhappy about the whole situation.

"You didn't know about it Doctor? I thought you knew every ow!" Martha stepped on Mickey's foot.

"Shut up idiot." Harry was still patting Martha's cheeks, but he wasn't laughing. He was looking at the Doctor and his eyes were wide.

"Martha, thank you. For everything. I…I'll try and come back sometime. If you need me, call me. I'll try to come. Alright, Harry, ready to go see Jack?" Martha handed Harry back.

The Doctor nodded to them both. "By Doctor. Try to make that visit sometime before I die, yeah?" The Doctor nodded. "And bring Harry!" Harry waved goodbye as they entered the TARDIS, and the couple stood and watched the TARDIS blink out of existence.

The Doctor was in a less cheerful mood than he had been in, and Jack was now on the top of his need to visit list. He tracked the Vortex Manipulator Jack always carried. A bar. Of course. Well, it was Jack's hunting ground. An Inter-galactic bar at that. The Doctor, still carrying Harry (he hadn't put him down) walked in, searching for the long grey coat Jack never seemed to be without. It was at the bar, the head above it staring morosely into a glass of something-with-way-too-much-alcohol.

He was sure that Jack would have punched him if Harry hadn't been on his hip the moment the Doctor touched his shoulder, Jack was that drunk. He was just looking for a fight. The presence of a small child seemed to hinder his need for pounding face in.

Then the blurry gaze cleared a bit. "Doctor? Is that you? Why do you have a kid with you?" Unfortunately, his words came out much less clearly than that, but that was what the Doctor gathered of the garbled sentence. He grasped an upper arm and dragged the compliant 51st century Time
Agent out of the bar. The bartender looked grateful. As soon as he had dropped the drunken man inside the TARDIS, the Doctor returned to the bar.

"Hey there, sorry about him. Quick question, how long has he been here?" The bartender shook his head.

"In that seat? About half a revolution, twelve standard hours. At the bar? Three standard weeks. Been drinking most of it, when he isn't trying to pick up whatever happens to be next to him. Glad he's got a friend who isn't interested in what's under his jacket. I have heard just about every pick up line from every book in the galaxy, and some new ones, come out of his mouth. Take care of him, alright? He's a nice enough fellow, just a bit lost." The Doctor nodded.

"How much does he owe?" The bartender shook his head.

"He took care of that. Handed over an agency card, it works out." Well, one thing he didn't have to worry about. Now he just had an extremely drunk immortal man and a small child to look after. At least the former would be easy to leave in a bed until he slept off the alcohol and the hangover. The latter, though, would be easier to handle for a time than a depressed, angry human. Still, he wasn't leaving Jack to drink his life away and sleep with whatever walked past. Not when he could help him.

He shut the doors to the TARDIS, looking at the immortal slumped against the walls and Harry, who had found a marker (this one from the Narian Formation, and would turn different colors depending on the mood of the drawer. It was bright blue, curiosity and a tad bit of mischief at the green borders) and was drawing on Jack's face. The Doctor snickered.

"Well, Harry, what are we going to do with him?"

Harry held up the marker. "I'm drawing!" he said gleefully.

"I can see that. But we can't leave him against the wall. Bed then? Yeah, that sounds good." He bent to lift Jack. "Well, if he didn't have a good fifty on me, that might work." He strained, pulling Jack off the ground and staggering towards the hallways. "Alright, please old girl, please don't hide the bedroom from me. I don't think he would appreciate waking up on the floor. And I would definitely not appreciate waking up under him, despite his amusement at that situation." Harry giggled from his place on the deck. "Glad one of us is finding amusement in this."

"Ugh…am I getting lucky?" Jack muttered under his breath. The Doctor snorted and was sorely tempted to drop the infuriating mad right there.

"No. You're getting a bed until you sober up. Now help me. You're heavy." Jack listened to the voice before he registered who it was, then he started.

"Doctor….I didn't know…you cared….so much…." Jack fumbled over his feet, trying to place them solidly on the ground. He wasn't overtly successful, but his attempts at least lightened the load the Doctor was holding up.

"You're an idiot Captain Jack Harkness," the Doctor ground out, propelling them forward and towards the closest open door. It seemed the TARDIS had taken pity on him and had actually moved a room with a bed closer towards them. Nice of her.

Jack snorted. "Truth!" Ah, a bed! The Doctor set Jack rather roughly down on it, shoulders heaving.

"You're heavy," he complained loudly. Jack smiled and opened his mouth to make another lewd joke. "No, just shut up. And I am not helping whatever hangover you get." The Doctor turned to
leave. A hand snagged his coat.

"Doc, ya think you could forgive me?" The tone was so broken the Doctor let the nickname slide. He crouched down by the bed.

"For what Jack? What do you need forgiving for?" A grimace.

"I didn't want to. I didn't. But they would have taken them all. All of them. And no one was doing anything. I had to." Jack's hand tightened around the Doctor's coat. "I had to… I had to… I had to…" Jack turned into his pillow, eyes squeezed shut. The Doctor sighed.

He had made the right decision, coming here then. Jack was clearly in no position to do anything less harmful than drink himself to death, and he would do that for ages if he wasn't snapped out of it.

Jack slumped into unconsciousness, hand slackening on the coat. The Doctor pulled away and left the ex-Time Agent to sleep off the alcohol. Straight answers would be had at a later date. For now, well, for now Jack would wake up with a horrid headache and a bad taste in his mouth.

Harry looked up at the Doctor as he walked into the console room. "Is Jack okay daddy?" The Doctor sighed.

"Probably Harry, probably. We'll see soon enough. Now, let's get you to bed. You've certainly been up a while now. Ah, yep, off to bed you go." Harry yawned widely.

"Not sleepy daddy," he protested weakly and the Doctor picked him up. "Not sleepy."

"Of course not. We'll just go rest our eyes a bit then." Harry nodded, eyes wide open in effort to keep them from drooping.

"'kay. Story though, right?"

The Doctor smiled. "Alright then. Story. How about one from Raxacoricolfalapatorias? Their life forms are all calcium based and one time, one of them tried to live with an acidic life form from Gorigalifus. That was an unpleasant reaction."

Harry's eyes drooped. "Raxacoracol…" his mouth fumbled over the long word. The Doctor laid him down in his bed, pulling the green blanket up. Harry grabbed the stuffed octopus stuffie and hugged it close, turning to look at his dad, who was pulling up a chair to tell the rest of the story.

The long brown coat was taken off and draped over the back of the chair and the tall, lean form folded itself in to sit. "Well, it was far away, approximately five thousand light-years, and about three hundred thousand years in the future, and the beings of Raxacoricolfalapatorias and Gorigalifus struck up a tentative treaty. They had always been somewhat wary of each other, seeing as they could destroy the other so easily, but eventually, the governments formed an alliance…” The Doctor told his tale to the steadily tiring Harry, watching as the lids dropped over the large green eyes and his breathing evened out. It didn't take long for him to fall into sleep, and the Doctor fell silent, looking over the child who had become quite the focus of his life.

Little Harry Potter. He never mentioned the last name anymore, leaving it behind with all its connotations and destiny. Harry didn't deserve that weight on his shoulders, not growing up. He would never deny the child his last name, but for now, Harry was content without it. The child he had taken from Albus Dumbledore not so long ago, having seen the power that he held and the ways the man would use it. He had lost faith in himself not long before, and when he had taken Harry without thinking the actions through, some small part of him hoped that the boy would give him something back in himself.
Harry had done that and so much more. He had given him something to focus on, to smile for, to laugh with, to teach. He hadn't done that in a while, teach, and Harry was a sponge for it. He learned things so rapidly, soaking it all up. Sure, a lot of the complicated stuff went over his head, the boy was just a toddler, but his memory was prodigious. And Harry always wanted to learn more, loved it. And he loved the Doctor. His dad. The person who hugged him and laughed with him and told him stories and took him to wonderful places. The Doctor found that he liked being called that again, hearing children's feet patter on the floor, laughter ringing out, and a smile all for him. And the title, Daddy, reverberating off the walls was good to hear again.

He stroked Harry's cheek once more, before rising from his chair and heading out the door, taking his coat. He didn't bother shutting the door, knowing Harry preferred it open. The TARDIS bleeped softly, and the Doctor sighed.

"Well, girl, now I have a drunk, depressed immortal as well as a small child on board. Let's see how we get on then, yeah?" The TARDIS pulsed. "And don't you go losing the Captain either. I'm sure you wouldn't want him rummaging around in some of those rooms causing havoc." Another pulse, amusement. "Ah, well, he'll be out for a while. Takes the body a while to metabolize that much alcohol, and if he was drinking for twelve hours, he's going to have one nasty headache when he wakes up. I don't envy him."

The Doctor punching in coordinated and set their destination for a nearby star formation. Just letting the TARDIS float out in space for a while. He could afford a nap.

This Is A Line Break

He settled into one of the chairs and tipped his head back. He could really do with a nap. It had been a long, long day.

Jack felt what seemed to be a horde of stampeding elephants running across his brain and doing their damndest to stomp every last cell he possessed. He groaned. He had made a concentrated effort to overwhelm his regeneration system in getting drunk. It had worked, apparently. Now he was dealing with the aftermath.

At least he wasn't at the bar, face plastered to wood. But where the hell was he? Obviously a bed, if the horizontal position was any evidence, coupled with the pillow and sheets, but whose? No one was next to him, and his clothes were still on, so he hadn't hooked up. Damn, he couldn't remember the last….however long it had been since he had that fourth Artesian Mixer.

He tried to sit up, felt the world spin and stars dance across the room, before plopping his head back on the pillow and burying his face in it. Possibly the worst hangover ever, especially since he had fended off the last ones with more alcohol. He had been main lining alcohol for quite a while now, and it was catching up with him. He thrust a hand out, searching blindly for something, anything that would resemble a drink. Just a small one to take the edge off. He encountered a cup, something sloshing in it, and cheered mentally (quietly). He forced himself partially vertical, keeping his eyes closed as a compromise, then tipped back the glass, waiting for the bite of the alcohol to hit.

He barely kept from spitting it back out, whatever 'it' was. The only thing that made him swallow it was the immediate relief of the headache it caused. The elephants lessened to stampeding horses and the world didn't feel like it was spinning. He took another sip, gritting his teeth and bearing the taste. Nothing good ever comes from things that taste good. Now it was hammers, and he could deal with hammers.

Jack pushed to his feet and set the empty glass on the stool it came from, looking around the room he was in.
Plain was one way to describe it. Another would be blue, or empty, or small. The door was just a foot away, and the opposing wall was three feet. It was more like a bunker than anything. Still, it had a bed, a damn comfortable bed, and if Jack wasn't so keen on figuring out where he was, he would be more than willing to fall back into it and head into dream world again.

But the urge to find out what had given him the bed and the hangover remedy was stronger, and he managed to not stumble too badly as he headed out the door.

Into a long, twisty corridor. Lovely. Someone had a sense of humor. He pushed out into the walkway and picked a direction based on which way he swayed first. Left it is. Hands stabilizing him against the walls, he made a slow and unsteady path down and around the bends, almost into a pool (who the hell kept a pool next to a kiln? Who the hell had a kiln anymore? And was that a Alysia Globe Spinner? He thought they had all been destroyed in the Second Galactic War!) and finally, finally, he almost met the floor of a kitchen with his face. A kitchen! Places that had water and bread and…and other things he couldn't think of.

He reached for the handle to an odd looking fridge (it has a smaller door near the floor, at baby height. And it seemed to have five storage areas. And seven handles, three dials and a lever. He couldn't begin to puzzle out what they were for this hungover) and failed miserably in his quest. He tried again.

"Ah, you're up! Lovely to see you conscious. It's been, what about three days now. You really had too much alcohol. From what I could tell, you drank nearly every possible mix in the galaxy. The Bartender was impressed."

Jack knew that voice. That lilting, almost British voice that he adored and oftentimes wished for constantly. That voice that belonged to the only person in the universe Jack Harkness ever listened to. Jack turned, eyes wide, hands, gripping the counter tight.

"Doctor?" The incredulity in his voice had the Doctor grinning. He looked just the same as the last time Jack saw him, same wide grin (well, it seemed happier now), same long, skinny limbs, same pointy, frazzled hair, same sparkling brown eyes (though they were definitely happier). The brown duster wasn't present, nor the pinstriped blue suit jacket. Instead, he was barefoot, wearing a long sleeved white shirt mostly buttoned (and with a strange, odd colored stain on the right shoulder), pinstriped pants and a tie haphazardly tied around his neck.

"Yep, me. Standing right here. Picked you up at the Horsehead Bar, drowning yourself in a Kriterion Cleaner. The bartender was relieved. He looked rather upset with you, and that guy does not get upset easily. Your alcohol system was starting to have too much blood in it by the time I got you back to the ship, though Harry was amused. Which, by the way, you still have…" The Doctor made a vague gesture around his face. "Ah, never mind. You got the hangover helper I left then. My own concoction. Rather proud of it, actually. Mixed it up after I had a few too many Gryon Shots and then had to go out and make sure the Fifth Galactic War didn't start because I left the TARDIS in a no-transport-zone. Those Judoon are very picky about where people leave their ships these days. It wasn't like I hadn't parked properly. It was just a minor error, a few feet into the Shadow Proclamation's territory, nothing too serious. Still, never upset a Judoon. Easiest way to get vaporized."

Jack stood stock still, letting the inane babble he had come to both love and find exasperating rush over him, grounding him in a way that all the alcohol he had drank couldn't. Just the Doctor's presence, soothing and chaotic, calmed him, brought his mind trudging out of the depression it had sunk into since the 456's. He smiled.

"God, I've missed that. You have no idea how much I've missed hearing you talk," he breathed. The
Doctor blinked, then smiled widely.

"Well, then, you'll love Harry. He'll talk your ear off. Probably start that rhyme of his again, show you his planets, make you work on drawing wars, drag you to the pool (how he finds it every time, I don't know), the library, the playground. Then he'll pester you for stories. It'll be rather adorable, I imagine. Hope you're good with kids though."

Jack blinked. "You had a kid?" The Doctor laughed.

"Oh, no, nothing so drastic. I just sorta picked one up along the way. He's mine now though, for all intents and purposes. Come along. Oh, wait, he's still asleep. Well, then, I guess you have time for something else. Oh, right, food. I imagine that the alcohol didn't help your digestive system any, even with your ability to heal. And it doesn't replace food at all. I'm surprised you didn't pick up any diseases, considering how many people you slept with, though I guess people might not be the right term. The bartender said you slept with anyone who would look at you twice. Knowing you, well, I don't want to guess. Anyway, yes, food. Hold on a tick, there's something around here. Always is, seeing as Harry's still trying things. Should be some pasta here…ah yes, good strong creamy stuff. Straight from Italia. The planet, not the country. Best place to find pasta. They even managed to figure out how to grow pasta in crops. Brilliant! Favorite place for food in the Galaxy, well, after that Planet that makes everything out of banana, well, maybe third favorite….anyway, not the point. Ah-ha! Here it is!" The Doctor scrambled back out of the fridge (he had been halfway in). Jack was still not fully functioning and had a hard time keeping up with the quick and erratic movements of the Doctor.

A plate (some plastic-thing with several divisions and swirly patterns that kept shifting) was spun in front of him, food was placed on the plate and quickly heated up and a fork was presented to the still overwhelmed Jack. "Um…thanks. Have any water?" He was almost immediately handed a glass of the clear liquid. "Thanks…" Another blindingly bright smile was aimed at him. His head pounded.

"You want to eat that in here or sit down? There's a table near the console and Harry should be waking up soon. Come on then. The Doctor had a steaming mug of tea in one hand, from where he got it Jack didn't know, but he followed dutifully, plate in one hand and cup in another.

The console room was just through the door and the aforementioned table was pulled out of a nearby closet (that was new.) Several papers, crayons and markers were scattered throughout the room off to the side, along with shoes and books. Small shoes, very small shoes. And crumpled piles of pictures in a corner. Jack blinked. Just how young was this kid the Doctor had picked up?

"AH, here we go! Oh, wait, chairs! We need chairs!" He dashed back out, dragging two fold up chairs Jack remembered seeing in conference halls out with him. "Handy things, these. No mess, no button pushing, all clean and easy, not bad on space. Now, sit. I'm sure the world hasn't quite stopped spinning." Jack stumbled his way to the makeshift dining area and sat heavily on the chair. He hadn't expected the hangover to last this long. His healing abilities should have kicked in by now.

"Why does my head hurt still?" The cool metal of the table felt good on his forehead. The hammers were still insistently pounding away at his skull. "It shouldn't hurt so much." His voice was a little raspier than he remembered it being. The Doctor's laughter was not helping.

"I'm sure if you hadn't nearly replaced your blood system with alcohol, your head wouldn't be hurting and you wouldn't be drunk anymore. However, the only reason you're even still alive is due to the metabolizing rate of your systems and your ability to process toxins. Your liver was all moon dust when I got you, but it should have healed by now. You'll start to feel better soon." The Doctor leaned back. "Why were you doing your best to drown yourself in a bar anyway?"
Jack raised his head to look at the man (was he a man? Ah well, who cares) leaning pensively in his chair. Hands were folded on knees and the tea sat on the table, cooling. The steam rising from the cup framed the narrow, lean face. Jack turned back towards the table. The hammers weren't as loud, as if he didn't have to look at the Doctor's face when he told him, well, he would actually able to get through it. Maybe.

"It started decades before the...the children. The '60's. They contacted us, never gave us a name, but the frequency they used, 456, became the name we called them. They demanded 12 children to be brought to a specific spot in the country side and they threatened to kill every human on the planet if we wouldn't. The government sanctioned it, a secret sect of it, and twelve orphans vanished that year. We thought it was over. Nothing happened for years and that particular frequency was never heard again." Jack closed his eyes, feeling the guilt he pushed all those years ago well up again. "I tried to forget about them, those kids, but I never could. What I sent them to, what happened to them, if it could have been done any other way." He balled his hands up, the material in his pants bunching up in his palms. The Doctor merely 'hmmmd' across from him.

Jack gathered his thoughts, sorting them. "Then, the kids all stopped, everywhere at the same time, all over the world. Then it happened again, and this time they all spoke, every single one of them. "They are coming". In English, even in China and India. The governments were in an uproar. Then again, and again. Over and over with more demands. They used the 456 frequency, they were back. And part of the people that were in the '60's conspiracy knew who I was. They planted a bomb in me, and blew Torchwood operations up. When I woke up, healing and chained to a wall, they buried me in concrete. My team, what was left of them, Ianto and Gwen, got me out and we ran.

"An old man was a survivor of the abduction in the '60's, and he knew me, remembered me. And we used him and another girl to get into the building the 456's were making their demands from. Eventually we got in. But they killed the man for helping. God, Doctor, they demanded children. Millions of them. 10 percent of the world's population, then ten percent of every country's. The government was cracking, children were being gathered for transport and Ianto died with the rest of the government officials in the room. Gwen was running with children, and my daughter had come to me with her son, knowing I would keep them from danger."

Jack felt the tears at the corner of his eyes. The silence across the table was almost worse than the Doctor reprimanding or asking questions. He gritted his teeth. "They were keeping us in a warehouse, with a scientist. I was desperate and he knew a possibility to end this. But it needed a child. The 456's communicated through the children, it was the only way to communicate or stop them. I had to. I couldn't....not again. No....my...my daughter wasn't there. They had taken her somewhere else. I had time before she came back....god, I had to, I had to..." Jack shut his eyes against the flood he knew was waiting for the opportunity.

"You used your grandson. Resonated the frequency back through him and killed or disabled them." Jack's silence was answer enough. "And it killed him, channeling the energy required to convert that much power into a frequency through children. The 456 did it by spreading the energy over the world. Using one child to do the work, he couldn't handle it. His brain fried." Jack nodded against the table. "Well, that certainly explains the alcohol."
Silence filled the room for a few minutes as the Doctor drank his tea and Jack scrutinized the pasta. "What was the alternative? If you hadn't used your grandson. What would have happened?" The immortal blinked, taken aback. Then he turned pensive.

"The government would have given them millions of children they would have used as a drug for the 456. A drug. They used them to get high! The government….they were too scared of the alternative. Otherwise, we would have died. All of us." Jack paused. "But I used my own grandchild."

"Would you have asked someone else to give their child up for it?" The immediate and reassuring response was a resounding 'No'. "Then you have your answer Jack. You'll hate yourself for a long time for doing it, but you'll either have to come to terms with it without the alcohol or spend the rest of your life drowned in some fermented substance or other and see how much your regenerating process can take. And I can tell you that the second choice is not the fun one, even if it is the easiest." The Doctor downed half the tea, eyes distant. "I spent the better part of a century after the Time War getting into as many dangerous situations as possible in the hope that it all might catch up with me. Not the best way to live, I can tell you that."

Jack slowly picked up the fork and started pushing the pasta around on the plate. He had drowned in alcohol for a reason. But he also couldn't remember the past few weeks clearly. He had done a spectacular job overcharging his regenerative abilities. The groan he let out pulled a smile over the Doctor's face. Clearly he understood the sentiment.

The silence would have pervaded if not disturbed by the sound of tiny feet pattering in the hallway, hands on the staircase and the sight of a small head covered in black hair peeking up over the top of the stair case. It was followed by the rest of the child.

"Daddy, I'm hungry," a high, childish voice stated, enunciation not quite clear. Jack blinked. How old was the kid? "Oh, Jack-jack's awake. Hi! I'm Harry." Harry turned bright green eyes to look at Jack, then he giggled. "Still got the scribbles!" Harry padded over to the Doctor, who picked him up and sat him on his lap.

"Hello Harry. How did you sleep?" Harry rubbed the sleepy sand out of his eyes.

"Good." Harry smiled. "Jack still has the scribbles," he stated again, giggled outrageously. The Doctor smiled and nodded.

Jack, the subject of Harry's amusement, was sitting stock still and staring at the child, eyes wide. The kid was tiny, and verbal. Very verbal. He couldn't be more than two, but he seemed like he was much older. And the Doctor….Jack hadn't seen the Time Lord that happy in….in ever, really. Not since before Rose vanished, and even then his eyes didn't light up the same. He seemed genuinely happy, gloriously happy. He exuded the damn emotion.

Then Harry's words hit him. "Scribbles? What scribbles?" He looked intently at the pair across the table. The Doctor was smothering chuckles and Harry was giggling unrepentantly.

"Scribbles! Jack was asleep." This last bit was said matter of factly. Jack blinked.

"I did try to tell you, but it wasn't important." The Doctor gestured at his face again, and Jack seemed to get the message (now that he had been informed of the state of it by a small boy). He stood up to go find a mirror, then sat heavily back down. The world spinning was not the best way to go look for a reflective surface.

"Damn…." The look he was leveled with from the Doctor stopped him from finishing that phrase. "Ergh…what exactly is on my face?"
Now the chuckles returned. The Doctor looked across at the hung over immortal, eyes wide in innocence. Jack's face was a wonderful scribble of color, now purple and sparkling as Harry giggled in his lap. The lines of color didn't form any picture, merely tracing and connecting random points on the handsome face. Circles around the eyes and fanning out from his nose. Some swirls decorated his cheeks and forehead and random lines found their way around Jack's mouth. In fact, if the Doctor looked closely….

"Harry, did you trace the orbit of the Germanian Galaxy on his cheek?"

"Uh-huh. And Koral on his forehead." Harry took an amount of pride in this feat. Jack blinked, trying to figure out what they were talking about. Orbits of galaxies?

"Wait, you drew these on me? How old are you?" No way a kids could draw those. Then again, the kid was also living with the Doctor, on the TARDIS. That gave some leeway as to what said kid could do. But still…

"I dunno. Two?" Harry looked to the Doctor for confirmation.

"He's about two, give or take. Time's relative, and age even more so. Especially when you live here. But two is about right." Harry nodded. "And before you ask, yes, he knows a lot about the Universe. Memorized as much as he could. It's rather brilliant."

Jack just sat there, staring. "He drew orbits of galaxies on my face….he drew on my face…while I was passed out…" alright, so there was a little bit of karma coming back to bite him. "Where's a mirror?"

The Doctor gestured towards the kitchen. "Should be a bathroom on the right as soon as you head back to the hallway. If you can't find it, yell. I'll come help." Harry climbed down off the Doctor's lap and took Jack's chair as he stood up slowly. The untouched pasta the captain had been pushing around on his swirling plate was gleefully eaten by the boy. Jack made his way towards the supposed bathroom and found the mirror.

His face was pale under the marker scribbles, with dark shadows under his eyes. Brown hair stood on end (it had grown in the weeks he had drunk himself into a stupor. He hadn't bothered cutting it). The marker though….it did form patterns. The circles and swirls that made up quite a bit of the skin were blue, sparkling just a bit. As he watched, the color changed, turning purple, then pink. Odd markers…Jack snatched a towel off the wall and busied himself with wiping the marker off. Except that it wasn't coming off. Not easily. Bits of the drawing were rubbed away and other bits stayed, despite Jack turning his skin red from rubbing.

Ah well, it was only marker.

He turned to look at the rest of the bathroom. It was large, with a huge tub and a shower off to the side. The tub had several different faucets, knobs and buttons, something Jack would inspect later. Now, now he needed a shower. He couldn't remember the last time he had one, though he couldn't remember the last five days all too clearly either. Then he shucked his clothes and made sure soap was in the right places before stepping into the enclosed space and turning the water on. The spray from the five heads made him sigh. This was nice.

Eventually Jack made his way back into the console room, dressed in loose pants and a white shirt he had found in a nearby closet. The pants were too small, fluttering at the back of his calves, but the shirt fit fine.

Harry and the Doctor were ensconced at the table still, Harry waving his hands and babbling
something, the Doctor listening closely, nodding and smiling. The Doctor glanced up as he entered the room.

"Ah, Jack, good to see you looking…less colorful. And you found the shower! I was just gonna suggest that. You were starting to sweat alcohol. You clothes…well, I'm sure there's dry cleaning in here somewhere. Or something to the equivalent. Anyway, we were just talking about where to go. Or, well, Harry was. Come join us then."

And with that, Captain Jack Harkness found his way into the TARDIS and the small family that was just starting to grow there.

Harry and Jack got on amazingly well. The TARDIS had grumbled at first, seeing as Jack was something she was still having issues with (though she didn't try to go to the end of the universe to shake him off). Eventually though, she warmed up to him. It helped, knowing that he had saved her from becoming a paradox machine (or, well, he helped fix her so she would never become one….).

The Doctor, long having gotten over his instinctive reaction to shudder at Jack's factual presence, helped the still somewhat depressed immortal find his footing in the universe. They would sit at the table, or in the garden, or by the pool, or anywhere, and just talk. Or sit in silence, or play games. They helped each other in many ways, and eventually, Jack just ended up fitting so nicely into the dynamic that he just never left.

It also helped that he was a second pair of eyes and hands to watch over Harry. The kid was growing in leaps and bounds.

Still, the first time Jack saw Harry conjure his solar system to play with, giggling and twirling planets around in impossible ways, it was only because of his extensive experience with aliens in general that he didn't flip out. Instead, he sat and had Harry excitedly explain what he was doing. Then, later (after a hair raising adventure through a bunch of pipes and tubing on what appeared to be a planet made for hamsters) after Harry had fallen and bumped his head, Jack's hair turned a shocking pink for a few hours. The amusement on the Doctor's face as he held an ice pack to Harry's head (he had lost the medical bay years ago and hadn't been able to find it yet. The freezer generously supplied ice packs and the cabinet had child appropriate medication for the swelling) more than made up for the rather alarming shade Jack's hair had turned.

Unfortunately, as things are wont to turn dangerous around the Doctor, their adventures didn't remain strictly fun and happy for long. Harry was almost halfway to three when a race of almost-humanoids that the Doctor hoped never to see again grasped the TARDIS and pulled it to their planet. The ensuing chaos would leave an indelible mark on all three of them, and the race, well, they wouldn't ever mess with the Time Lord again. The amount of work it took them to repair the foundations of their society after he left wasn't worth the effort.

~~~~~~This is an Ending~~~~~~

And scene. Well, a set up for one of my personal favorite adventures. I hope that last paragraph didn't throw you all off too badly. And I do have some side stories planned with little Harry and Jack. ^_^ When they get written, I'll make sure I post a notice in whatever chapter it is. ^_^

I hope Jack's introduction lived up to some people's expectations. And I really hope you know Torchwood to some extent. Otherwise some of the events that I described won't make as much sense.

Thank you so much everyone! For everything! The kudos, the reviews, everything!
In Which Danger finds Harry

Chapter Summary

Some of the Doctor's old enemies come back. They aren't very happy with him. Not at all.

Chapter Notes

Hey guys! This is the final, complete, hopefully as spelling-error-free as possible version of the Olympians. Thank you all for your amazing feedback on that separate version I put up! The next chapter should be up within the next half hour. Thank you!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

~~~~~~This is a Beginning~~~~~~

"This is not good, this is not good. This is very bad. Very very bad!" The Doctor was racing around the console room, flipping switches, turning knobs and behaving in a generally manic way. Jack was holding Harry, who was tracking the Doctor with big green eyes.

"Bad daddy? What's bad?" The Doctor looked over at the two of them.

"They've got us. Pulling us in. They've tied in an electromagnetic field into the TARDIS mainframe matrix. Hold on tight!" The Doctor's long fingers wrapped tightly around a bar. He braced himself. The TARDIS shook and rattled, then slammed into ground with a groan. The column pulsed unhappily.

Jack, Harry and the Doctor stood up, shaking ringing ears and wondering what had happened, or Jack was. The Doctor knew and Harry couldn't really care. He was more interested in where they had landed. Jack looked over at the Doctor.

"What happened?"

"The TARDIS hit a bump in the time vortex, apparently too close to the planet Olympus. Zeus has been angry with me since that incident several millennia ago and, well, yeah. This is not good. This is very not good."

Jack blinked. "Zeus? As in Greek god Zeus? Isn't he a myth?"

"No, no, not that Zeus. Different race. The Olympians. Arrogant beings, what the Immortals based their hierarchy on in Greece. The Olympians see themselves as higher beings, better than every other race. Prometheus, yes, the one from the myth but not the same one, was chained to a mountain for bringing life to the Universe. In freeing him, the Olympians caught me. They are not friendly, not at all, and if they've managed to pull me here again, I don't want to know why." He raced around the dashboard, but the TARDIS wouldn't respond. She was unmoving, inert. The Doctor kicked the dashboard.
"Wait, you're saying that there really were Greek gods?"

"The Immortals. A sub-species of humans who advanced tremendously. Modeled themselves off of the Olympians. Used to be rulers of ancient earth. They've all either vanished or gone into hiding by the 20th century. Work!"

Jack and Harry watched with wide eyes as the Doctor tried various combinations of different knobs and buttons, trying to get some reaction. Nothing worked, the TARDIS remained stationary.

The tall, thin man collapsed into a chair, sighing. "I really didn't want to come back here. This is really not good at all." He turned to look at Jack, eyes wide. "Very bad…where's Harry?"

Jack started and looked around. The TARDIS door was open. "I don't know. Outside?"

The Doctor leapt to his feet. "No, not good at all. Come on, out we go. I didn't want to do this today." And, grabbing his long brown duster, the Doctor raced outside. Jack followed, pulling his own jacket after him.

They arrived in time to see the small form of Harry being picked up by a man with wings on his helmet and sandals. An all too handsome face looked over at them, before they were waved at and the man sped away, over the treetops and into the distance.

"Harry! Bring him back! Damn you, bring him back! He's just a child!" The Doctor ran towards the white tops of buildings in the distance. Jack stood in shock as the Doctor released a string of obscenities in various languages (he didn't know those last four). Harry. They had taken little Harry, with his bright smiles and laughs. He narrowed his eyes.

"Doctor, where would they take him?" The low, deadly tone in Jack's voice had the Time Lord turning towards him, eyes wide.

"Wha?"

"Harry. Where would they take Harry?"

"Well, to Asclepius and Paean, most likely, after being brought to Zeus first. His oddities would… push them to research him, learn things about him. Asclepius and Paean are those who look after medicine." The Doctor was wide eyed, fury still evident on his face, but now that he wasn't shouting at the empty sky and his cooler head was prevailing, he was thinking.

"What will they do?"

The Doctor narrowed his eyes. "They won't kill him. Children are valued, but that doesn't mean they won't study him. I can't pinpoint the year here, but it is long after my first visit, and since the Olympians cannot be killed, if Zeus knows of Harry, then he knows what he means to me. This is a punishment of sorts." The Doctor's eyes hardened. "One that will work if we can't get to Harry."

The Doctor pulled Jack back into the TARDIS. "And I can't storm the city with just a sonic screwdriver. Their technology is more advanced and they have power, they manipulate various energies. Hold this." A box was thrust into Jack's hand, quickly followed by another box, a book, some papers, a bag and a few things Jack didn't recognize.

"What can they do Doctor?" Jack set the things he had been holding to the side. Brown eyes flashed up at him.

"They manipulate various energy wavelengths into different frequencies. This allows them to create
a varied spectrum of effects based solely on their own personal whims and personalities. The few I met were Zeus, Hephaestus and Asclepius and they follow the Greek mythology rather closely, with various results. Zeus, I recall, was able to grow to huge proportions to strike down enemies with lightning and Hephaestus was a genius inventor. Asclepius….that is a man in whose hand a scalpel is a paintbrush."

"What are you going to do?" Jack sat heavily down on the grated floor. The Doctor kept moving from panel to panel, pulling each up with controlled rage.

"I'm going to remind them why the Time Lords ruled for a billion years and why they were wiped out." The Doctor shoved a few more things into his expansive pockets. "And if they've hurt Harry…" The Time Lord rose to his feet, eyes glowing dangerously. Jack didn't need the rest of that sentence to know what the Doctor would do. He shivered. The last time he had seen the Time Lord angry had been with the Master, and that anger…it had nothing on the rage flashing across his face now. Jack was sufficiently convinced that they could get to the city.

The Doctor dropped down into a flooring panel and started going through a stack of books. "AH-hah! Here it is!" A large, musty tome was dropped onto the floor and the Doctor clambered out of the flooring and replaced the fittings. The book was swiftly opened and scanned through. Jack peered curiously over the Doctor's shoulder, wondering why now was a good time for some light reading, and, strangely, why he couldn't read the language on the page.

"What is that Doctor?" His tone was full of impatience. Fingers wiggled.

"This, Jack, is a list of various Olympians that I requisitioned years ago on an old Library Planet. Dunno how it got off Olympus but it holds valuable knowledge. Written in an old form of the First Language. Sorry, yeah, the TARDIS can't translate it. Now, just sit tight a moment. I need to look a few things up." Jack stood and fidgeted a bit more, but the rage the flitted under the Doctor's now calm mask was enough to soothe his own potent anger.

Harry. Bright, sparkling, happy Harry. They had him. They had taken him, and they were doing who-knows-what to him. Jack felt his own anger resurface, not at burningly strong as the Time Lord's fury (though few could match him for emotional levels) but it raced through his veins with a vengeance.

Jack watched the Doctor as he slammed the heavy, thick and dusty book shut before he dashed through the side door, feet echoing back. He was slightly bewildered. What in the Universe could the Doctor possibly have that could do any kind of damage to an immortal race of beings that hated him and could pull the TARDIS out of the time vortex? Then again, he would put very little past the Doctor when he was angry. Things just never tended to work out well for whomever that anger was directed at.

"So, Doctor, what's the plan?"

Brown eyes seared into him as their owner rushed towards the door, one hand shoving something into a pocket. "Remind them why I'm the last Time Lord left in this Universe and get Harry back."

Jack raced after him. If there was any small mote of pity in him, none of it was for the Olympians. They had taken smiling, laughing, shining Harry. He was so going to be there when the Doctor did whatever he was going to do to them.

~~~~~~This is a Line Break~~~~~~~

Harry had grown used to opening the TARDIS doors the moment they had set down and wandering
outside to see where they were. It had never been an issue before, considering his dad had been right
behind him, usually tugging him back for forgotten shoes or a jacket.

Now though, he was starting to think that he should have waited.

The winged man (not like the wings on butterflies or birds. Wings on shoes and his hat!) had picked
him up without asking, sweeping him into the air and leaving without letting him speak. He had
been, inadvertently, silenced. He was not enjoying the situation. He gestured angrily at the man,
hands flailing, and brightly colored balls appeared and peppered the man's narrow face. He got
blinking at.

"Ah, aren't you a talented one! Haven't seen skill like that before! Zeus is going to love you." The
tone of voice was too happy for Harry's stunt to have affected him. Harry was frustrated.

The ground below was speeding past, all sorts of animals running through the forest or flitting
through the trees. No people though, none at all. But the city ahead, the white columns and roofs
glinting in the sunlight, rapidly approaching, it would have people. People he could ask to take him
back to his dad. People who would be nicer than this man who flew.

He didn't dare struggle though, knowing that he really didn't want to be dropped. Instead, he turned
to look at his kidnapper.

He wished he could speak, ask for a name, ask to be taken back to his home and to his dad and
uncle. Ask anything. But his voice seemed to have left him permanently. He pouted, and the white
city rushed into being underneath them. People didn't look all that interested in their flight, though a
few pointed up and shouted at them. The man said nothing though, determined and single-minded.
They were rushing towards what looked to be a giant temple, soaring over the masses and straight in
through the columns. The winged man gently touched down, outside a set of large, marble doors.

He gestured at two men in white and they bowed solemnly, before pressing a series of buttons. The
doors opened with a soft hiss of escaping air. The man carried Harry into the expansive hallway and
towards a raised dais.

Harry didn't think his eyes could get any bigger. The room was huge, bigger than anything he had
seen in the TARDIS. White columns reached higher than Harry could see clearly, with ivy wreath
patterns etched all the way up. Symbols, strange and unknown, wrapped in spirals as high as Harry
could see. And it was all white. Ivory-white, pure white, lots of white. It was starting to hurt his eyes.

Then he was abruptly facing the floor. The man holding him was kneeling, and Harry was forced to
do the same.

"My Lord Zeus. The child you wished for is here." And then Harry was facing a man who, despite
the slight appearance of old age, was radiating charisma. Bright blue eyes, sharp and glinting, swept
over Harry's small body. Hands, long fingered and slightly chapped rant through a well kept beard.
A perfect mouth turned thoughtful.

"That infernal Doctor's child, yes? The one we could sense through the Time Vortex itself? Ah, I can
see it now. Your blood holds what remains of the Eternals on this plane, yet it is…different
somehow. As if it were warped. Tell me Hermes, has he done anything strange?"

Hermes chuckled. "Yes, Zeus. He summoned colorful balls that proceeded to throw themselves at
me. I silenced him, unsure of his abilities. It seems as if he doesn't need to speak to use them."

Zeus's eyes widened imperceptibly. "Summoned, you say. That is interesting…..tell me, child, what
is your name?" Harry felt the bonds holding his voice back release, and he immediately refused to answer the question.

"Where is daddy? I want to go back! Take me back!" Harry struggled out of Hermes' arms and onto his own feet, glaring with all the might a small child could muster. "You're not nice. I want to go back home."

"Child, answer my question. What is your name? I care not for your home and your father will get his due punishment for defiance. What is your name?"

Harry shut his mouth stubbornly and shook his head. "No. You're not nice. I don't like you." And he turned around.

Hermes was in silent awe of the boy. Few dared defy Zeus at any age. The Olympian commanded power.

"I will have your name boy. Tell me your name!" The roar of Zeus shook the compound, echoing in the rafters and causing those in the room to wince and cover their ears. Harry stood still, eyes wide, face pale, mouth clamped shut. He shook his head, hair flopping. Fear kept him from opening his mouth now.

Zeus growled low in his throat and swirled a bit of electricity between his fingers. It coalesced into a ball, bounding from joint to joint, then, with a swiftness no one was expecting, Zeus thrust the lightning at the child. It arced from his fingertips, coating Harry in white and blue.

Harry screamed. It hurt, pinpricks of electricity zapping and stinging his skin. Hermes turned wide eyes up at Zeus.

"Sir…he's just a child. You don't have to…" Zeus glared.

"It is harmless. Merely a bit of overcharged static with some kick. He will be fine." The voice was dismissive. "Get him up; send him to Asclepius and Paean. I want to know what he is, how he works, everything." Hermes hesitated a second. "Now." The finality of that voice had Hermes scampering towards the boy, who was quietly crying on the floor, and towards a set of small, open doors.

He dare not disobey Zeus. Not if he wanted to keep his limbs functioning.

~~~~~~This is a line Break~~~~~~

"Ah, such a specimen we have here today. Still in the formative stages I see. And such strange energy, power. It wraps around him….a type of security I imagine. We shall have to disable this, Paean, if we wish to follow our instructions." A long, bony fingered hand reached towards Harry, and a sizzling filled the air. A gleeful squeal of joy. "Yes, yes, this is wonderful. Paean, send for Hecate. The old witch will be able to assist. I am…quite…eager to work on this one."

A thin mousy man in a white toga scurried out of the room. Asclepius laughed madly.

Asclepius was tall, broad shouldered and whippy. His arms were corded with muscle but it was knotted and bunched, lending an odd and strange look to him. His neck was thin but strong, supporting a face that would have been handsome if it wasn't twisted into a smile fit for the insane. Eyes, a deep, dark green, swallowed you in and would eat you alive if given the chance.

His toga had a staff entwined by serpents and topped with leaves splayed across the chest, held closed with a silver cord. He tugged on it impatiently as his eyes roved the small boy lying
motionless on the marble table. Another mad smile stretched across his face. Zeus had really given him something interesting this time. Ever since that Doctor, nothing else was ever interesting again. That man…if he had managed to actually get him on the table, work on him, and research him, the things he would have discovered...

Time Lords held their secrets close to them, even when they did roam the universe. Now, locked away in an endless battle, their secrets were held even tighter, locked even beyond the reach of the Olympians. Except for one. One brilliant, mad Time Lord was still running loose, and Asclepius almost had him.

Now he had a boy who was part Eternal, part human and something so completely different. This was worth every little bit of time spent on tiring over those useless little things that crash landed on Olympus or were pulled in for entertainments purpose. He rubbed his hands with relish.

"Ah, Asclepius, how horrid to see you so excited today. Your little slave said you had something interesting. I do hope you aren't just wasting my time with your usual dribble." The drawling, mocking voice seeped through the air like poison, dripping softly into ears and into the mind. Asclepius grinned.

"Ah, Hecate, you old horrid bat, would I be so cruel as to call you unnecessarily?"

"Yes. You would." Hecate was the picture of classic beauty, statuesquely beautiful and with skin as dark as night. Red eyes peered from under heavy lashes and a purple scarf was draped over her shoulders. Her toga was rich plum and fell to the floor, tied together with red-gold. Her fingernails were long and pointed and red, making a statement every time she gestured. Her mouth was twisted into a smirk.

"Well, vision of nightmares, I have been given a specimen of such interest that I decided you would be the best one to…appreciate such intrigue." Asclepius moved and gestured the woman over, clearly delighted. "Look at him, look at him closely. Can you see it?"

Hecate stepped lightly over, eyes narrowed and face pensive, bending close to the child's body. "It would seem as if…he had power, wrapped around him. Every inch covered. Remarkable. This is interesting indeed. Let me see, what would cause that…." Her hands ran along a sizzling, smoking barrier, sensing, touching, tasting, before she jerked back, eyes wide. "He is part Eternal. He has their power in his veins. But he is human, his features, his core, is human…how is that…" She turned to Asclepius. "Let me help. I need to know more. The Eternals were never able to be studied. They never cared enough to venture out. This human is the last of them, last of what is left of their race on this plane. Let me help, please." Her eyes were wide and pleading.

Asclepius cheered silently, knowing now that he had her. Hecate was never the easiest of them to convince to do anything; she had to decide or she would do what was contrary just to irritate you.

"My vile, vicious vermin, of course. How could I not when you ask so nicely." He clapped his hands. "But first is first, this barrier. Can you remove it or destroy it or disengage it?" The glare he received from the witch was one that said she knew he had tricked her, but she didn't say anything. This was too enticing a project to abandon just because of a small trickery.

She leaned back over Harry's inert form, tapping, prodding, poking and generally agitating the shield that had wrapped itself around the small body. "Just give me a bit of space. This is unusual power. I have to take it slow or I might be fried." Asclepius took a step back, making sure he would be out of the possible blast radius. Hecate sent a wicked grin over her shoulder. "And don't think you're safe because you're behind me. This power will wipe out your existence too." Asclepius just hoped she didn't decide to mess with it on purpose, to destroy him. That would be…unpleasant.
Thin, lavishly covered fingers began to twirl and spin through the air, dancing around the sparking, warning barrier. Swirls of mist followed in their wake, settling over the figure of the child and dampening the power to something that would remain harmlessly within the body. Hecate smirked.

"You'll have about 48 hours until his power is strong enough to break the dampening I placed on him. I would recommend leaving anything you want to do to his own innate power to me though, as I am unsure of the...consequences your actions might provoke. The child's strength is formidable. It would be...unfortunate for your essence to be blown to the wind due to a mere probe." Her wicked grin conveyed how amusing she would find this happenstance, should it happen. Asclepius decided to leave the prodding of the child's power to the witch-goddess. She would most likely survive such a happening.

Now, as the power was contained, Asclepius drew near, peering at the boy with avid interest, now able to touch and measure the body.

He was small, very small, not yet two feet in length. His frame still carried remnants of his time in babyhood, the fat lingering on his cheeks and legs. His body was starting to lean out to imply the slender figure he would have as he grew older, but childhood still made sure he was insulated properly. Asclepius opened one eye with his fingers, peering at the orb within.

"Great Skies above, these eyes. They are magnificent. Such color and vivacity. Have you ever seen such a green, crone?" Hecate peered over Asclepius's shoulder, before shaking her head.

"Not a natural green, are they? Something changed them. Almost emerald, but they glow too bright. It is intriguing."

"His mind must be something else...I must examine it. His power has changed so much about him, but he's still so young, young enough to work on. His whole structure is still malleable, still forming. Ah, he's coming around. Horrid hag, if you would be so kind as to Silence him. I can restrain him thank you for the offer. Ah, there you are green eyes. Such a treat to finally meet you."

Asclepius and Hecate peered at each other over Harry's prone form. Harry opened his mouth and screamed. If he had been able to make a sound, it would have been terrifying.

The white city that was the only structure on Olympus gleamed in the sunlight as Jack and the Doctor drew nearer. Arches and columns speared the sky, arching gracefully over the landscape and making a pointedly imperious statement as to the identities of those who lived beneath them. And were those flying chariots? Jack shook his head. The technology was astounding...the artistry was stuck in ancient Greek. Or, well, Ancient Greek architecture was decidedly Olympian. Whatever.

The gates, large metal behemoths that barred their entrance, barely stopped the Doctor's inevitable forward movement, and the guards barely had time to collect themselves as they found the doors swinging open. The shouting that followed them was amusing, and Jack would have stopped to savor it if their mission hadn't been of dire importance. The Doctor had yet to speak as they marched onward, meeting no resistance on their way. Then again, it was just inside the gate. People rarely mingled just inside the gate.

"Doctor, it has been awhile. And you bring such lovely darkness with. The chaos exudes from your pores. It is magnificent." The voice was silky and sensual and full of ill-tidings. It made Jack shiver. Its owner was a tall, lean woman with hair twisted up in an intricate knot, snaky black tendrils creeping over her bare right shoulder. A white dress was tied to her frame with a silk, shimmering tie whose color was a mystery. Jack had to tilt his head up to look her in the eyes, a feat he found made
his head swim. Those eyes…that color blue should be illegal.

"Eris, what do you want?" Eris? That name….

"Eris? Chaos, right?"

"Indeed Jack Harkness. If we had more time I would love…."

"Move, now. I am not in a forgiving mood Eris. Anything you have to say is too little too late. And unless you are currently holding my son you don't want to be standing in front of me."

Eris scoffed. "What would you do, Time Lord, against an immortal? If you want your son back it might just take more than talking to get him."

The Doctor's eyes narrowed even further. He stepped closer to the lovely, bronze-colored, white-toga wearing woman. "I am the last Time Lord in the Universe. Do you want to find out right now why that is? If not, I suggest stepping out of my way. I have things to do."

Eris's blue eyes went wide, but she nodded, stepping aside with the air of one who intended it all along, though her wary gaze wasn't meeting the Doctor's angered one. "You can't help him if you get killed in the process," she said, not looking at the Time Lord.

"That won't be happening. I recommend you leave, Eris." And he stalked away, towards the stairs that led up and up and up towards the plinth like temple on top of everything, rising above the mass of white buildings and statues.

Jack glanced back at the tall beauty. She met his gaze solidly. "I would be careful following him, Jack Harkness. He is dangerous and unpredictable. You might find yourself dead."

Jack flashed a self-depreciating grin. "I don't think that's happening any time soon." He glanced at the Doctor's retreating back. "I have a nephew to retrieve." Then he hurried to catch up.

Few words were spoken for the first couple hundred steps they took, then Jack, who was trying to keep up with the Doctor's relentless pace, finally spoke up. "What are you planning on doing Doctor? You can't just march in and demand Harry back! I mean, if these Olympians are anything like their mythic counterparts we won't even make it past the doors! Doctor! Are you listening?"

The Doctor spun on his heel and stared at Jack, three steps high and now even taller. "They have taken my son. They have broken every rule in whatever book there was ever written. So I'm going to be breaking some of mine. There are reasons the Time Lords feared me. Zeus is about to find out why."

Then he left Jack standing, shocked, on the steps of the endless staircase, unsure of what to do or what to say or anything. His brain hadn't quite processed what had just been thrown at it. So he rushed after the Doctor. Something was going to happen, something probably epic in terms of destruction. He was going to be there to make sure the Doctor came back to his senses in time to get them away safely.

Curious faces of the Olympians around them watched them climb the stairs but no one interfered. Jack wondered about it out loud.

"The Olympians are held in strict order by Zeus. Those that fail to follow that order don't usually end up in very nice places. Zeus is what amounts to a dictator and no one will stand up to him. SO they leave strangers alone. It's safer for them that way.
"Sounds like a harsh way to live," Jack said mutely.

"The punishments here are rather creative. Prometheus really was chained to a mountain to have his liver eaten out every day, only for it to regrow again. All for, as the Olympians say, bringing the spark of life to the Universe." The Doctor's scoff was enough for Jack to understand he didn't really believe it.

"So, do you know where you're going."

The Doctor glanced back at him. "I was here before, centuries and centuries ago granted. But Olympus never changes. It's been this way since they first built the city millennia ago. And Zeus is arrogant; he chooses his throne so it is above everywhere else in the city. His palace, one might say. His closest attendants and those highest in rank are located inside it as well." The Doctor pointed at the ever closer temple like structure. "It looks like a temple but inside it is all a maze."

Jack didn't think that made him feel any better about their endeavor. The Doctor was clearly furious, despite answering his queries with an even tone. Brown eyes were hard and almost burning and he was sure that the Time Lord's hands had remained clenched since they started climbing the steps. As they drew closer and closer to the top of the steps, Jack could make out the guards and sentries outside and gulped. This wasn't going to bode well for his state of mind, he was sure.

As they drew level with the temple floor, stepping up the final step, Jack's fears for opposition were quickly realized as the sentries, who had been watching their progress, called out to the guards and they were quickly surrounded. Not that this fazed the Doctor much at all.

Jack on the other hand, was not pleased by his situation. But he stood where he was. Harry was certainly in worse danger than him at the moment and the tyke wasn't immortal.

"Who crosses into the territory of Zeus the Almighty?" one sentry boomed out.

The Doctor turned to look at him directly. "I'm the Doctor. I'd ask if you'd fancy a chat but I'm not really in the mood for one. I'd also tell you to move, but I'm sure that wouldn't work either. As is…" he trailed off as several round discs were leveled in his direction. He raised an eyebrow. "As is, I am here to retrieve my son. So, unless you'd like to move, I'm afraid I'll have to take a more direct approach."

No matter how politely the Doctor couched his words, Jack heard the underlying threat that was blazing above his head. It seemed that the guards didn't.

One moment, Jack stood, trying to formulate a plan that would, somehow, get them both out alive, hopefully with minimal deaths on his part. The next every single one of the discs was blown apart and the Doctor was no longer standing next to him. In fact, the Doctor was now outside the circle of confused and bemused guards. Jack blinked.

Had he missed something important?

While the guards tried to figure out what had just happened, Jack shoved them aside to catch up with the brown, trench coated figure striding towards a seemingly solid wall. Jack desperately wanted to know what he had done to the guards but, after glimpsing his face, decided against it.

He would ask later.

~~~~~~~~This is a Line Break~~~~~~~~

_Harry. They have Harry. They took Harry._ His mind was racing, but that one thought, over and over
again, kept surfacing. His son, the little boy who called him dad and played games and wanted stories and special bubbles in the bath and would read him hero stories as he tinkered with the TARDIS, had been taken.

So when those guards, pitiful pawns in the hands of a much more sinister king than they imagined, surrounded him and Jack, he warned them. Then he took action.

It had been a long time, years, eons, since he had drawn so heavily on the innate connection to time all Time Lords had. Most never fully realized what it was exactly since many had rarely left Gallifrey unless ordered, but he had known what it was since his weaving. And while Gallifrey was gone along with all her majesties and history and power, time still flowed around him.

So he yanked on it and drew it around himself and aged their devices past the point of fixing as he slipped himself out of the circle. He was sure Jack would follow. Jack caught on rather quickly.

Harry. My Harry. My son. In this life, his life as the Doctor, his children were woven from a Family Loom and called Cousin. Once he had a Brother, chosen rather than given. Once he had a granddaughter, somehow his yet not at the same time. But he could remember a time when he had been a father to children with tiny feet and squeaky voices. When he couldn't remember his name but he could remember the sound of his wife, of his children running through hallways and playing games and laughing. He had never dreamed he would get that opportunity again.

Then he had been given Harry. And the little boy was his. Bright green eyes, messy black hair and always running feet, he had a child. And Zeus had taken him.

The door in the white wall was obvious and, as he sensed Jack run up behind him, he strode towards it with purpose. The Sonic Screwdriver in hand, it took little more than a quick point and assessment before he had typed the code into a small, nearly invisible panel, before he was inside and Jack’s footsteps echoed with his as they strode into the complex.

"Lord Zeus, there has been unauthorized entry into the temple. The Watchers say it is the Doctor. What is it you would have us do?"

Zeus looked at the bowed heads of the Personifications. Nemesis, Tyche, Momus, Fors and Fortuna all stood along the walls. Moira, Mania and Hypnos were, as usual absent. Hypnos was no doubt cloistered in its room spinning discs around and gazing into orbs. He wasn't sure what Moira did with her time and he had banished Mania from stepping foot into the throne room so it wasn't a shock that she wasn't there.

"Stop him and bring him to me. Confiscate any foreign technology he has on his person and take it to Hephaestus. I shall teach him the consequences of disobeying Zeus the almighty."

They bowed lower before filing out the doors. If anyone could get this infernal, maddening Doctor, it would be the Personifications.

He looked around to see Hera and Athena staring at him from across the room. Disapproval was scrawled all across Hera's face.

"Don't you think you have done enough damage Zeus?" she said, marching over to him. He eyed her. Hera wasn't the Head of the Female Order of the Olympians for nothing.

"He deliberately broke the bonds of the traitor and thief Prometheus and helped him escape. He evaded punishment for his actions and must be dealt with accordingly," he said, keeping his tone
even. The moment he raised it, Hera won.

"You took his child. That is not just punishment for actions. You gave his child to Asclepius and that horrid witch Hecate. That is punishable by the Erinyes. You have surpassed what is just punishment and have now broken the laws of Olympus. The child is to be protected."

"The child is not Olympian," he snapped. "He is not under our laws. He is under no laws. A child with the touch of the Eternals is under no law. A child under the protection of a Time Lord doubly so. I may do as I will."

Hera gazed at him, fury in her eyes. "Then I too shall do what I must, for the good of our laws." She turned and left, her second in command and warrior of unrestrained strength Athena following.

Zeus rested his head in his hands. This was not his day. Soon though, he would have that Doctor and his revenge. Soon Hera would see the error of her thoughts and come to his side. It was only a matter of time.

He looked over at the two shadowed figures lurking in the corner.

Well, there were always those two as well.

"Deimos, Phobos, make sure the Personifications carry out their instructions. If necessary you make capture the Time Lord yourselves."

The two slinked away with nary a word though Zeus was sure a giggle echoed around the chamber as an answer.

~~~~~~This is a Line Break~~~~~~

Jack was worried. They had made it into the 'temple' with barely anyone stopping them. Beyond the guards outside, which were quickly dispatched through some Time Lord specialty or other, and a door that wasn't even good enough to stop a sonic screwdriver, nothing had prevented them from getting inside. No one was waiting for them and this made the former Time Agent nervous. There were very few reasons why there would be no guards inside and none of them boded well for Jack or the Doctor.

The Doctor, however, wasn't fazed by this at all. He hadn't been joking when he said the inside was like a maze but this was absurd. There were multiple options to turn at every branch, doors and side halls and stairs and Jack wasn't sure which way was back the way they came. So he supposed this was a kind of defense on its own. But the Doctor wasn't even hesitating as he took turns and obscure doors and passages and Jack just followed, silent and waiting for trouble.

So when a small, slender figure appeared out of a side hall he hadn't noticed, Jack was on the defensive. The Doctor stopped just shy of her personal bubble. Her dreamy, moonstone eyes gazed up at him, the white toga brushing the ground and dragging along behind her. Her white hair was loose and touched the floor. She was eerily creepy.

"Lord Doctor of those who call themselves Masters of Time. I have awaited your arrival on Olympus as we await the setting of the sun. Tidings."

"Moira. I don't have time for your talk of destiny. I need to find my son."

"The Child of the Eternals and the Vortex will be within the cradle of his home soon. Time must be made and broken and forgotten before the Child will return. The She of us all will show you the way. She will understand."
Jack watched the Doctor take in the words, frowning. This Moira had obviously figured out what the Doctor was planning, so why wasn't she trying to stop him?

"Immortal, friend of the Bad Wolf, Destiny cannot be altered by those who see it, only by those who are its chosen instruments. The Lord Doctor is its favorite and most hated son. He alters Destiny by existing but also allows Destiny to take shape."

Those moonstone eyes looked at him. Jack shivered slightly. "You know who Bad Wolf is?" he asked. A dreamy smile spread across the young face.

"The Bad Wolf wrote her own Destiny and in doing so Taught Destiny how to write. The Bad Wolf is Older than Destiny and Destiny's Child, a Circular Paradox contained in the form of a human being. All who See Destiny know The Bad Wolf."

The Doctor was clearly struggling with himself, wanting to know more but desperate to find Harry. Jack watched him, sympathized with him just a bit. But he knew Harry had already won. Rose would be a memory he treasured and never forgot. Harry was his child.

Moira looked at the Time Lord. "Never fear, Lord Doctor, the Bad Wolf is not forgotten or gone. Just Misplaced. The Bad Wolf Saw all of Destiny and Knew Her Path. Take heart. The Child will be found. The Personifications approach. I shall take my leave, Lord Doctor, Immortal. Destiny has spoken, so shall it pass."

The small girl/woman disappeared down a side corridor and Jack watched her go. So many questions, not enough time right now. They needed to get to Harry.

Jack opened his mouth, trying to formulate a question, but the Doctor looked at him.

"Not now Jack. I need to get to Harry. We'll worry about everything else later. And she gave us a pretty clear warning too. Good. I'll have time." He pulled something that looked decidedly like a crystallized hand, either a small adult's or a child's, out of his pocket and began to fiddle with the sonic screwdriver settings. He pointed the blue light at the hand and it whirred. The hand glowed and Jack had to keep yet another shiver down. This was turning into a strange, weird combination of everything that could possibly be strange and weird.

"What…is that a hand?" he asked when the shift of colors began anew. The Doctor raised a rhetorical eyebrow at him, wondering perhaps if Jack was unable to see properly.

"What, you can have my hand in a jar for years yet a crystal one in my pocket is weird?" he asked. Jack sighed.

"Just…what is that?" he finally conceded and asked.

The Doctor frowned. "It's something I never thought I would ever need again, not with the Time Lords gone. But it seems as if I'm wrong."

"That doesn't answer my question," Jack said pointedly. The Doctor shook his head. He obviously wasn't going to answer. Jack looked up and down the hallway. "So, what are we waiting for exactly again?"

"Moira said the Personifications were coming," he said, the hand flashing again, this time bright silver. "Which can only mean the other personifications. Moira is Destiny. There's Tyche, Nemesis, Momus, Fors, Fortuna, Mania and Hypnos. Though I don't think Hypnos would be among them and Mania is restricted from entering the upper levels. They're strong and dangerous in their own rights, combined as they are they are deadly. I need something to stop them until this She arrives."
Jack blinked at the onslaught of information and tried to filter what he knew of Greek mythology through that list of names. Some of them were easy, Fortuna and Hypnos. The others weren't. He was about to ask until a slender, well, actually stick like figure, rounded the corner and approached them. Behind ranged five others of various shapes and sizes. They approached quickly and Jack tried to shift in front of the Doctor. He was pushed back by a long fingered hand as pure silver light flashed through the hallway, racing towards the six Personifications.

Jack watched in astonishment as they all froze, before starting to move backwards down the hall, well, as they reversed their movements completely, stepping backwards as if in rewind. Jack looked sharply at the Doctor.

"What did you do to them?"

"Merely reversed the aspects of Time that they inhabited, setting their perception of the world as a backwards loop so their brains are registering what they did do rather than what they are going to do so that their bodies, effectively, retrace the last fifteen minutes exactly of their previous actions down to the tiniest movement in reverse. Their brains are repatterning their perception of time until the effect wears off and they regain their natural state."

"You…what? You rewound them?"

The Doctor shrugged. "In simple terms, I suppose so."

"With your crystal hand thing?"

"The Doctor slipped the now opaque hand into his pocket. "I'll have to wait to use it again. Only effective once I can impose its limits and right now it has no direction. It also needs to be recharged."

Jack shook his head. This whole rescue was becoming more and more fascinating complicated the longer they were here.

A wave of fear hit him and his spine stiffened. It tasted unnatural but his body screamed at him to run. The Doctor laid a hand on his shoulder.

"Calm down. I expected something like this. It's not your fear, let your brain taste it and it'll wash out."

~~~~~This is a Line Break~~~~~~

The moment the wave of pure fear rolled through him, the Doctor knew who else Zeus had sent. Deimos, most likely with his twin Phobos. Which didn't bode well for them at all.

The book hadn't been clear exactly on what Deimos and Phobos looked like or what they could do, beyond being Fear and Terror. Not Personifications. They were Fear and Terror. Shadows slipped along the wall, indistinguishable unless one noticed a distinct body shape just a shade lighter than the shadow it was shrouded in.

He let the fear run through his mind, let the unconscious part taste the artificiality of it, sloughed it off. Jack, next to him, wasn't nearly as successful. He whispered some words of encouragement to help him shake off the effect but he knew the human body would have a harder time of it than his own physiology. His mind was fully accessible. The human mind was mostly sealed shut from their own prodding thoughts.

Still, Jack's shoulders loosened.
"Deimos, Phobos. It must be serious if Zeus is letting his play toys out of their cage."

Laughter greeted his words. "The mighty Time Lord knows not of our true nature. He who is Destroyer of Worlds does not feel terror, he gives it. So we shall make him feel terror and fear." The voices were creepy and echo like. The Doctor tried not to think of what was happening to Harry. He couldn't afford the fear that thought inspired at the moment. He needed to beat them at their own game.

"Your artificial fear and terror is useless. If the body knows it is fake it ignores it."

"Then we shall make the fear and terror real. How much do you care for your friend?"

The Doctor turned to Jack, eyes wide. He met Jack's blue eyes and saw the captain understand his plan. "Don't you hurt him! He has nothing to do with this quarrel between Zeus and myself."

"You brought him to the temple. He is now fair game. We shall give you fear Doctor. Zeus did not ask for the human, he asked only for you. There is not purpose for him anymore."

Then a black hand shot out from the shadows and sliced right through Jack's chest. The Doctor felt his hearts clench.

"JACK!" only the gurgle of Jack's air trying to reach his lungs met him as the Captains body fell to the ground. He whirled around, trying to pinpoint their locations. Jack breathed his last on the floor at his feet.

Now all he needed to do was stall for time.

"Do you feel the fear now, Doctor? The terror of losing a friend is a terrible thing."

"You didn't need to kill him! He was no threat to you or to Zeus!"

"He was useless. He was purposeless. His death gives you fear. That is all we need. Zeus will see you now."

"Zeus is an arrogant dictator who can't accept when someone else changes the rules to his games. Well, let's see how much I can change those rules then, shall I?"

The giggling echoed through the hallway just as Jack breathed back into life. The giggling cut off abruptly.

"Who are you? What is this you bring into the temple, Time Lord? What is this human who does not die?"

The Doctor smirked. "You just killed the best friend of the Bad Wolf Phobos. I am sure that name as reached your shadowed ears before."

Outraged noises. "Lies. The Bad Wolf is older than creation!"

"The Bad Wolf is Destiny's mother and Destiny's child. I'm sure there are worse ways to go but harming the personal friend of Destiny's child might not be so bad for you two," the Doctor hazard, watching the two shadows shake against the wall.

Then, as suddenly as they were there, they were gone. Jack coughed and pushed himself off the floor. The Doctor lifted him up.

"Why did they run off?" he asked hoarsely. The Doctor's grin was empty and terrifying.
"Deimos and Phobos have felt the hand of Destiny, when they were created, and their inability to affect it in any way has left them uneasy. When Moira spoke of the Bad Wolf, she spoke of those who See Destiny knowing her. I took a gamble on them having seen the Bad Wolf. She's unforgettable and rather terrifying, I've been told. They fear what she could do to them."

Jack blinked. "Really. But, aren't they Fear and Terror or something? How can they be scared of anything?"

"They fear that which cannot be controlled by fear or terror. Destiny and its child, well, they aren't concerned with anything as paltry as fear and terror. The lack of it is as terrifying to them as the overabundance of it is to you or me."

Jack shook his head. "Alright, alright, so where's Harry then?"

The Doctor's face looked absolutely anguished for a brief second before it hardened. Jack had been trying to ignore the fear he had been feeling for Harry, but the assault by the duo of monstrous nightmares wasn't helping him handle it any better.

"I don't know where Asclepius is keeping him. I was planning on following the energy trace he leaves but after the interference of the Personifications I can't pin it down. I wasn't even sure I had the right wavelength to begin with but I was hoping…"

Jack felt his body freeze. "Wait, what? You were tracking Harry with your sonic screwdriver? But, isn't it impossible to track humans?"

"Humans yes, but Harry leaves behind a very faint but very distinct residual Psionic energy trail when he goes somewhere. I could have put a dampener on him so he wouldn't but I figured it would be helpful if he ever got lost or something." The Doctor sighed, shoulders slumping. "Now though, I can't even get a proper read on it. The air's too clouded by all the different energy signatures."

Jack frowned. It made some sort of sense. He whirled when a hand tapped him on the shoulder. A woman, tall, slender, draped in white and with very beautiful if too perfect features stood behind him. He had to look up at her.

"You are the child's guardians?" she asked, her voice both harsh and melodic.

"He's my son, yes," the Doctor said. "Are you the "She of us all"?"

A smile. "I am Hera, Head of the Female Order of Olympians. This is my Second in Command, Athena. So yes, I would be the She of us all. Moira spoke to you then?"

The Doctor's eyes narrowed. "From my understanding, you are supposed to be Zeus's right hand. Why are you here, helping us?"

Hera sighed. "Zeus has broken the Laws of Olympus with his actions. I merely seek to right a wrong. Whatever punishment you inflict on us for our non-action I can only call justified. The Family is sacred on Olympus. Zeus has forgotten it."

The Doctor stared at her, eyes hard, until he nodded. "Alright then. Take me to my son. I assume Asclepius as him by now?"

Hera nodded. "Asclepius and Hecate and Aphrodite. Paeon is there as well, though he is mostly a slave to Asclepius's whims."

The Doctor's eyes flashed again and Jack made sure to stand behind him as Hera led them down the
"Do you know what they are doing to my son?" he asked through gritted teeth.

Hera shook her head. "I do not know. I can tell you nothing good can come out of what they do to him, though it has only been several hours by the candle so nothing drastic. Asclepius enjoyed taking his time. Hecate even more so."

This did nothing to halt the steady burn of the Doctor's temper. Jack hoped that he wouldn't do anything drastic.

Athena, the silent warrior who looked made of muscle and dressed in gleaming armor, walked behind them, staring intently at a point beyond Hera, probably looking out for danger.

The walk to the room was quiet, mostly to keep attention from being drawn to them, partly because the Doctor would most likely destroy anyone who spoke to him until he had Harry back. Jack worried for him and Harry. He hadn't fully realized how attached the Doctor had been until recently. And he would most likely be getting a very good look at how much Harry meant as soon as Harry was back with him and the Doctor confronted Zeus.

Hera stopped beside a door, punching in a number and laying her finger on a small plate. The door hissed and slid down. "Your son is within, Doctor. Zeus's chambers are down the hall, the third door on your left. I offer what little apologies I can for the actions he took." She bowed her head and headed back the way they came, Athena following her still.

The Doctor nodded curtly at her but didn't say anything, rushing inside instead.

The Doctor burst into the room, the door slamming into the wall with a violent shove and staying there, unmoving, probably unwilling to take any more abuse.

Four large figures of the Olympians were unconscious in corners of the room, sprawled and angled awkwardly. Brown eyes searched the room frantically for the small figure that he could feel. Harry's black mop of hair was in the far end of the room, body huddled against the wall, eyes wide, terrified and dripping with tears.

The Doctor immediately rushed to Harry, worried that he was making no sound but so glad he was alive.

"Harry, Harry, I'm so sorry. So sorry." He fluttered more, making sure he wasn't hurt. Harry mustered a small smile, reaching out a hand to pat his dad's face. The moment his skin made contact, his mouth opened in a silent scream and he jerked back into a ball, huddled into the wall. The Doctor's eyes went wide.

"Doctor, what's wrong, why isn't he making noise?" Jack hovered in the background as the thin frame shook in fury. Brown eyes snapped over to the nearest figure, a mousy man with a narrow face and a plain white toga. The Doctor shook him awake.

"What did you do to my son? What did you do to him?" Maybe not the best way to interrogate someone, but it was effective. At least, as soon as the man stopped stuttering long enough to answer the question. The mousy brown eyes were wide in terror.

"I...I didn't do anything. It...it was Asclepius and He-hecate. They...they opened his mind. They warped...they moved his power throughout his body. They...they I'm sorry I'm sorry please don't
hurt me!" The Doctor growled.

"It'll be so much faster to do this the other way. Hold still. This might hurt." And with that, the Doctor gripped the sides of the man's head and forced his mind into the others. The rush of information was fast and furious and made him gasp in pain. He rarely ever did this without the other person relaxing, and this was a brutal method. But he needed the information and this one couldn't string a sentence together.

Then, a minute or so later, he dropped the man to the ground and let him curl into a ball, whimpering, clutching his head. Jack stared, wide eyed, at the vibrating figure. Fury was wrapped around him like a cloak, flowing outward and shimmering in the air. Brown eyes flashed dangerously as he looked over the mostly unconscious occupants of the room.

"Doctor…are you….what did they do?" He thought better of the question he was going to ask.

"They tore his mind open, they ripped it and rummaged through it like rats then warped the connections. The synapses…they forced them open, flooding his mind with neuro-chemicals, biofeedback signals. Every single time he touches someone skin-on-skin, unhindered mental connection is made and it races through his mind in a torrent. They did the worst thing you can to a person; they made him a touch-empath. He can't touch someone without…without feeling every single emotion, every single thought." He looked at Harry, his eyes full of pain. "He can't….I can't touch him. Not his skin, not even for a moment. They didn't give him any protection, any barriers. They just ripped through his brain and left him open, wide open and scrambling for stability." He knelt back down to Harry's level, laid a hand on Harry's covered shoulder. Harry opened red-rimmed green eyes, sniffling.

Jack stared in horror. Touch-empaths were solitary, frightful beings who were cursed with their ability. They were born with it, and if they survived childhood to become adults, they were shunned by those around them. They were a uniquely human phenomena that began to occur with the sudden surge of psychics and other similarly gifted individuals. They could be the offshoot of the interspecies genes mixing with the human or some strange genetic quark, but those with touch-empathy were always the more disturbing ones. With no physical contact most of their lives, they shunned and were shunned.

"Doctor…what can we do?"

"I don't….wait, they had to use Harry's magic to make it possible, his genetic sequence wouldn't allow them to alter the pertinent structures necessary to stabilize an empathic connection throughout his body, which means they had to tie the nervous system directly into his core. Which would allow….hold this, I need to find something." The Doctor shoved the screwdriver into Jack's hands and dug through his pockets, rummaging deeper than the size should allow. Buttons, a book, a tea cup (chipped), a toothbrush, a few unnamable things and a watch fell out of them as the Doctor dug deeper and deeper in, until he smiled triumphantly and pulled out a twisting, looping golden chain.

Jack stared as the Doctor knelt closer to Harry, unlinking the back of the necklace and reaching around the boy's neck. Harry whimpered soundlessly as fingers brushed his neck, hands clenching into fists. "Shh, Harry, just a second. It'll be alright. Shhh." He linked the chain and in that instant, all the tension in Harry's body flowed out, to the floor. Harry sighed and melted bonelessly into the wall. "Yes, yes, earlier than I had ever hoped needing to use it, but it serves its purpose."

The necklace was of a shimmering gold Jack had never seen before. The Doctor pulled Harry close to him.

"What is it?" He gestured at the necklace around the now sleeping Harry's neck. The Doctor looked
It was a gift given by the Guardians of the Forest of Hadroona. Not long after I got Harry. It restrains his magic, pulls it back into his core rather than allowing it to flow freely around him, as it has been doing. It also restrains his Empathy to a minimal level. Those...monsters wove his magic along his nerves as they forced his mind open, tying his amygdale and his cerebral cortex together with the power and running it into his nervous system. Because they couldn't alter the genetic sequence to make him a true empath, they had to improvise, which allows this necklace to work."
The Doctor gazed down at the sleeping child. "He can never take that necklace off, not unless he gains complete control over his power, iron control. Otherwise sensations will flood his body immediately." The Time Lord raised eyes full of sadness to Jack's own.

Jack reached out to stroke Harry's cheek. "Why isn't he talking, or screaming? Did they...do something to his voice?" They could have taken it. Harry might never...no, he couldn't think like that.

The Doctor shook his head. "No, they didn't take his voice. You can't take a person's voice, only their ability to use their vocal cords. But no, not that either. They basically suppressed Harry's vocal cords to the point where they won't resonate was air passes over them. According to that...that creature over there, it's only temporary, reapplied after Harry screamed. Another twenty hours will allow it to wear off. And no, I can't do anything about it. Olympians possess unique qualities I can't override. We just have to wait, and hope Harry sleeps through it." He shifted Harry in his arms, watching the gold of the necklace glint on the small boy's chest. Eyes flashed in anger. "Now, though, we have a punishment to met out, Furies to satiate. Let's go."

The lack of the usual catchword just underlined the Doctor's fury. Jack followed, now relieved Harry was safe and somewhat worried as to what exactly the Doctor was planning on. His child had been taken and harmed, his mind tampered with and his body poked at. It wouldn't be pretty, Zeus's ultimate demise.

Harry lie against the Doctor's chest, head tucked into the curve of his neck and shoulder, the golden necklace glimmering on his chest. He slept, eyes wet with tears and track marks on his cheeks. It made Jack's heart swell in anger. It was nothing compared to the anger Jack saw when he looked at the Doctor.

The Doctor's eyes burned in fury and rage and pain and Jack scrambled out of the way as he made for the door Hera had indicated. Jack looked at Harry fearfully, scared for him and what could have possibly happened. The Doctor would explain in time, but right now all he knew was that Harry and been made into a Touch-Empath. He had encountered one before and just the merest brush against their bare skin had left him reeling with emotions that weren't his own, fear and loneliness and loss and pain. He had felt empty inside, as if something had been taken. Later he had been told the empath had taken his happiness and his joy. It was the only way they knew how to survive.

Now Harry was one. The necklace kept it at bay but to know that someone had deliberately altered another being into such a creation was horrifying.

The Doctor blew the door into Zeus's chambers open. Jack followed him in.

The throne room was huge, the ceiling beyond his eyesight, but what he focused on was the man perched on a throne at the far wall, center stage in front of the door as if a performance. It was, Jack knew. It was how rulers got attention. Grab it from the moment anyone walks in.

He also knew it wouldn't work on the Doctor.
"Time Lord, you return. And you have your child. I underestimated you. I won't do so again."

"Zeus, leader of Olympus, wielder of lightning in all its forms, Head of all the Olympians and self-proclaimed god. You took my child; you have broken your own planet's laws of non-violence to children and the sacred commandment of the family. You are guilty of crimes older than your race. Your people are guilty of the crime of non interference."

Zeus laughed. "And what is a Time Lord going to do about it? We are immortal! We cannot be killed!" He spat the word Time Lord like it was a bad word.

Jack flinched at the Doctor's dark look. "I am the last Time Lord in the Universe. I killed the rest of them. There are ways of killing the un-killable." He reached into his pocket and pulled out the crystallized hand Jack had seen him use earlier on the Personifications. The Doctor turned to him, held Harry out with one arm, pain creasing his face. "I need both hands. Can you…can you hold him? Please?"

Jack nodded, taking Harry with careful arms and settling the child into the crook of his shoulder. Harry slept on.

The Doctor turned back to Zeus, who was looking astonished. "You killed the Time Lords? How?"

"You broke the law of the sanctity of children, the sacred family. You took my child. You harmed my child." The Doctor hefted the crystalline hand with his own. "I am not sorry for this." Then he threw the hand into the air. It flashed brilliant gold and plummeted towards the floor. The Doctor stepped back. "This is one of the last remnants of the might of the Time Lords. This hand is used to manipulate time. In its basic uses, speed up and slow down. But, if one knows how, the hand can be used for things much greater. Right now, as it falls to the floor, it is ripping a hole in the Time Vortex. It is ripping this planet into an erased timeline. You will never have existed."

Zeus watched the hand fall, as if in slow motion. "You…you wouldn't. You couldn't! Not innocents, not to everyone on this planet!"

"Watch me."

Zeus roared in fury, aiming a hand crackling with electricity at the Doctor. Jack watched as it seemed to slide around the tall, thin, furious figure. "DOCTOR! I WILL DESTROY YOU AS WELL!"

The golden light erased Zeus from view and Jack rested a hand on the Doctor's shoulder. "Um, Doctor? If we don't leave now, will we end up in that timeline too?" he asked. The Doctor's eyes widened.

"Yes, yes, come on, we don't have much time."

He took Harry from Jack without a word and raced for the door, dodging a lightning bolt from Zeus as he made it through and into the hallway. Everywhere the building was shaking apart at the disruption within the time vortex. They were unaccosted as they hurried out the far door and back through the maze. At a dead run and with the Doctor's excellent memory, they made it out to the stairs faster than Jack would have thought possible.

He narrowed his eyes at the Doctor. He was sure the Time Lord had done something but right now they needed to be out of the city. The stair case was descended as fast as was possible without falling face first down it.

Eris stood at the bottom, eyes wide in horror. She looked at the Doctor, fear in her eyes. "What did you do? I can…I can feel it in the air. I can hear it!"
"The Doctor looked at her. His eyes seemed to soften just a bit. "Goodbye Eris. You might just survive it too."

"WHAT DID YOU DO?" She screamed at them as they took off out the gates and across the fields. Behind them the whole city started to glow. The temple was gone in the golden haze and as they reached the TARDIS, the city started to vanish. The Doctor snapped it open and they rushed inside. The doors closed behind them.

With one hand the Doctor sent them spinning into the vortex and collapsed into a chair. Harry was still asleep against his chest and Jack leaned against the railing, heaving for air and trying to reassure his lungs that he wasn't dead this time, so breathe dammit.

Jack looked up at the Doctor. Unsure of what to say. What did you say to someone who just erased an entire planet? Then he looked at Harry. His uncertainty turned to fear. Was Harry okay?

Before he could say anything, the Doctor disappeared into the hallways. He would have to wait.

~~~~~~~~This is a Line Break~~~~~~~~

He had sworn never to use the Hand, ever. He had just condemned and entire race to oblivion, to a Timeline that no longer existed, to a life where they would be erased because they couldn't continue to live because there was no time. Unending death.

Because of Harry. Because they had taken his child from him.

It scared him. What would he not do for Harry? He couldn't think of anything. And that scared him more than he thought was possible.

Such a tiny little being with such an enormous impact on him. He should be scared, but right now all he felt was relief that Harry was back. Back and alive and safe. He wasn't sure what had been done to him but he would find out as soon as Harry woke up. If Harry woke up. No, no, when Harry woke up.

~~~~~~~~This is a Line Break~~~~~~~~

She could feel the pain radiating off her newest child, engulfing him in waves. His mind was asleep, protecting itself the only way it knew how, but his body was wracked with pain. And her Time Lord too. His heart was heavy with anger and rage and sorrow. All these emotions, brought into her control room. She shuddered, her whole mainframe shivering and she keened softly.

Her Time Lord, his child, they brought heavy hearts with them. She could only shift the rooms around so Harry's bedroom was closest, and her Time Lord set him down gently. The immortal who carried a piece of her, an infinitesimally small piece of her, lingered at Harry's door before he realized he wasn't welcome just then and went to his own room.

She had been so happy when Harry arrived, feeling the power that spiraled around him connect to her, an intrinsic connection that she would always have with him. And her Time Lord was happy, happier than he had been in a long time. He laughed louder, his eyes were brighter, he took her to beautiful places. Harry would play in her hallways, his magic touching every inch of her walls, and he could feel her too. So young, yet so brilliant. This child, it had been a long time since a child had been within her walls, a child still young enough to touch. She reveled in it.

Now, his power was wrapped around his core, held there by a pulsing chain of foreign power, and she could do nothing about it. Her Time Lord just sat beside Harry's bed and watched him sleep, counting his breaths and stroking his cheek, reassuring himself that Harry was there, that he was
The Doctor sat vigil besides Harry's bed, staring unblinkingly at the small, almost motionless form of the child ensconced within the blankets. Only the up-and-down movement of his chest indicated some sign of life.

He was terrified. He wasn't sure if it was Harry never waking up or Harry waking up, but just the fact that this small child he had cared for for so long had been placed in danger, a danger that was, ultimately, his fault, didn't inspire hope. Harry had to wake up, but what if he was scared of him? Wouldn't let the Doctor come near him? Residual effects of what Harry went through...he knew the effects it had on the mind. But he couldn't bear it if Harry stayed asleep forever. His mind raced with all the worst possibilities. And he could think of a lot of possibilities.

A hand twitched, shifted, and then rubbed across slowly blinking eyes. The Doctor leaned forward, hearts leaping. He was awake! Harry was up!

The terrified expression crossing the boy's young face sat him quickly down in his chair. Harry's eyes, bright emerald eyes, were wide in horror and fear. They didn't seem to see what was in front of them, but the fear shining in their depths was hardly in need of translation. He kept his hands to himself, not daring to reach out to comfort his child. No matter how badly he wanted to, Harry's initial reaction...it would not end well if he did. He had to wait for Harry to calm down.

It took a few hearts pounding moments, but Harry's eyes cleared, and they landed of the Doctor.

"Daddy?" The voice was little more than a whisper. He nodded, and Harry launched himself across the bed and into his father's arms. "Daddy! Saved me." His hearts skipped a beat. What had he ever done to deserve this level of devotion?

"Yeah, Harry." He couldn't say more. Harry burrowed into his father's arms, face pressed into the white dress shirt, arms hugging as far around the thin frame as he could.

They stayed, embraced, for a few more minutes, before the Doctor pulled Harry back slightly, sitting him on his knee and visually inspecting him.

He couldn't see where any physical surgical scars would be, but the Olympians were advanced enough that they scars would be tiny. Microscopic. His sensitive finder pads felt small, almost unnoticeable raised lines around Harry's skull, his throat, down his arms and, he guessed, directly up his back. His throat closed up. Harry stared at him with worried eyes.

"Daddy? Are you okay? Did they hurt you too?" Oh, his little Harry, always worried about people, always caring and generous.

"No, no Harry. Daddy's fine. I'm just so...so happy to see you again." And he wished he had been there to see what the Furies had done to Zeus. To do it to that arrogant prick himself.

It wasn't becoming of a Time Lord, such thoughts, but that was the furthest thing from his mind. His Harry, his sweet, precious, smiling, laughing, kind Harry, had been hurt.

"Harry? Is it alright if I use the scanner to make sure you aren't hurt? No med bay, I promise. We can do it in here, or the console room..." Harry's eyes lit up. "The console room it is then. Allonzy!" Harry giggled and he was picked up and spun around, the Doctor marching out into the hallway and towards the console room. He set Harry on his seat and dug around for the scanner.
"Alright, under 'M' for medicine…no…..'S' for scanner….no….D'…no….Ah, here we are! 'T' for thingamajig! That's a technical term, you know." Harry giggled again. The Doctor smiled. "Alright, let me get this working….here's the on switch…" The device fizzled and popped before vibrating violently. Then is clicked and hissed on. The Doctor stared at it in puzzlement, then the screen blipped into existence and he beamed. "Ah, here we are! Hold still Harry, just got to get these settings adjusted….." he fiddled with the multitude of buttons and possible choices before settling on the closest to Harry's species category. Human. Then he pointed one end at Harry and turned to side button.

Harry wiggled as the blue light traced his body. "Feels funny daddy. Tickles." He giggled again. The Doctor smiled.

"Almost done….almost….there!" The blue light flickered out and the Doctor inspected the screen.


Height: .68 metres.

Weight: 15.87 kilo

Blood Type: Unknown Genetic interference.

Genome Structure: Elements of human genome type, addition of fifth, sixth, seventh, eight nucleotides to genetic polymer. Effect is unknown. Basic double helix structure, addition of occasional triple helix. Cause: Subject is within a Time Vortex Manipulator.

Cerebral Cortex: Influx of foreign proteins and chemical compounds designed to stimulate growth of synaptes and mental connections. Effect: Drastic improvement in mental functions of subject. Possible insanity.

Nervous System. Additional nerves connected to the Central Nerve. Effect is unknown.

Miscellaneous: Subject's eyes have been altered. Possibility to see energy wavelengths, dimensions. Subject's vocal cords have been altered. Effect is unknown. Subject's organs have been rejuvenated. Effect: Longer cellular lifespan of each organ system. Possibility of extended life.

A very basic readout of Harry's current predicament. The Doctor's hands clenched around the scanner, and he quickly pressed a few more buttons, reading out a long winded and technical description of the short summery he had been given. Every line made his eyes harden, and when he finally finished, it took his entire self-control to simply set the scanner aside instead of throwing it across the room. He pulled his anger in, let his hands clench into fists for a few minutes, before he reached out and pulled Harry into a tight embrace. Harry struggled for a few minutes, then, feeling the anguish in the Doctor's embrace, he settled down and let his dad just hold him.

He knew Harry had been turned into a Touch Empath, that was why the golden necklace was scratching against his chest. He knew they had altered his brain chemistry. He hadn't realized they had messed with his genes, his eyes, his vocal cords, his physical structure. They had…they had….they had played 'perfect human' on a child, a child that was not yet three, a child that was his child. Harry…he wouldn't know the full extent of the damage they had wrought on Harry until he was older, until he had matured and his body's hormones decided to kick in. With the addition of these…changes, he couldn't even guess as when that would happen.

Harry leaned indulgently into his dad's embrace, enjoying the comfort of the hug. He felt strange, like he was missing something important, he couldn't reach something vital, but for now, he was just
glad to be here, home. Home and warm and in the TARDIS.

The TARDIS. He could feel her surrounding him, her own strange energy enfold ing him and lending him support. He didn't know why, but it felt nice, it didn't make this loss so insistent on his mind. The TARDIS, for her part, knew Harry was feeling the loss of the freedom he had with his magic, the ability to do what he wanted to with it without care, and she compensated by letting her age old Atron Energy fill in the missing gaps. Later Harry would have to deal with this sudden loss of freedom and free play with his magic, to learn how to control it willfully, but for now, he was unaware of the loss. It was how she wanted him to be for a while longer. Just a while, until he had grown up some and could handle this loss.

Harry pushed insistently at the Doctor, wanting to say something, and the Time Lord pulled back, his face an unreadable mask. Harry smiled up at him, and the Doctor's face softened. "Adventure Time, Daddy."

Harry smiled. "Adventure Time Dad?" The Doctor smiled softly.

"Not now Harry. Now, now I need to make sure you'll be okay. They did some very bad things to you." He wasn't used to using words so small, lacking the technical details that his words usually were filled with, but Harry might not understand DNA and polymer and double helix and chemical bath and any of the other numerous things he could use. No, he had to stick to the basics.

Harry frowned. "But...I want to go on an adventure!"

"Not now Harry, please. Now, now I just want to make sure you're safe. I want to keep you safe. Your body...your body is not well. You have that necklace on, you feel it? You have to keep it on all the time. You can't take it off."

"Why?"

"If you do, well, if you do you'll hurt a lot. You won't be able to stop hurting until you put it back on, not until you can control your magic. You can't feel it right now, can you?"

Harry furrowed his eyes. "No, not really. It's...it's still there, but I can't...I can't reach it. Why?"

"The people that took you away did bad things. They hurt you, and they made it so your magic, it feels everything." Harry looked puzzled. "Alright, imagine you have a cut, and you have a band aid on it, so it heals quickly. And it heals and you have a scab left. Now, your magic was sort of like the blood underneath that scab. They people who took you, they ripped the scab off and poured lemon juice on it and now it won't close up again and the blood, your magic, is running everywhere. Understand?"

Harry nodded slightly. "So, my magic...it touches everything?"

"Yes. So until you can pull your magic out yourself, you have to leave that necklace on and never take it off. Please Harry, promise me that." Harry nodded solemnly.

"Promise daddy. Can we go on an adventure now?"

The Doctor laughed. "No, not yet. Food first, then more bed for you. I...I want to do more tests, but I need you to be rested and not sleepy, okay?"

"Kay. I want Silvarian Pasta. Please?" They headed into the kitchens, Harry asking for more and more outrageous foods. The Doctor smiled, Harry hoisted on his hip, and glad that there weren't any more obviously ill effects from what had happened.
Jack leaned against the counter, watching them come into the room, and Harry's eyes lit up. The Doctor smiled at him, thanking him with eyes and smiles and silent words.

"Hey Harry. How are you feeling?"

Harry reached out for Jack, who took him from the Doctor with a smile. "Hi Jack! Daddy said I was okay. But I have to wear the necklace all the time. That's okay. It's sparkly and pretty and I like it."

Jack listened intently. "Really? It is a nice necklace, I have to say. It's very pretty." Harry smiled.

"Food now! I'm gonna eat Silvarian Pasta! Daddy said I could." Harry turned to look at his father, as if daring him to say otherwise. The Doctor smiled and nodded. Harry clapped.

The pasta was produced in due time and Harry managed to eat half of it before he yawned and curled up against the Doctor, falling asleep quickly. Jack dropped the jokey, smiley face and looked seriously at the Doctor.

"What happened to him? I stayed out of it because he's your kid, but I care about him too. And I don't want some quick and simple answer."

The Doctor sighed, resting a hand on Harry's back, holding the child to him. Then he looked directly at Jack, eyes flat.

"I ran a scan on him. Beyond the complete and utter demolition of his mental barriers and the tampering of his magic, they tried to recreate him in their image. They didn't get very far, managing to perfect his eyes and some minor physical adjustments on his skeletal frame, but they flooded his brain with chemicals. Various neuro-chemicals and proteins that stimulate growth. In a mind as young as his, the effects are unknown. He'll be sleepy, hungry and hyper for a while, then he'll either calm down some or…" Jack watched the Doctor glance down at Harry, eyes swirling in worry and fear. He could guess what came next, but he didn't want to. It wasn't…he didn't know if he could.

"Or he'll go insane. Schizophrenia would be the most common result. Hallucinations, disorientation, synesthesia are also a possibility. It might also not happen until Harry hits puberty. The chemicals might just swirl around, bolstering his mental faculties until his own hormonal imbalance hits and they start to influence his growth. His mental state…we will have to watch him very carefully. His magical and mental growth will be both off the charts and very very dangerous."

The Doctor spoke in a carefully level tone, but Jack could see the fury and fear under the surface. How it was all the Doctor could do not to clutch Harry to him and never let him go. Jack reached over the small table and rested a hand on the Doctor's arm, providing a silent support.

"I may not know all there is about human physiology, but I won't leave you, or him. I'll be here, to help or whatever you need."

The Doctor looked at him, a smile threatening at the corners of his lips. He nodded.

They say there in silence, watching the small human in front of them sleep, a child who was unaware of just how dangerous the next few weeks would be.

~~~~~~~~~This is an Ending~~~~~~~~~

Chapter End Notes
Thank you to all you wonderful people who have read and reviewed and left kudos! Thank you!

The Olympians were from the Doctor's past. It was in a comic rather than an episode that they appeared but they aren't my creation.

I started a tumblr for this story so I could bounce Ideas around more freely. harry-son-of-a-mad-man is the url if anyone wants to bounce them around with me.
The first few weeks after Harry woke up was filled with mostly Harry sleeping for hours. He was like a cat in that respect, curling up randomly, usually on or near the Doctor, and nodding off. When he wasn't asleep he wasn't any farther than ten feet from the Doctor at any time. He would rather have the Doctor's hand in his, or his coat, or be in his arms.

It was disconcerting and rather frustrating for Jack, if he was honest. He couldn't do anything to help Harry and the Doctor was quieter than usual when Harry was asleep, retreating to a back room and leaving Jack to his own devices. Jack couldn't even wander outside the TARDIS, seeing as, more often than not, the Doctor would let the TARDIS float through some part of space not filled with hyperspace lanes or planets.

And Jack had questions. He had lots of questions for the Doctor. He had questions about Harry, about Bad Wolf, about what exactly happened on Olympus, about Moira's words. He never got to ask them, the Doctor was always doing something else.

The TARDIS too was doing her best to protect the young boy. When they did land, she made sure they landed exactly where the Doctor intended, mostly places without sentient life or extremely peaceful places where there were no wars or conflicts to be had for centuries in either direction.
Now they were sitting on what could be called a beach, Harry's attempt at sand buildings evident all around them. The boy was asleep at the moment, curled up in his father's lap, small chest gently rising and falling. The Doctor was watching the slowly diminishing crescent of the large gas giant that this moon circled and Jack figured now would probably his only chance to ask questions.

"What's wrong with him?" he asked softly, broaching the subject with probably the most important yet least likely to provoke an angered response question. "Why is he so...stuck to you?" The Doctor brushed a hand over Harry's head.

"He's terrified I'm going to vanish and he'll be left alone. He doesn't say as much when he's awake, but he does talk in his sleep." Harry's hand grasped the Doctor's shirt tightly, settling down deeper into sleep. Nothing sentient was anywhere near them for now. Lightly glowing water, H2O with a scattering of phosphorus rocks, lapped against the rocky, grey colored coast. It would be called the Light of the Betricax in the future but for now it was unknown.

Jack nodded. He could understand that. Even though Harry was almost too young to form solid memories of the event (the Time Agency made them take courses on Memory and how it changes, solidifies and adapts in various species) right now they would be nightmares and vivid memories. Pain was the Universe's great teacher and created highly responsive memories.

"Doctor, I've seen Bad Wolf before, on computer files associated with you. What is it? She?" The Doctor smiled at him, sad and solemn.

"You know who she is. She's the reason you're alive today Jack. Why you'll always be alive. She created herself and thus was created and existed for but a moment yet has always existed. A feat that no being in the Universe has ever managed, to create themselves and have been themselves for all of creation."

Jack blinked. That...made sense. He supposed. He mulled the answer over until he stumbled over 'reason you're alive'. He snapped his head around to look at the Time Lord. "You...you don't mean? Her? Rose? Really?"

The Doctor nodded. "Yes. Rose is the Bad Wolf."

"But...how?" It was unbelievable.

The Doctor brushed Harry's hair out of his face as he stared out over the water. "I sent her back to her own time, but Rose takes stubborn and rewrites the rules for it. She opened the heart of the TARDIS and absorbed the Time Vortex. She was Time itself, the Bad Wolf, for minutes and eons. She was beautiful and terrifying and amazing." He smiled in remembrance. "I have no idea how she didn't die. I regenerated after taking it from her and I barely held it for half a minute."

"But...but, I mean, Bad Wolf was a virus!"

"Bad Wolf is also a bay in Norway, a failed power plant in Cardiff, the name of the Gaming Platform in 200,100, an old legend in Time Lord history, the creator of Destiny and the Child of Destiny, the name of several star systems in the Caspersian Belt in 4 Apple/K-098, the name of the first star ship ever to pass light speed and Rose Tyler, along with numerous other various things scattered about the Universe." The Doctor chuckled. "Beside the word 'impossible' in every dictionary should be a picture of Rose Tyler."

"So...when that woman said she was lost or misplaced or something, she was speaking of what exactly?" I thought she had come back or something."
Here the Doctor looked almost miserable. "I left her in Pete's world with my meta-crisis. He was partially human, he would grow old with her, they could have a family. I, I couldn't, not then. I never thought I would, ever. I couldn't give her a life, I thought, so she stayed with him. And I left."

Jack wanted to hit the Doctor with something hard but settled for glaring at him. He had forgotten how self depreciating the Time Lord could be. "What about Harry? He's your son, your child. He is your family now."

The Doctor didn't look up. "He was unexpected. I never thought I would ever have children. It wasn't possible on Gallifrey. Children were woven in batches. Once…once, long long ago I had children, before Pythia's Curse. Now though, now I have Harry. It's a privilege and an honor I never dreamed I would ever deserve.

Jack wondered, had wondered, where the Doctor had gotten Harry from. He was human, or he looked human, but what was so interesting about him that the Olympians had gone through such lengths for him? To snatch the TARDIS out of the Time Vortex just for a child that happened to be the son of a Time Lord? Now was as good a time to ask as any.

"Doctor, where did you pick Harry up?" he asked, hesitance in his voice. It wasn't something he had asked before and the Doctor hadn't offered answers, but under the circumstances, it was the safest topic to bring up in relation to Harry.

The Doctor lifted his eyes up to look at Jack, then out over the water, watching the gas giant dip below the horizon, revealing the soft, distant light of the binary star system. He was silent for a few moments.

"Harry was given to me after his family was killed," the Doctor finally said softly, resting a hand on Harry, the other propping him up on the sand. "There's this community all over Earth, a secret community of wizards and witches, those gifted with magic, an energy similar to Psionic energy but fundamentally altered to an extent that shouldn't be possible. But that's humans for you, always doing what the universe says shouldn't be. I think, somehow, something went wonky in your evolution and there were almost no hardwired physiological or psychological absolutes in your make-up. Besides your instinct to survive, there aren't any limits to the good or evil you can do. It's something I've never seen in any other sentient species. So many extremes in the same species, the same person. Every species that makes it to the stars has a drive, a desire to see more or to find more land or for any other number of reasons, but humans have a spark about them that is absent in so much of the Universe. It's why I love Earth so much, why I love humans so much."

Jack waited for more. When the Doctor hit these philosophizing moments, the question would be answered eventually, just maybe not in the way you thought.

"This community of magic users, these people who manipulated energy that shouldn't be within their grasp, were the last remnants of the Eternals. Not children exactly, but rather like a transplanting of their genes into the human genome structure. They chose a certain percentage of humans all over Earth, some 3.5% of them way back before you lot figured out how to use the wheel for anything significant, and transposed their genes into them. Half of them advanced dramatically, increase in knowledge, technology, became what we know now as the Immortals, homo superior. They were driven deep underground into hiding before the Roman Empire reached its height, but by then the other half had discovered their ability to manipulate the world around them. At first they made small communities of their own, interacted with the outside world, became holders of knowledge and power and emissaries to those in power. Merlin is one of the well known ones, before they retreated into their own communities, shutting off the normal world. Most of the Egyptian gods and goddesses were witches and wizards of amazing power. They worked alongside the Osirins to build the
Egyptians into what they became."

Jack often forgot just how much the Doctor knew about history. About the history of anything, of everything. Earth, his favorite planet, was obviously his forte in this scenario. The Doctor brushed a hand against Harry's head.

"So, Harry comes from these wizards and witches? These magicals?"

The Doctor smiled slightly. "Yes. Harry was given to me in 1981, November 3rd to be precise. By then the wizarding world was in factions, separated by country much like their non-magical counterparts. In the U.K., a wizard who had dabbled too far into the darker sides of magic was terrorizing the entire community. It would have shown as terror attacks in non-magical Britain, Scotland, Ireland and Wales. You all probably had clean up from it." Jack nodded. He remembered a few odd clean up jobs in Cardiff and London that didn't seem alien on origin but had no other source.

"1970's?"

"Yes. In 1981, there was a prophecy that foretold the possible downfall of this wizard. It eventually ended up being Harry here. His parents were killed defending themselves and the wizard was reduced to a shade of himself. The leader of the resistance was an old acquaintance of mine and called me."


The Doctor smiled. "I met Dumbledore not long after the end of the Time War and he gave me hope again. I gave him a device that he could use if he needed it. I never expected him to, he was a powerful, bright wizard. He did though, and he," The Doctor paused, half frowned. "He manipulated me rather handily into taking a small child with me. I was less than pleased with him and I'm sure I said some rather nasty things. I wasn't in my right mind. I wasn't even sure I was keeping Harry. What was I supposed to do with a child? Barely a toddler! I'm not qualified in any sense of the word."

Jack blinked. "You've done a good job with him so far. He's a remarkable child."

"I've had him for just over a year and he's been in the hands of monsters doing their best to play god with his body. The only reason I can even touch him is due to a gift given to me by a race that was obliterated hours later. What Harry is to me...I never thought I would have this again Jack. This responsibility of another soul relying on me completely. It isn't something I ever thought I would be given again."

"You have companions all the time," Jack pointed out. The Doctor looked at him pointedly.

"Companions that are old enough to survive on their own if left to their own devices in a time not their own with nothing but the clothes on their back. Not pleasantly, but they are old enough to find food, water, shelter. They rely on me for adventure, for excitement, for danger. For getting them out of that danger. They don't rely on me for bed time stories, for food and baths and new clothes, for hugs and kisses goodnight, for someone to play puzzles and drawing wars, for basic knowledge and speech and how to live. I've never had that responsibility, not in a long time. Not in a very very long time."

Jack's eyes went wide, understanding for probably the first time just how much Harry meant to the Doctor. He hadn't really thought about the Doctor's life, how companions fit in, how the Doctor saw them. To him, the Doctor was someone who would hold him accountable for his actions, who would
give him a purpose, a reason, adventure. Someone interesting and different, a being of higher standing that he could look up to. To Harry, the Doctor was his dad, the person who tucked him in, who got him apples, who played games and gave him baths and made sure he was safe.

Everything that had happened to Harry on Olympus had severely damaged the Doctor's confidence in his ability to keep Harry safe and made Harry cling to his savior, his daddy, all the more. To Harry's mind, the Doctor had saved him, had kept him safe. To the Doctor, he had been too late, he had let Harry be taken and, for all intents and purposes, tortured. And he had to come to terms with that.

Jack was sure the complete obliteration of an entire race was also weighing heavily on his mind, but he wasn't about to venture into that dangerous territory at the moment.

Silence fell again as they watched the distant suns rise higher and higher in an erratic arc across the sky. Harry turned in his sleep, muttering against the Doctor's clothes and squirming. The Doctor's eyes went wide and he scooped Harry up close to him, holding him against his body as Harry began to cry, silent tears slipping down his face.

"Is that…is he having?" Jack asked, not quite able to finish the sentence. The Doctor nodded tersely.

"Yes. Get the TARDIS open, quickly. I don't want his magic to do anything out here."

"His magic lashes out? I thought his necklace bound it inside him?"

"It still reacts to extreme emotions. Even more so because of the empathy. The TARDIS does her best to sooth him but it isn't always enough. Quick Jack, get the door open. Please."

Jack started at the plea and dashed for the door, fumbling with the key but pushing it open in time for the Doctor to bundle Harry inside before he followed, shutting the door behind him. The Doctor was already halfway across the console room, heading for the far door and towards one of the unnamable rooms in the back of the twisting, turning hallway. Jack wondered if he was invited as well when it was made clear that he was needed.

"Jack! Come here, I need some help!" Jack didn't waste a second rushing across the floor and following the Doctor's footsteps.

They passed Harry's room, the kitchen, the medbay, even the play room until the Doctor nudged open a door with his foot.

The room beyond was empty of almost anything. All that was inside was a golden drop of glistening energy, suspended in perfect harmony with the room. Harry was silently crying and thrashing in the Doctor's arms. Jack stood beside, hands fluttering. He wasn't sure what to do, where he should be helping, why he was here. The Doctor looked at him with hopeless, pleading eyes. He understood then.

He wasn't here to help with Harry and his nightmare, he was here to help the Doctor grasp onto something. Something other than his child in pain.

"Is it…has it been a month Doctor?" They had discussed this not long after getting Harry back. The possibility of Harry's mental processes being overpowered by the effects of whatever was done to him. The Doctor nodded.

"Yeah. It's why he's like this right now. I brought him into the central matrix so the TARDIS can help with whatever she can. Harry has always had a special bond with her. The energy in this room is higher than anywhere else, even higher than what is in the console. If I had to be precise, this is the
heart of the TARDIS, as close to the true heart as one can come. Most Time Lords never thought it existed. The central matrix of the TARDIS consciousness was considered a myth, but she lets Harry here and by default me and you."

Jack nodded. The Doctor had sagged against the door, now closed, Harry resting in his arms, fitfully turning and soundlessly opening and closing his mouth.

Now it was a waiting game, one neither of them wanted to play but, out of necessity, were unwilling participants.

She could feel him, the small child who touched her walls and spoke to her in pictures and feelings and colors. His power was leaking all around him, surging and struggling, partially cut off from its freedom and now freer than it had ever been before.

It was in turmoil, in pain, not understanding what was happening and not sure what it should be doing. She soothed it with a soft touch, as if a skittish animal. It recognized her, and she directed it back towards the little boy it belonged to. It careened wildly around for a moment, confused, before it seemed to realize. It circled around its little owner for a moment.

She tried to show it the right path but she was blocked from the little one's power source beneath his skin. That necklace, which was confusing both his magic and her, was also keeping him safe. She could see him, talking to her, necklace in hand. She could see him, necklace laced around a neck much older than the one lying on her floor right now. He needed it, but he could also take it off, would take it off, will take it off, has taken it off.

The magic swirled around, touching the child, touching her Time Lord, who looked so frightened and unsure and scared for the child in his arms, touching the immortal human who loved her Time Lord and his child and her and was so very lost. Then it bathed the little one in a glow so bright before it sunk beneath the boy's skin.

It had settled at last. Her new child wouldn't have the nightmares he had been suffering from so often. They wouldn't be so damaging. He would be fine for the present. He would come back here when he was older and his magic much stronger and he wouldn't be so fine but right now this little one was okay.

It had taken her longer than she wished but little Harry was now sleeping peacefully. A deep, healing sleep. His magic would help restore some of the equilibrium he had lost during his nightmares and would soothe the mental wounds. His mind was still young, would come back from this painful encounter.

Her Time Lord was sitting against the wall, holding her little one close. She could feel his turmoil and gently soothed his soul. The Immortal with the flirty smile sat as close as he dared, resting a hand on her Time Lord's shoulder. For now her work was done. Her little child would be fine. Her Time Lord would heal. The Immortal would help, would find his way.

Harry groaned and spasmed and the Doctor tried not to pull his small body any closer. It wasn't safe for Harry or himself. Harry needed the space and he couldn't restrict his movement. The results would be unpleasant. So he just held Harry's head in his lap, between spread legs. He felt Jack's hand on his shoulder, grounding him, and he smiled. He could do this. He could. He would.
The air began to move, whipping up into a furor around them. Colors sparked through, turning the wind into a kaleidoscope of color and wind. Harry's magic, spinning out of control. It was a feeling of helplessness that descended on the Doctor right now. He couldn't help in any way imaginable at all. He could just hold on and wait it out.

He watched the maelstrom and, to his astonishment, a trickle of vibrant gold spun through it, calming it. The magic responded to the intrusion and…it stopped. It reacted like a confused puppy, unsure as to what to do, where to go.

The TARDIS, that's what the golden energy was, twirled around and circled Harry, resting near his center. The magic followed hesitantly.

It took a while, but eventually the TARDIS led Harry's magic back into him. The whirl of color and energy died down and Harry's twitching and moaning stopped. He curled up, sleeping now, thumb inching towards his mouth and expression peaceful.

The Doctor looked at Jack, who looked as relieved as the Doctor felt.

"Thank you old girl," the Doctor murmured, gathering Harry into his arms. He felt a tear slip down his cheek. "Thank you."

Jack opened the door and the Doctor walked out, carrying his small son with care and gentleness.

"Is he going to be fine now?" Jack asked, peering over his shoulder as they headed towards Harry's room. The Doctor looked at him.

"I won't know for sure until he wakes up, but the TARDIS helped him. I'm…I'm not quite sure how she helped, but I felt the Atron energy in that room."

Jack nodded. He had felt something aside from the chaotic energy swirling around him as well. Harry had finally managed to get his thumb to his mouth and it sat there, nothing more than a comfort of something familiar. Jack and the Doctor watched him fondly for a few moments, then the Doctor pushed open Harry's room and set the boy on the bed. Harry's hand closed around the Doctor's for a few moments, keeping him there, before Harry turned over and snuggled into the comforter.

Jack and the Doctor watched Harry sleep for several minutes before the Doctor abruptly turned and dragged Jack out. Jack nearly yelped.

"What? What is it?"

"Let Harry sleep. This is the first time in nearly a month he's slept by himself. The TARDIS will keep an eye on him. When he wakes up we'll know."

"But…but what if he gets nightmares again?"

"Jack…" The Doctor looked at Jack with pleading eyes. "Just…Harry will wake up and we'll deal with the results then. For now, let's just let him sleep and let me rest and try not to panic about my son possibly going insane. Please Jack."

The second time he had heard that word directed at him. Jack swallowed heavily and nodded. The Doctor looked at Harry's closed door once more, before he headed off towards the console room. Jack made to follow him, then hesitated. The Doctor's entire posture said 'Leave Me Alone'. He turned and rambled down the hallway instead. He would find something else to do for the moment. When Harry woke up he would find his way back to the console room.
Harry yawned, sitting up. He was in his room, laying on his bed and under his blankets. His dad was nowhere to be seen. It wasn't as concerning as he thought it should be. Something heavy lay on his chest and he touched it.

The necklace his daddy put on him after the mean people touched his magic and changed it somehow. His daddy said he had to keep it on otherwise his head would hurt and his magic would be chaotic.

He was alone in his room, but he wasn't feeling that panic he felt before. He wanted to see his dad, but he didn't feel like his heart would jump out of him if he didn't. It was nice. He patted the wall of his room, thanking the TARDIS. She had helped him, he knew. He couldn't remember how, but she had helped his magic calm down and settle back inside him like it should be.

He shoved the blankets, the light-sensitive stars dimming as the room acknowledged he was awake and slowly brightened. He pushed open the door and out into the hallway. The TARDIS had placed the console room, where he could see his dad working, right down the hall. He shuffled towards it.

"Daddy? I'm up," he said, loud enough to let his dad know he was there but not shouting. He didn't like shouting. His dad's head shot up from under the floor and caught sight of him and before Harry could register his movement he was caught up in a hug and lifted off his feet.

"Harry! Harry, how are you feeling? Is your head alright? Is your magic okay? Do you feel funny? Is anything wrong? Do you see strange things? Can you taste sounds?" Harry blinked, hands going around his dad's neck.

"No, I'm alright. I'm not seeing anything weird. I'm hungry though. Can I have that cheesy stuff from Yj..yjrefv…” he struggled to pronounce the difficult name of the planet they had visited. The Doctor breathed a sigh of relief. Harry was fine. For now, he was okay. Nothing was going wrong with his brain at the moment and he could breathe a little easier. Jack stood in the doorway, looking at them both with a smile on his face. The Doctor nodded minutely and the good Captain grinned all the wider.

Harry turned, hearing the footsteps behind him, and squealed. "Jack! Jack! I'm gonna eat cheesy stuff! Come on!" The Doctor and Jack laughed as Harry gestured towards the doorway towards the kitchen. The two adults indulged the toddler as Harry babbled at them.

With Harry awake, happy, and not currently adversely affected, they would leave the worry over Harry's future mental state to the future. For now, the two and a half year old would eat cheese and learn new things and be a happy child in what counted as normal for those who lived in the TARDIS, especially those who were raised in the TARDIS.

Harry was three and his foray into the library was disconcerting for all those involved. Where before he would reach for the adventure books and stories of battles and heroes and magic from any and all cultures and races, he now found the science books and the math books and any other books that just had knowledge. It wasn't as if he ignored the adventures and magic and heroes and battles. It was just that he could often be seen with a science book as he was with the Adventures of Gyroish and the Meteor.

He also sat at the Doctor's side with the book, asking questions.
One of the early ones, "Daddy, what are all the elements on the periodic table?" resulted in Harry learning the extensive and extremely long list of elements by name. On Earth, Harry was told, they had discovered 215 elements before they made it any appreciable distance into space. In the Universe, there were 100 naturally occurring elements that nearly every race discovered after they became an active member of the space going community, mostly because the last ten or so elements every race discovered often had to be found outside their own planet because it wasn't naturally occurring where they lived.

The list of elements created by races throughout history was almost as extensive as the number of stars in a given galaxy. Harry nodded seriously as the Doctor had him memorize the one hundred naturally occurring elements and their basic properties. Then he ran and sang his alphabetized song to Jack in a warbly, three year old voice.

Jack watched Harry run to his coloring papers and markers with wide eyes, then turned to the Doctor. "Is this what you meant when you said his mental capacity would receive a boost? Cause it took me months of chemistry class to replicate what he just managed in four hours of listening to you."

The Doctor shrugged. "Partially. He's had an astonishing memory all on his own. Being so close to the time vortex all the time and having magic also helps. His own mental prowess is in part his own biological functions taking hold, part his access to knowledge and information and ability to facilitate his learning, and part the invasive procedures that took place on Olympus. Harry was brilliant before he was taken. I did some discreet scans while he was asleep, after his magic settled down, and re-evaluated just what they did to him." The Doctor watched Harry as he took the large chemistry book, balanced it against the wall and started drawing elements on his paper, spreading them around him with a frown of concentration on his face.

"What did they do? You weren't entirely forthcoming on the details," Jack said softly, not willing to draw Harry's attention. The Doctor speared him with a look.

"When they flooded Harry's brain with proteins, neurotransmitters and excessive levels of a compound I recall as 'Kisleverus', designed to stimulate growth and activity at a rate higher than any fully developed brain could handle, they added onto Harry's own genetic sequence which called for a massive amount of connections between the right and left hemispheres, a rapidly functioning hippocampus, a slow growing but increasingly thickening cortex. It almost tripled the rate Harry processes information at. It was one of the reasons I was worried for his mental stability. Human brains are not meant to process information at such a high rate, but Harry is young and change is accepted better when the brain is young and it can compensate for it. I hesitate to speculate how he will fare when he reaches puberty. Puberty that will most likely come very late."

Jack blinked at him. "What? Why?"

The Doctor's eyebrows rose in amusement. "The body takes precautions in its own way Jack. His brain will function at a very high level. With the flood of chemicals and transmitters and connections, it won't know when precisely to trigger the first stages of puberty. When it does, the hormonal imbalance in the body may, well, most likely will, cause severe mental imbalance that will have to be dealt with when it comes around."

"You can't do anything about it now? While he's still young enough to adapt?" Jack asked. The Doctor shook his head.

"No. Not without possibly damaging his cerebral cortex and his amygdale. Harry is well adjusted, puberty is more than a decade off for him. He's barely three, let him learn and grown and adapt to his own magic before we throw that stick at him. He'll be able to take it under advisement."
Jack sighed. "Harry got the luck of the draw, being raised by the most genius genius in the Universe. Most parents wouldn't even know where to start if their almost three year old came up and debated the merits of the periodic table with them."

The Doctor grinned widely at him. "I'm waiting for him to find the book of multi-dimensionality and the physics of tame/space travel. It's somewhere past the physics of light speed and the astrophysics books I picked up from the University of Kelgarro the 6th during the 4th Bountiful Human Empire."

Jack groaned. Harry's topics of conversation, when they weren't revolving around drawing wars and food choices or story books tales about heroes and magic, often outstripped his ability to participate in. And Harry wasn't much more than three. He dreaded to think of the upcoming years where Harry's topics of conversation started drifting towards the mathematical improbabilities and physics of time travel.

~~~~~~~~This is a Line Break~~~~~~~~

The TARDIS touched down and Harry raced out the door, grinning at the sight that met him. His three year old legs didn't carry him as far as he wanted to go as fast as he wanted to get there but bare feet did indeed touch soft grass.

The sky was blue, but that didn't really help him identify what planet they were on. After visiting the number of places he'd been, blue skies were among the more common sky colors. He had learned that was because of refraction and light waves. Green grass was also unhelpful. But the birds he could hear made him grin. It was easy to identify birds and animals from different places. And this was Earth.

"Daddy! We're on Earth!" The Doctor peered out of the TARDIS doors, smiling at his son.

"Really now? And you're missing shoes, I see. Any reason?"

Harry pouted. "I don't like shoes."

"You liked them well enough last time we landed," the Doctor reasoned. Harry shook his head in protest.

"I don't like them anymore. I like to feel the grass and the dirt."

The Doctor laughed but still slipped the small pair of shoes he was holding into his pockets. If necessary he could get Harry to put them on later.

Captain Jack Harkness slid out from behind him, his Jacket swishing with a flourish. The Doctor rolled his eyes.

"Uncle Jack! We're on Earth!"

Jack looked around, nodding in agreement. Earth was the clearest distinction for their current location. "Well then, do you know when we are?"

Harry frowned. "No. Not yet. I can't do that, not like daddy does."

"Pre-industrial, going by the lack of pollutants in the air. Probably early 1000's ACE, give or take. Might be off by a century. This time in Earth history is usually rather similar, to be honest."

Harry grinned, nodding, then ran off. He face-planted about fifteen feet later into a partially muddy road. "Found the road daddy, uncle Jack!"
"Did you find it with your face first or your feet?" the Doctor called back, unable to keep the grin out of his voice. Harry glared back at him.

"You should watch where you're going, young one. You might get hurt," a soft yet firm voice said from a bit down the road. Harry pushed himself to his feet, brushing off the dirt and frowning at the mud that caked his clothes. The Doctor and Jack both looked at the newcomer.

The Doctor's eyes went wide and he grinned manically. "Merlin? By the stars, you're Merlin, aren't you?" he babbled as he rushed over. "Harry, Jack come here!"

Harry quirked his head as he complied and Jack rolled his eyes. "Yes daddy?"

"Harry, meet Merlin, foremost wizard of the Middle Ages and...oh, wait, are you called Merlin just yet? I'm not quite sure?"

The man, dark haired with a beard just beginning to get a touch of white, looked at him in amusement. "Sir, I have been Merlin for most of my life, but it is not a name I am known by. Emrys, I believe, is what people call me. Though you have the interesting fortune to know Merlin first."

The Doctor grinned sheepishly, rubbing the back of his neck. "Ah, well, times, years, never get them right. Harry, come meet Emrys."

Harry peered up at the much taller man, looking at the staff in his hand with curious eyes. "Who's Emrys? Or Merlin?" he asked. The Doctor looked askance and even Jack chuckled as he eyed the wizard with bright eyes. If he wasn't so certain this wizard could turn him into a toad with a look, he might have said something suggestive.

"I've never told you about Merlin? What am I thinking? Wizard child, never told about the greatest wizard in history, I must be mad!"

Emrys smiled, though there was a bit of confusion to the expression. "Sir, I am afraid you know my name but I am afraid I don't have the same knowledge. If you could..."

"Oh, oh, right, yes. Of course, what was I thinking? I'm the Doctor, this is Harry and that's Jack Harkness. Don't let him get to you, he does it to everyone."

Jack glared, but held out a hand for Emrys with a suggestive smirk. Emrys stared at it for a moment, a bit perplexed, then grasped Jack's forearm. Jack blinked and Harry giggled.

"They don't shake hands here uncle Jack," he was informed.

"Ah, I see. Well, that explains a lot. Hello, I'm Captain Jack Harkness." He flashed a winning smile, holding onto the wizard's hand for longer than was probably necessary.

The Doctor rolled his eyes again. He felt like doing that a lot when Jack was around. Emrys smiled at him. Blue eyes sparkling in amusement.

"Well, Captain Jack Harkness. You are rather forward. Mayhaps a drink before you leer at me so." Jack grinned all the wider.

"Sure. Pick a time and a place?"

"Jack, enough. Not now."

"Aw, come on. We're not running from danger and it isn't like he isn't interested!" Jack protested.
The Doctor looked pointedly between him and Harry, who was watching with wide eyes, and Jack coughed. "Oh, um, alright. Later then. I guess." He backed off a bit and Emrys grinned. Jack sighed but he would rather not anger the Doctor by flirting in front of his child. Harry learned things way too quickly.

"Now that your overly friendly uncle is indisposed for the moment, young Harry, your father says you are a wizard. How amazing, that one so young can be so sure, especially when their parent has no such magic."

He looked at the Doctor, who shrugged. "He's not my biological son but he's mine to raise. His birth parents were magical, if that's the answer you're searching for." Emrys nodded, satisfied. Then he looked back at Harry.

"Well, little one, what sort of things do you do? Young children often exhibit signs of accidental magic and it is a sign of how powerful they are in how often or how young they start."

Harry tilted his head. "You mean the colorful sparkles right? The stuff that I used to make my toys out of." Emrys blinked.

"You…you can control it?" he asked, sounding disbelieving. Harry shook his head.

"Not anymore. I have to wear this," he touched the necklace. "Otherwise my head hurts and I can't touch anyone. But it means that the magic is stuck inside too."

Emrys reached out a hand and gently touched the golden loops lying on Harry's chest, fingers light and curious. He frowned, brow furrowed, as he let his own power explore the metal underneath his hand. He looked up, concerned, at the Doctor. "You know this strange necklace is restricting his magic, trapping it inside his body. It isn't healthy for such a young magic user to have their power restrained so, I wouldn't know what it would do. It could be devastating to his growth or it could implode, destroying his core. It isn't safe to have him wear it."

The Doctor's eyes darkened. "He doesn't have a choice. He cannot remove it, not until he has iron control over his magic and even then it would be better for him to keep it on." Harry looked between his dad and this stranger who was kneeling in front of him. Then he looked at Jack, eyes wide. He clearly understood some of what was being said and it scared him.

"I don't wanna implode daddy," he said softly. The Doctor's face looked stricken for a moment and he glanced at Emrys.

Emrys frowned. "Why do you wear this necklace, little Harry?" he asked softly.

Harry looked at him, green eyes wide and face this side of scared. "Bad people did bad things to me. They made it so I feel everyone else if I touch them without my necklace on. It makes my head hurt really bad and then I pass out."

Emrys looked grave. "Then it would be unwise to ask you to remove the necklace permanently wouldn't it? Yes, it would." He nodded, looking Harry in the eyes. "Little Harry, I may be able to help alleviate some of the burden you bear, for a time. You are still too young, your magic still too wild, to be taught properly, but when you are of age I may be able to help you more. For now, I can add to the protections of this strange little necklace, allow your magic to have some freedom within your body rather than be restricted to your core." Harry looked at his dad.

"Is…is that alright daddy?" he asked. The Doctor looked at Emrys, eyes sharp.

"What exactly would you be doing to him? I…I can't risk his mental stability to a spell I cannot
understand properly. I know the workings of the necklace, the electromagnetic biodampener, the psionic loop-back circuits, the negativity field. What would you be adding to it?"

Emrys raised an eyebrow, smiling. "I'm afraid most of those words don't make any sense to me, but what I am doing is simple in essence if complicated in application. I am merely finding the part of the...mechanism? that restricts little Harry's magic and applying a small, almost unnoticeable enchantment that balances the power between Harry's body and his core. His magic would stay underneath his skin rather than cycling around his body in a constant loop of energy as is common but it would be enough to lessen the pressure that will build up over the years. Magic is not meant to be restrained in such a way, though I can understand why, if it is so damaging to Harry to not wear the necklace."

The Doctor nodded, hand running through his hair, crosswise over his chest. "So you would be using your magic to create a balancing force between Harry's core and his body while still allowing the necklace's properties as a means of restraining such energy to function properly." Emrys nodded, eyebrow raised in amusement.

"For one who has no magic you speak very knowledgeably about it."

The Doctor grinned, waving a hand about. "Ah, that's me, know a bit about a lot of things. And it's helpful to know about magic, considering Harry here."

Harry looked between Emrys and his dad. "So...you're gonna make it so my magic doesn't stay inside the ball inside me anymore? Cause it really doesn't like that."

Emrys looked slightly off-put. "You know about your core? Can you find it?"

Harry nodded. "It's right here, almost where my heart is, just below it." Harry tapped on his chest.

Emrys frowned, stroking his small but well kept beard.

"That is a bit of a surprise, and will actually make this much easier to do that I expected." He looked at the Doctor. "If I have your permission of course, Doctor."

The Doctor nodded, crouching down so he could be on their level, eyes scrutinizing everything. "Yes, I just want to make sure you don't mess with the specific mechanisms that keep Harry safe." He held out the Sonic Screwdriver. "This shouldn't interfere with anything you're doing." Emrys nodded.

"Alright, Harry, if you could take my hand. I have to be touching you for this to work, alright?" Harry held out a small hand for Emrys to take. "And I will also need to touch the necklace. This won't do anything, will it?" The Doctor shook his head. "Now, Harry, I am going to send a small amount of my magic through your hand. You'll feel something strange but that's okay. It won't hurt. If you can help that magic to your core I shall work on the enchantment."

Harry nodded. "Okay. You feel really buzzy. Like a bee. It hums all around you. Tickles a lot. Is that what magic is?" Harry stared at him with those wide, curious, green eyes that saw far more than they should. Emrys managed a nod, unable to keep the astonishment from flickering across his face. "Ok. I can show you. It's this way." Harry's tongue poked out between his lips as he stared intently at the ground and Emrys felt his power being tugged towards the boy's core. He would keep his comments to himself, to tell the boy's father when they were done. For now he would concentrate on finishing his task. It would take concentration to work this tiny, complex enchantment.

When he could feel the magic swirling and pulsing like an angry wolf or wild cat inside the contained sphere. He slipped a pulse of his power inside and started to expand the core's outer edges,
this artificial barrier that was placed by the necklace. It needed to trace the inside of Harry's body rather than remain around the core. He worked on the necklace, shifting the enchantment inside the layers of strange, foreign power until he could settle the expansion and strength enchantment within the heart of the mechanism. Then he worked at the bubble. Harry's magic started to swirl outside the core, tentative and curious, then, when it realized what Emrys was trying to do, it eagerly leapt to help and Emrys took advantage of the offer of power. He would ponder its impossibilities later.

Soon this shell was pressed against the inside of Harry's entire body and his magic swarmed through it, pleased and excited and whizzing around. Emrys quietly withdrew his power and swayed a bit. Jack stabilized him as Harry blinked, before grinning widely.

"I can feel it again! My magic! It's there!" Harry held out his hands and twisted them in a peculiar pattern and Emrys watched in startled amazement as the boy broke the rest of the rules of magic he knew existed. A small, swirling set of spheres began to rotate in the air, around each other and twining between each other. It wasn't nearly as expansive as the ones Harry had created before, but just seeing him set a binary star system and another star, both with planets, to rotate at impossible angles made the Doctor's heart soar. Jack smiled and watched it with awe. The Doctor grinned.

"Well, I must offer my thanks, though that really isn't enough for what you just did for me, for Harry, for us. I, I worry, because I can't do anything about Harry's magic, I don't fully understand how it works and I don't know how it affects Harry. You just made life a lot easier. So thank you, Emrys Merlin." The Doctor dragged the wizard to his feet and hugged him tightly. "Thank you."

Emrys patted the man's back, unsure of what to do, until he was released. "It wasn't all me, if I must be honest. Your son is an impossibility amongst magicals. His own magic, acting on instinct, helped me work the enchantment and there should be no way that could happen. He is an exceptional child. When he is slightly older I would love to be able to teach him some things."

The Doctor blinked, puzzled. "Why would you not be able to teach him now?"

Emrys shook his head. "Despite the astonishing rate at which his magic learns and adapts, to teach him how to use it now would be restraining the natural paths one's own magic takes and setting it on a directed course. He wouldn't be able to create such things on a whim. To impose rules and structure on young people damages their creativity to some extent. It would be almost unnoticeable in most people but I am afraid with Harry here it might cause a lot of problems. It is why magic is taught only to those who have reached the age of eleven or older. They can handle the structure, they need it by then. Harry can come and see me when he's about eight. That would be best, considering his strange magic. To make sure it isn't wild and uncontrollable. There are serious downsides to having so much power and lack of control is one of them."

The Doctor nodded, eyes watching Harry who was showing off to Jack. Harry had twirled the miniature solar system around and was telling Jack their names and what they did. Jack was listening with as much rapt attention one could muster when one didn't understand everything being said but they still wanted to understand..

Jack looked up at the Doctor, quirking an eyebrow as if asking 'Everything Okay?' The Doctor nodded and Jack smiled before returning all his attention to Harry and his explanation as to what exactly these two planets were doing orbiting two separate star systems. Jack might have been having so much trouble because Harry was blatantly ignoring all the laws of physics he knew, but that didn't stop him from paying close attention.

"So, I can bring Harry back when he's eight?" The Doctor finally asked. Emrys nodded.

"Yes." Emrys looked at him closely. "Preferably five years from now and not tomorrow, if you can
manage that?"

The Doctor laughed, clapping a hand on Emrys' shoulder. "You are a sharp one. What gave it away? Most don't believe in time travel."

Emrys smiled. "I was the bane of most of my teachers for a year when I shattered Professor Ravenclaw's time ring and aged backwards for the better part of a year. I also heard stories of a Doctor and a boy with too much magic and a captain who couldn't keep his hands to himself and a golden beam of time that shone through the eons. They traveled in a blue box that had wonders beyond imagination inside. I assume that would be the blue box over there," Emrys said, pointing off in the distance. The Doctor nodded.

"You are perceptive, aren't you. And you have a good memory. Well then, I will do my best to make it in five years your time. Best I can." Emrys clasped the Doctor's outstretched forearm.

"Then I shall await your coming with interest. Harry would be a delight to instruct in the basics of magic. I am sure he will be a most troublesome student." Emrys looked at the young boy who was now chasing after butterflies and sunbeams and chattering at Jack about elements and chemistry and swerving into higher mathematics. "He is, after all, the son of an alien and nephew to an immortal."

Emrys tipped his head at the Doctor's wide, astonished look and went to say his goodbyes to little Harry and Jack. The Doctor stood and gaped after him. He had to stop underestimating people sometimes. He really did.

Harry felt a hand on his shoulder and he looked up into the bright blue eyes of Emrys. He smiled, a flash of white teeth and Harry let his magic galaxy collapse as he spun around. "Emrys! You're leaving now, right?" he asked.

Emrys nodded. "Indeed child I am. But we will meet again sometime, so don't worry. And I'll be able to teach you some magic as well."

Harry's eyes went wide. "Really? For truth, right?"

Emrys laughed. "Yes, honestly. When you are eight years old I shall see you again." Harry smiled and spun on the spot.

Then Emrys looked at Jack, a smile dancing on his face and eyes grinning. "You, captain, I shall also meet again. Next time I would prefer a round of drinks before you try and make use of your charm. You might get further."

Jack's grin stretch from ear to ear. "You're on. Five years from now I'm buying."

Emrys nodded and Jack restrained the urge to whoop. Then Emrys turned to the Doctor. "I'll be seeing you then, Doctor. I look forward to the day."

"Ah, yes, me as well. Though you have some things to do in the interim. A princeling to train and such." Emrys nodded.

"Indeed. I suspect it will be an interesting five years. I shall see you again then, Doctor, Harry, Captain. For now, I bid farewell."

Emrys nods to each of them before he turns and sets off down the path they had stopped him on. The Doctor, Jack and Harry watched him go before Harry turned to the Doctor.

"So, are we gonna stay here longer then or are we gonna leave? Cause I liked the castle!"
The Doctor smiled. "Well then Harry, how about we go see the castle then? It should be the other way from Emrys, right?" He pointed vaguely in a direction. Jack and Harry followed after him, one squealing and running with glee the other excited. Something interesting to do. "Allonzy!"

~~~~~~~~This is a Line Break~~~~~~~~

Emrys smiled to himself as he approached the gates of Camelot and his future pupil, Arthur Pendragon, son of Uther Pendragon and heir to the throne. He would certainly be looking forward to little Harry's arrival. He would use Arthur as a template for some of his possible lessons.

A wheezing, groaning noise came from behind him and he turned, curious but already suspecting what the noise came from. He watched in amusement as a blue box materialized and couldn't keep back the chuckle as a head of black hair followed by startling green eyes popped out the door. They landed on him and a frown etched its way across Harry's now older face.

"Dad! I think you got the time wrong!"

"He did, little Harry. I believe you yourself are merely three leagues away from your current position. I left you barely three hours ago."

Harry rolled his eyes. "Always getting the settings wrong, he is. DAD! You messed up again! We just left him! Have you fixed the time-" The door slammed shut before he could hear any of the rest of the comment but he chuckled none the less.

This would be an interesting child to teach, he could see that now. He watched the blue box blink out of existence before he turned back towards Camelot.

Now off to see an unruly princeling and his uptight father. This would be an adventure in itself.

~~~~~~~~This is an Ending~~~~~~~~

Chapter End Notes

Thank you to everyone who has read and left kudos! I really appreciate it!
Chapter 9

Chapter Summary

The Doctor takes Harry to the Shadow Proclamation. The thing they find there though is infinitely more interesting than the governmental structure of the nearby galaxies though.

Chapter Notes

Hey! Ugh, I apologize for the long long wait for this chapter. I’ve been so behind on everything. I don’t even have much of a decent excuse as to why this is so late. I mena, up until a week ago I had a mostly functioning laptop. Now it’s in pieces on the dining room table waiting to be put back together but…. *sigh* And all of you who are now reading and getting ready to enjoy this should bow to the master of soldering and fixing electronic parts that is my roommate cause I broke my thumb drive that had all of this on it the other day, right before I was going to post it. Then he took it, soldered wires onto it and made some conglomeration of electronic things that recovered all of my stuff. So that’s why this is here now and not being completely rewritten after I bash my head into a wall.

As to all my awesome reviewers who I haven’t replied to, those will be replied to soon. Now that I have updated my story I no longer will want to go and cry in a corner after reading another “update soon please!” and remembering my total lack of writing motivation. >.>

This is very much a transition/learn some interesting things chapter. It is a set up for one of my favorite chapters that I feel much better about fixing up and posting really soon. Now that University has started, I need to partition my time that much better. Yay for planning things? (or yay for taking 18 hours, having a job (sorta) and wanting to read and write for pleasure and not just for class?)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

~~~~This is a Beginning~~~~

The TARDIS landed with a soft WHUMP and Harry jumped out of his chair and raced for the doors. A new place and all the excitement that heralded the possibility of exploration always had him excited.

The Doctor watched as his son, now five years old and possibly in possession of a number of semi-working devices that would be illegal in any number of systems, bound towards the door, excitement in his steps.

“Oi, Harry! Don’t forget your shoes! And leave The Astrophysics of Sub-Qantum Travel here! It’s the last copy I’ve got left!” Harry rolled his eyes but set the book down on his chair and trotted over to a far wall where his shoes were.
“I wouldn’t have ruined it Dad! Besides, what if I wanted to read it? Now I have to come all the way back to get it!”

“Yes, well, you never know what’s outside the door. Better safe than sorry. You can come back and get it if you want. The TARDIS is a safer place for it.” Harry sighed at his father but slipped his Air Treaders on then bounded for the door. Despite the necessity of leaving his book behind his excitement hadn’t dipped.

Harry opened the door, still short enough that he had to reach up to get to the handle, and peered outside. Then he looked back at his dad. “Why is there a Judoon Platoon outside the TARDIS dad? Judoon Platoon…” he repeated, amused by the word combination. From outside they could hear the thunder of the Judoon. “THOSE WITHIN THE CAPSULE REMOVE YOURSELF FOR JUDGEMENT!”

The Doctor smiled widely. “Why, because we’re at the Shadow Proclamation! Though they should recognize the TARDIS…I mean…oh, wait, that’s 200 years from now. Whoops. In any case, the Judoon! Guards of the Shadow Proclamation! The TARDIS has full access anywhere, just need to clear some things up then off we go!”

Harry groaned. “But the Shadow Proclamation! Why? There’s got to be a better planet or something! I hate governments! And the Proclamation is so boring!” Harry hated boring things. This was a thing the Doctor knew most acutely. He could only blame himself though. He avoided anything boring with the skill of a seasoned summer camper, and governments, when they weren’t being perfidious, were rather boring.

And Jack, Harry’s best distraction tool that wasn’t liable to blow something up if the wrong button was pressed (mostly), was back in 21st century Earth trying to deal with the lack of presence at the rift. It was something that he had agreed, reluctantly, needed to be dealt with. So the Doctor had dropped him off and given him the TARDIS’s number and supercharged his phone. Now he had to hope Jack didn’t lose the phone, otherwise he would just have to make a guess as to when to show up. Harry would never forgive him if he didn’t go get Uncle Jack back.

Still, now there was a sullen five year old who really didn’t want to be here that he had to convince, somehow and against a stubborn nature, that this was actually a worthwhile trip. And talk a squad of temperamental and trigger-happy Judoon into allowing him to park the TARDIS here. The latter was definitely going to be easier.

“They have some of the best labs outside of highly restricted time-locked loops,” the Doctor pointed out.

Harry narrowed his eyes. “And? The TARDIS has better labs as long as no one’s left the dishes in the sink.”

“And they have the largest and most complete Library this side of the Balthesian Galaxy and with more restricted books than The Library.”

Harry sighed but the Doctor could see his eyes light up with excitement. “Fine. Just...just go talk to the police out there, will you?”

The Doctor grinned. “Alrighty! Get ready to see the Shadow Proclamation Harry. It's rather spectacular!”

Harry raised his eyebrow. “I'll hold judgment until evidentiary proof,” he said wryly. The Doctor laughed.
“Allonsy!” The Doctor strode out the TARIS doors and straight into the middle of a squad of Judoon all pointing various weapons at the blue box.

“WHO ARE YOU? IDENTIFY YOURSELF! YOU ARE ON THE PREMISES OF THE SHAOW PROCLAMATION WITHOUT PERMISSION. WHO ARE YOU?”

The Doctor held up placating hands. “Not here to do anything illegal. Just a visitor, got a permit and everything. No need for violence.” The Judoon didn’t move and the weapons remained pointed at the Doctor.

Harry, who was listening inside the TARDIS, sighed, then grinned widely. Well, who said he couldn't mess things up.

The group of rather tall and intimidating Judoon were surprised when a small, black haired child raced between them and the Doctor, green eyes glaring at them.

“WHO ARE YOU?” was the introduction from the Judoon leader. Harry looked directly at the leader.

“Harry. And I'm fairly certain that the TARDIS has permanent access to the Shadow Proclamation whenever it wants. There's a plaque that says so and everything.”

The Judoon leader blinked, about as confused as a Judoon could look. “I AM NOT AWARE OF ANY PLAQUE,” he said, voice booming.

Harry shook his head. “Doesn't mean there isn't one. Go look it up in whatever regulation book you all use for these things.” And, as the Judoon leader did just that, Harry raced between the gaps in the surrounding Judoon and vanished down a hallway.

The whole encounter passed rather quickly and the Doctor didn't have enough time to grab his son before Harry disappeared and his vision was filled with an irate Judoon.

“WHO WAS THAT? WHERE IS HE NOW? IF THE CHILD IS YOURS YOU WILL BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE FOR ANY MISCHIEF HE COMES TO.” The Judoon leader was not impressed. The Doctor sighed. Now he would have to find his wayward charge before Harry got into any trouble. Though knowing Harry he was already in trouble.

“I'll find him before he does. Can I leave my TARDIS here?”

“You may. Some of my platoon will guard it while we find your child. It is not appropriate for a child to wander around the Shadow Proclamation without guardianship.”

The Doctor nodded. “Alright. Let's go.” He hoped Harry hadn't managed to get into something already.

The hallway Harry vanished down was windy and long. The Doctor, escorted by the oversized rhino-esque police force, contemplated what Harry could have possibly gotten into. The list was sizable.

“IT IS AGAINST THE LAW OF THE SHADOW PROCLEMATION TO HAVE ANY VISITOR WANDER WITHOUT A PROPER ESCORT. YOUR CHILD IS IN VIOLATION OF THE LAW.” The Doctor sighed.

"As if I didn't have enough problems with him on my own. Now he's gone and gotten the important
people angry at him." He quickened his pace and rounded the corner. And there was Harry, a small cylindrical device in one hand, standing in front of a locked and id-required door and staring resolutely at a tall, pale woman with red rimmed eyes and pale hair. By the sudden halt and the Judoon equivalent of a salute, the Doctor deduced that she was in charge of the Shadow Proclamation, and she was currently locked in a battle of wits with a five year old. A very stubborn five year old, but a five year old nonetheless. The Doctor huffed back a laugh, then cleared his throat. The woman looked up.

"And who might you be?" Her imperial tone was impossible to mistake. Harry frowned.

"That's my dad." The woman looked down at Harry, then back up at the Doctor.

"And would you be willing to explain to your child, then, that trying to break into top-security offices with a sonic device is strictly against the rules." The Doctor shrugged.

"Sure, though I bet it'll do as much good as you explaining it. He doesn't seem to care. Though where did you get a sonic screwdriver? Mine's still in my pocket." He felt for it to be sure. It was still there.

Harry grinned mischievously. "Made it. Not as good as yours but it works. Mostly. When it isn't blowing things up."

"So that would be why the entire network of Graticoria went down the last time we were there?" Harry actually looked guilty.

"Well....maybe....I mean, I hadn't got it working right yet, it just....sorta....made the main processing unit....implode?" he added hesitantly.

The Doctor cradled his head in his hands. "What have I told you about not messing with the operating systems of planets? Anything? Really?"

"Not to touch them unless, in the process of manipulating the basic code, you are saving someone's life or removing a threat or the newest recipe for anything related to bananas comes on line." It was a memorized and oft used sentence. Harry didn't sound remotely interested in actually following it.

"Correct. Blowing up a computer system just because the game you were playing freezes in not an
acceptable reason. Ever.” Harry sighed, hands not hanging by his side. The Judoon and the pale woman were both blinking in astonishment, then the woman hid a smile.

"I can see that we have a small troublemaker here. There are stipulations for causing trouble inside the Shadow Proclamation but since this is your first offense and your father has explained proper procedures for your actions I suppose I can offer you clemency. And since this is your first visit, I can give you the guided tour of the main chambers, if you would like."

The Doctor looked up eagerly. "Really? You could? But I thought no one was ever allowed to see inside them, not unless they were on trial....we're not on trial, are we? I mean, I know I parked the TARDIS beside the plants, maybe not the best spot, but really, it's not all that bad..." the woman shook her head.

"No, not on trial. Just a tour for an interesting visitor on a rather slow day. Since there isn’t anything pressing going on and Harry here was adventurous enough to try and break through the bio-locked door to what was merely a simple computer hub, taking some time out to show you the Proclamation isn’t a hardship. Though I am curious. What kind of transport is shaped small enough to appear inside the Proclamation?"

“Ah, well, it is a rather trans-dimensional ship. Smaller on the outside and all.” The Doctor rubbed a hand through his hair, the looked at Harry, who was still standing in front of the pale leader. "Alright, Harry, hand please. And the screwdriver. No need for you to get tempted."

Harry glared at his dad. "No. It's mine, I made it. Mine." His hand immediately clutched the device to him. "Mine."

A sigh."Fine then." A slim hand pulled out another sonic device, which the Doctor pointed at his son and turned on. The small object in Harry's hand fizzed, sparked, then went inert. "Now you can keep it. Alright, Allonsy everyone!"

Harry stared at the now useless piece of technology in his hands. Then he sighed. Of course his dad wouldn't let him keep it, not unless he could stabilize the sonic frequencies to not backfire and explode things when anything louder than five decibels was in the two meter range. Which usually meant it always exploded. He tucked the bit of metal and wiring into his pocked at left, following his dad. He would sneak into the computer terminal later. He didn't need a sonic device for that. He could do it all on his own. Maybe. Or he could snitch a key card or something. He smiled. That would work.

“Alright then, Doctor. Judoon Squad Leader Skorix, if you could return to your unit and inform them
of the change in plans, that the Doctor’s blue box, it is a blue box correct? That his box remain where it is parked? Thank you. Then you may catch up with us near the science laboratory.”

~~~~~~~~This is a Scene Break~~~~~~~~

The tour started out with Harry being firmly lead where they were going by the Doctor, who didn’t let the small hand go. Harry sulked for a few moments at this, but brightened up considerably when he learned they were heading to the science and technology room. He never said no to toys and gadgets and gizmos.

The room that was, supposedly, the technology and research laboratory was little more than storage. Harry glared accusingly at the Doctor. “You promised me high end laboratories! This is a storage closet!” Harry gestured around with his free hand, his other one held tightly by his father to make sure he didn’t run away again.

Sure, the architecture was grand, it was a government building, but there was mostly just various containers with labels and strange items poking out of the top. A few tables were scattered around and some equipment but no one else was around. A few doors were leading off in different directions but they weren’t allowed to go through any of them.

“Our higher end research laboratories are beyond the doors. Unfortunately there are delicate experiments taking place and I am not allowed to let you into them.”

“Well that’s no fun,” Harry moaned.

The Doctor looked at his son. “This is the Galactic Government, Harry. I don’t think fun is on the menu.” He glanced quickly up at the pale woman. “No offense, I just mean, well, it’s the government. They’re just not very interesting, really, that’s all I’m saying…” The woman smiled.

“I am sure you see it that way. You are not in government, are you?”

The Doctor scratched his head. “Ah, well, I was President twice, didn’t like it much, ditched as quick as you like, courted a couple royals, that never ended well. Even sat in on a few decision meetings among the Helfariiys. Not the most decisive race, they are.” The woman raised a pale eyebrow.

“You are an interesting person, aren’t you Doctor. May I ask, what species are you? Humanoid, obviously.” The Doctor pulled a face.
“Ah, well, you see, well, big war, end of the universe stuff, things happen. It’s not important.” He trailed off. The woman stared at him intensely.

The Judoon took the lull in speech to add a comment. “THE CHILD SPOKE OF A TARDIS, YOUR REGENCY. I RECALL A MYTH OF THOSE WHO POSSESSED SUCH THINGS.” Red eyes widened dramatically.

“I thought as much…but you are a myth a legend. You shouldn't exist...” The Doctor grimaced again.

“See, this is why I don’t tell you people what I am. You all get all flustery and bothered and such, and we were having such a nice tour too. Really, please, can we move on?” The woman raked her eyes over him once more, then looked at Harry.

“Is he also….?”

“No, no, he’s human. Human humanhuman, well, human living in a TARDIS, but human.” He grinned widely. “Come on, things to do, lessons to learn, laws to memorize.” He sent a look at Harry at this last one. The child grinned unrepentantly up at him.

Despite this new revelation, the tour did continue. Harry, after the dismal revelation of the scientific laboratories and the firm dismissal of seeing the actual labs, was as unhappy to be here as the first time they landed and he realized where they were. He was sullenly holding the Doctor’s hand as they headed down endless corridor after endless corridor. This was why he didn’t like governments. They never did anything fun and interesting, they usually had crappy buildings meant to be impressive and more often than not they were corrupt. The Regent was showing them room after room but most of them were offices of various officials, a few computer labs that he peered at but realized that their technology was rather out of date and sighed, disappointed, and a room with quite a few monitors that had his father really excited. The Doctor managed to push a number of buttons and watch the screens flick on with a series of different pictures before the Regent frowned at him and the Doctor laughed, heading back to Harry.

Harry had taken the opportunity to snitch the sonic screwdriver out of his dad's pocket. Jack had taken some time to show him how to pick pocket. It came in handy. Now he could get into those computer terminals. He just had to wait. And endure the endless, oppressive architecture of the Proclamation.

When they reached the central room, he had to take his previous assessment back, if only because the large dome over the room was crystal, and therefor see-through, and the stars burned brightly over
him. He grinned, twirling a finger through the air and tracing the various designs with bright gold sparks. This was a much better room. Large, open, glamorous, and beautiful with the full view of the stars overhead. He started dotting the air in front of him, marking out constellations and galaxies and worlds.

At this new development, the Doctor sighed. Of course Harry would do something absurd and impossible and he would get them into trouble before they really did anything trouble worthy, seeing as how Harry didn’t actually break into the computer hub. The magic sparks that he was tracing through the air had caught the eye of the Regent and the Judoon, who were staring at the boy with something akin to wonder and confusion.

“Doctor, who is this child?” And again the questions began.

“He’s human, just of a different gene sequence. It gifts him and his people with the ability to manipulate energy.” The wide eyes were back. “Harry, stop it, please. Just for now.”

Harry looked up at his dad, confusion in his eyes. The Doctor pointed at the Regent and the Judoon and Harry sighed before letting the streaks of gold fade away.

“Why do I always have to not use my magic? It’s not like I’m doing anything harmful.”

The Doctor sighed. “You’re worse about getting into trouble than almost anyone else. How do you manage it?”

“Me? What about you? You got Uncle Jack sent to prison! I just make sparkles and animate paper airplanes!”

“And rip holes in the void and screw with timelines and all the other stuff that’s gotten you in trouble.

Harry shrugged. “Hey, that was fun. Don’t knock it.”

“If you could tell me what you were doing, child, I would appreciate it.” The Regent had spoken up, and Harry flicked his eyes toward her.
“I was tracing the stars. Making different designs and pictures. I didn’t finish though.” He shrugged.

"So it was just fun?"

“Yeah, well, yeah. Nothing harmful.”

“Wait until he tries messing with the continuum again. Then say it’s all fun and games,” the Doctor muttered under his breath. Harry pouted at him.

~~~~~This is a Scene Break~~~~~

After the scene in the main chambers, the Regent had led them in contemplative silence to the library. Then she left them there, giving them free reign to look at what they wanted as she wandered off to consult her history texts.

Harry stared at the large library, eyes wide. Books, books, lots and lots of books. They soared up the side in spiraling spires and around corners and through archways and every other way imaginable. Some were in the crevices under staircases, creating an illusion of a stair case literally made of books, some were held in suspended animation in specific locations, special books that were held in high regard and needed special permission to access. He was sure there was a gravity pad somewhere that kept books on the ceilings. He smiled widely. Now this was awesome.

He raced down a corridor and grabbed three or four books off the shelf at random, then plopped down in the middle of an aisle and peered at them. *History of the Shadow Proclamation, 1st Galactic War to the 2nd Galactic War.* Nice. He set that to the side. *Myths and Legends of the Shadow Proclamation.* Another interesting one. *History of Klum.* Not interesting. Whenever his dad was teaching him a new language they would use *History of Klum* to work on translating because it contained 90% of the most commonly used spoken words. It didn’t make the book any better though. He set it to the side.

The next book in the stack was a plain, unnamed beige hard-back but Harry had been taught not to judge a book by its cover, the best ones weren’t always the flashy ones. He flipped to the front page, looking for a title, when a small book fell out, tucked between the pages. He picked it up. It was maybe half an inch wide, soft cover and bound with some kind of strong wire. The front cover was merely a simple set of circles and loops and Harry felt like he recognized it but it wasn’t until he opened the cover that he realized what he had.
The pages were covered in swirls and loops and other parts of the mathematical language his dad had been teaching him ever since he could read. His eyes widened. This was one of the lost books of the Time Lords. The only ones he had seen were in a special section of the library on the TARDIS and he had to have his dad there whenever he wanted to look at them. He had been told that there weren’t any more, they had all disappeared with the rest of his dad’s people but apparently that was wrong. He stroked it reverently. A book from the Time Lords. Really, truly, a book from his Dads people.

He stared at the inside page, trying to decipher the words. The language of Gallifrey was all about perfection, the perfect intersection of lines and circles, the placement of those words on the page, the location in relation to others. Well, at least the formal one he was learning. His dad told him there was a much more casual version of the language that had more symbology and less math but he hadn’t learned it yet.

This particular book was…he stared at the cover, trying to piece out the swirls and circles and lines. This one…this one was a personal diary of…of…someone whose name he didn’t know. He flipped to the next page, and the language flowed over it, creating and becoming the words they represent. Harry was determined to figure it out. He tucked the book into a pocket. He would show it to his dad later. Right now he was going to read about Legends and Myths and then he would find the science section. His little treasure would require the dictionary he was still working on to figure out, and that dictionary was in the TARDIS.

Later, after being berated by a thin faced, many armed librarian for mis-filing books and for running in the library, he found his dad, engrossed in a thick-spined book written in some kind of dot-line-square language Harry didn’t know. He pulled out the little book from his pocket and set in on the page the Doctor was reading. He got a raised eyebrow in return.

“Dad, whose diary is this? I can’t read the name.”

The Doctor glanced down. “Rassilon’s. First Lord President of Gallifr…..” He trailed off, then looked at the book again, then up at Harry. “Harry, where did you find this? That’s supposed to be lost.” Harry shrugged.

“It was tucked into another book, some history of the Shadow Proclamation. Fell out of the pages.” Harry bounced on his feet. “I couldn’t read a lot of it, didn’t recognize all the letters.” The Doctor reached out and took the book, eyes wide and hand hovering over the cover.

“Harry, do you know what this means? Do you know what this book is? How much it could hold? The universal secrets that Rassilon never…never…” His eyes were wide in excitement, ecstatic happiness.
“Harry, Hary Harry Harry Harry! This is brilliant! There were rumors Rassilon actually had a diary of some sort but no one actually though he kept one.”


“Whatever you want. Whatever you want.”

“Awesome! Yes! I’ll get it! Thanks Dad!” And with this, his plans to sabotage some part of the Shadow Proclamations designs were halted and he looked intently at the book in the Doctor’s hand. “Uh, how are you going to get it out of the library? I thought all books were regulated by the Shadow Proclamation and you can’t just take things out without telling someone, right?” Harry looked concerned. “And that librarian has one too many eyes and hands. I bet she would see us leave with it.”

“Psh. So little mister rule breaker here is now following rules? No, it’s my property, or well, time lord property, so it’s mine by rights. And it doesn’t have a stamp on it at all, so it shouldn’t be a problem. Really. No electronic coding or whatever, whoever slipped it in here must have done so without getting the regency’s attention.” He frowned. “That was a tricky thing to do.” He pulled out his sonic screwdriver and buzzed it over the book. “No trace of anything electronic on it, a little bit of the vortex, a bit of the void, something else, but no electronic signature….how strange.” He stared at the book in his hands. “This is a bit of a puzzle.”

Harry reached for it. “I’m gonna figure it out. Just you watch.”

“I never doubted it Harry.” Harry smiled, took the book, and tucked it into a pocket. “Now, now, we should probably get going. No more mishaps on the way out, alright Harry? No running off, nothing. Otherwise I will confiscate the diary and you won’t be reading it for quite some time.” Harry clutched it protectively to his chest, nodding his agreement to the terms of the deal. “Promise?”

“Promise Promise promise Dad!” And he meant it. He really meant it. He rarely got to handle the books with any Time Lord script on it and now he got to translate one all on his own. At all possible costs, he wanted to translate the book. He smiled widely and tightened his jacket around his frame, making sure the book was well tucked into the pocket.

The Regent met them outside the Library doors, her hands folded sedately over her robes and a small smile on her face. She nodded at Harry then turned to the Doctor. “Your TARDIS will be placed on
the registrar as a registered Shadow Proclamation Vehicle, though I would recommend you don’t arrive without prior warning of some kind. The Shadow Proclamation is not meant to be…accessed, in such a manner.” The Doctor nodded sagely, for all appearances agreeing with the statement. The walk back to the TARDIS was quick and mostly silent. Harry quieter than usual, keeping himself as inconspicuous as he dared.

“DOCTOR, YOU HAVE BEEN AUTHORIZED AS AN ENTITY WITH ACCESS TO THE SHADOW PROCLAMATION. DO NOT ABUSE THESE PRIVILEGES. ANY VIOLATION OF THE LAW WILL BE DEALT WITH SWIFTLY.” The Judoon Leader, Skorix, was as loud as ever as the Doctor approached the blue box he and Harry called home.

“Of course, of course! Ah, well, better get going. Harry!” Harry was already in the TARDIS, keen on reading the book they had smuggled out. The Doctor smiled. Well, one way to keep Harry out of trouble was to bribe him with knowledge. A tried and true method for delaying the possible explosions of nearby matter. He smiled and waved to the Judoon as he stepped into the TARDIS and shut the door behind him.

“Dad, do you know where that Galifreyian dictionary went? Mine isn’t complete and while yours sucks to read it has more words and I wanna make mine better” Harry asked him, rummaging around in the floor. His version of the dictionary was beside him, having already been unearthed from beneath the mountain of books on the far side of the TARDIS.

The Doctor pressed buttons on the console, feeling the TARDIS slip into the vortex. “In the library, where you were reading it last.” Harry’s head popped up, he frowned, then smiled widely.

“Right, right, ok! Bye!” And he raced down the connecting corridors towards the library.

~~~~~This is a Scene Break~~~~~

Harry spent most of the next few days scanning the dictionary, adding to his own and then comparing it to Rassilon’s Diary. The language used in the diary was older and more complex than the dictionary words, but they were similar enough that Harry could labor over it until he was able to decipher whatever entry he was currently on.

Most of the early entries were continuations from what must have been an older diary and made little sense. It spoke of Pythia and of someone whose name was scribbled over and replaced by ‘O’. This person was someone Rassilon both hated and admired and feared. Harry thought he would like to meet this person. Apparently this person vanished and Rassilon spent the rest of his time trying to forget about all that had happened. But it was the mathematical entries, complete with theoretical time warps and dimension crossing, which caught his attention.
From what he could understand, Rassilon was experiment with creating stable and permanent connections between parallel worlds. At the time this was written, there was no access to parallel worlds by any conventional means, though an occasional rip would appear. Rasillon was concerned with making them stable and permanent. The prospect of this possibility was fascinating and very very confusing.

Because the Time Lords were gone, there was no access to parallel worlds anymore, the walls were closed off, but with the instructions and theories that this genius was playing with….they could actually do it! They could reach into a parallel world! For real! He jittered in excitement. An entirely new universe to explore!

He was halfway through the diary when the mathematical language changed into complex math equations, things he wasn’t familiar with, and though he could tell they dealt with time and space (they had variables for up to eight dimensions) the actual equations themselves were far beyond what he knew. It was then that Harry finally took the diary to his dad.

“Dad! Dad! I need help! I don’t understand this stuff!” He was racing through the TARDIS halls, searching for his father or any trace of where he might be. The banging and clanging from up ahead, the console room, had Harry rolling his eyes. Of course he was there. Of course. And he was probably messing with the time rotor or some other such device. Still, when he came racing into the room, the tall lanky form of the Doctor rolled out from underneath the floor and bowed up. Streaks of various fluids lined his face, his hair was frazzled and he looked frustrated. Harry grinned.

“What is it Harry? Having problems with the language?” Harry shook his head.

“No, not that. The math. I don’t understand the math at all. It deals with something about parallel worlds and stable portals, but other than that, I don’t really know…” Harry shrugged, holding out his own personal notebook and the diary towards his father. The Doctor looked stunned.


“From what I understood, when Rassilon first became President, there wasn’t travel between parallel universes, or it wasn’t easy. He was looking for a way to create stable portals and such. The first part is all theory and writing, but then he gets into math and I can’t read it anymore. Or I can, I just don’t understand it. Which is about the same thing, really.” The Doctor hesitantly took the notebook and diary from Harry, opening the pages with trembling fingers.
The possibilities of having access to a parallel universe again…it was sweet incentive. He could see Rose again…he could see if she was doing well, if she had a family, if her and his metacrisis were having a good life. It was one of his regrets, leaving her there without being able to see if she had a great life or not. He could do so much with this…

He opening the diary up to the marked page and his eyes scanned the words. Harry was partially right, in his assessment. It was a theory on creating stable portals, but he hadn’t been able to tell that the portals were limited in time frame access. A few days at the most, or a few cycles of a certain set of time parameters. It wasn’t a large window, but it would connect one universe to another while it was being used. And it could be used again. A set amount of time had to pass, but it could be used again. He trembled slightly at the prospect. He could really go and do it, he just had to learn the formula, learn how to implement it….

Two words blazed out of the equations, bold and bright and shining. BAD WOLF. There, right on the page, staring at him. He blinked, shook his head, checked again. They were there, written into the pages of a diary older and far long gone than the girl those words referenced. Still…if they were here, then there must be a way…

“Harry, can I borrow this for a little bit? Please?”

Harry cocked his head. “That’s why I brought it to you. Can you understand it?”

The Doctor absently nodded. “Yeah…and I can almost fix it….I just have to….make a few adjustments to….this…one little…” The Doctor wandered off in the general direction of the library, or his room, or any number of other places. Harry smiled after him. His dad, always messing with something for some reason or other. At least this time it wasn’t an attempt to upset the world balance or them running from any number of monsters. So Harry hoped.

The Doctor was scribbling frantically on a sheet of paper, hand drawing wild diagrams and filling in spaces with more letters and numbers and spirals and loops. It was starting to look like abstract art, really, but it was, to the Doctor, a way to fix a part of his past that he hadn’t been able to leave with any sort of satisfaction. In fact, leaving Rose behind with his duplicate had been…it had been one of the hardest things he had done. He had done it out of a kind of misguided sense of justice or friendship or some other emotion he couldn’t think of, but leaving Rose behind on Bad Wolf Bay all those years ago…he couldn’t even begin to contemplate how much that hurt him.

Now, with this new possibility of being able to see her again, to see if she had a good life, if she had a wonderful family, if she loved his duplicate, if he loved her, anything about her, he just wanted to see her. And Harry had given him that opportunity back, had given him the option to see her again. He would show her to Harry, tell her all about the brilliance that was Rose Tyler, how she saved the universe, how she saved him. The pictures he had hidden of her, her cell phone, still on the
TARDIS. She deserved to be remembered by Harry.

~~~~~This is an Ending~~~~~

Chapter End Notes

To all the awesome reviews I got that I haven’t replied to and to those I can’t reply to, You all are amazing and awesome and reasons for me to edit and update and write and feel like my day has been made that much better. So thank you for being so amazing. All of you.

Kuroi
In Which There is a Spectacular Return

Chapter Summary

So, someone returns. Though things don't always run smoothly, especially with the Doctor around.

Chapter Notes

Um…..yeah, I can only offer school as a reason for not getting this done any sooner. 18 credit hours and a grad course pile up quickly. 0.o I didn’t quite realize how much work it would be. >.> Also, NaNoWriMo starts tomorrow, so GOOD LUCK to all my fellow nanoers!! YOU CAN DO IT! (I shall be working on this story most likely, seeing as how I already have the plot to it worked up and just need the motivation NaNoWriMo inspires to finally do it.

Thank you to all of you who haven’t given up on me and this story. It is taking me a while to get chapters up but I will do my best.

Now, on to what I know a lot of you have been waiting for, Rose Tyler’s return. Enjoy! ^_^

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

~~~~This is a Beginning~~~~

The diary Harry had so fortuitously stumbled upon was old, old and fascinating and filled to the brim with wondrous and mind-boggling ideas. While he would peruse the rest of the journal later, right now he was concentrating on the thirty or so pages were 'Bad Wolf' was scribbled into the margins, as though an afterthought to the equations themselves. Equations that had begun the process by which the Time Lords would come to conquer space and time and dimensionality. Equations the very foundation of his birth planet were founded upon and held together by. Equations he could use to break through the barrier that now held fast between one universe and another. This universe and the one that held the girl whose identity revolved around those two words scribbled into a diary written before her time.

But there was something odd about these equations. Something that wasn't adding up right, or working out in the circular manner math on Gallifrey operated. Some variable was missing, or not accounted for, or not included. Something was off. The Doctor stared at the sheets of paper in front
of him, an old fashioned pen (Sir Arthur Conan Doyle had given him that pen as a souvenir of thanks) shoved between his teeth as he ran his hands through his hair, ruffling the already wildly out of control style he was sporting.

If he stared at it hard enough, long enough, something would give. He would have an answer, the answer. It would just take some more time....he threw another crumpled sheet of paper over his shoulder, where it landed amidst the mass of crumpled, scribbled on and ink blotted balls of paper already populating the floor.

Just as he was about the stomp off for a nice cup of tea and a game of three dimensional chess with Harry as a break, it finally hit him. He immediately felt like an idiot.

Rassilon wasn’t taking into account the added effect of the Void variables, the lack of space that existed between universes to separate them from touching. He wasn’t considering how he would breach that void stuff, since the rip he was creating had to be made twice, once on each side. There had to be a pathway through the void, otherwise any vehicle traveling through it would be trapped forever in the swirl of nothingness. He straightened up and began to scribble dawn the new variables.

This, this was his element. His way of working. Impossibility-shmossibility. No, he was going to breach that gap, and he wasn’t going to tear the universe apart in the process (he hoped). This equation was in effect before the newer Tardis models that allowed travel between Parallel worlds on their own merit, when the Time Lords had watched over the various worlds but hadn’t breached the void to others. No, this had stability built into the equation. The Doctor whistled lowly. There was a reason Rassilon was one of the greatest Time Lords, why he had been resurrected for the Time War, why he had reigned as President for all thirteen of his regenerations, thousands and thousands of years. He was a genius, even a young Rassilon who was still discovering the limits of the Time Vortex and levels of quantum mechanics. The Doctor would never have figured all this out, he hadn’t been introduced to the lack of possibility of travel through to parallel worlds. Only after the Time War and the loss of the Time Lords was this travel impossible. Technology once plentiful, if squandered unreasonably by its creators, had vanished with those who made it. But the young Rassilon who had created these works of art had lived in that possibility and had compensated for it.

And he was going to recreate it. Here and now, in a Universe with only one Time Lord, he was going to recreate it.

The equations in hand, all thirty-five pages of them, he raced into the console room and spun the computer interface towards him. Harry looked up from the corner he was sitting in.

“Finally decided to grace us with your presence, dad?” Harry asked sardonically. The Doctor blinked.

“Huh?”

“You were gone for nearly a hundred and sixty hours. The Tardis was getting worried.” The Doctor grinned.

“Oh, Harry, you brilliant child you, I am going to show you something fantastic!” And with this said, he began typing frantically into the keyboard and looking at the screen. The Tardis gave a questioning pulse.

“Dad, what are you doing? The Tardis…she’s….she’s….DAD!”” Harry rose to his feet, reaching out, eyes frantic and confused. “You’re…she says you’re…you’re breaching the void! You’re creating a tunnel…..DAD! What are you doing?”
“Just hold on Harry! We’re going through it!”

A dial spun, a knob was twisted, a new-fangled device was fiddled with, several more things began to spin and swirl and the central Column pulsed bright gold, filling the room with bright, eye-searing light.

“DAD! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?” Harry was crouching behind the railing, hands holding on tight and eyes slammed shut.

“We’re breaching the void! Spinning into nothingness and reaching into a parallel universe, Harry! We’re actually doing it! Hold on tight! This is gonna be a bumpy ride!” Harry opened his mouth to scream when the entire room gave a violent shake and he was tipped sideways and sprawled on the other side of the room. The Doctor stood at the controls, a manic grin on his face, eyes wild and his hearts beating faster than he thought possible. He glanced over at Harry, noticing him struggling for the railing, reaching for stability as the Tardis pulsed with bright gold light again and shuddered. The Doctor was sent sprawling against the railing and the room spun in a vomit-inducing manner. Then it set down, brightly glowing gold light still spilling out of the column. A visible connection to the universe they came from. The Doctor sprang for the screen. They were there. They had made it to Pete’s World. It had happened.

“Harry! Harry! We made it! We made it!” Harry groaned softly in the corner. “Harry? Harry!” He rushed over. Harry’s black hair was sprawled over the floor, highlighting his pale skin and slightly damp. The Doctor touched the back of Harry’s head. Red. He had split his head.

“Dad? When are ya gonna ge’ yur license?” Harry moaned softly. The Doctor’s eyes fluttered.

“Oh, oh Harry, I’m sorry, so sorry…so so…..” He trailed off as bright sparks showered down and Harry’s head healed up with a bit of sparkling green. Harryry smiled weakly up at him.

“see, all goo’….all good…just a little….sleepy…” Harry nodded off against the Doctor’s legs, and the lanky alien smiled.

“Oh, Harry, aren’t you just brilliant.” He gathered the small boy in his arms. Harry was still so tiny, stick thin and with black hair brushing the lobes of his ears. Vibrant green eyes were closed right now, but when they were open, they shone with a fervor for knowledge and amusement. The necklace lying on his chest, a constant reminder of his own failures as a father but something Harry wore with pride, shone in the light. It was the only thing holding the child back from being dragged into the depths of his magic and drowning in it.

Now though, with Harry asleep and the possibility of Rose being outside those doors, the Doctor had a choice to make. Still, it wasn’t a hard choice. Harry was his child and while he had been mourning the loss of Rose for years, he wasn’t about to leave Harry when he was unconscious. Harry was his responsibility right now and he wasn’t going to go haring off while Harry was recovering and asleep.

So he sat at Harry’s side for a little bit, making sure Harry was alright and unhurt and in one piece before heading back to the control room and checking the screen. The screen was telling him that outside the Tardis doors were trees and just about anything else imaginable that would be on Earth. That wasn’t what concerned the Doctor however. He wanted to know if they had made it to the alternate universe that held Rose and her family. The airspace was filled with what might be advanced barrage balloons, different from when he had been there before, but still. It was a hallmark of Pete’s world that the skies were filled with them. He smiled. They had made it.

He spent the next few hours until Harry woke up discovering, to his chagrin, that they had arrived fifty years (he thought, time wasn’t the same here) after he had left Rose here for the last time. He
hoped…he hoped she was still alive, that she had lived a good life. He couldn’t even think about the alternative, hadn’t dared looked up her name, her family’s name. he didn’t want to know ahead of time, he wanted to see it for himself, so see her life, her spirit, still soaring. Whatever had happened, he wanted to see her as she was, not find out from a computer screen. Rose deserved that much at least.

Harry stumbled into the room after a few hours to find his dad reading the diary. Well, he looked like he was reading it. In fact, Harry noticed, he hadn’t changed the page in well over five minutes. So he was thinking about something again, something that required enough of his attention to be considered vital enough that he couldn’t multitask. Now that had to be something important.


“Oh, Harry, how’s your head?” Harry shrugged. “Not bad. Not sore at all. Magic is good for something more than making makeshift 3-D models of the periodic table and nearby planets. Whatcha thinking about then?”

The Doctor sighed. “Someone I hope is still…still alive. She….I hope she’s living a good life too.” Harry frowned. It wasn’t like his dad to visit old friends of his without telling him, and he was sure there were no old friends stuck on a formerly unreachable side of the void.

“I thought we went through the void to a different universe. How would you have a friend still here?”

The Doctor smiled. “She was stuck here, long long ago. Long enough that I don’t know if she’s alive. But I hope so, I really truly do.” Harry nodded at the computer.

“Have you looked her up?”

The Doctor shook his head. “No, too afraid. Don’t want to know….not from a computer at any rate.”

A knocking at the door had the Doctor’s head springing up. So soon? He had be recognized so soon? Harry furrowed a brow.

“I’ll get it.” He opened the door and peered outside. “Says they’re Torchwood, looking for you. A…A Zach? And a Gail?”

The Doctor frowned. “Torchwood? They still have one here?”

“Apparently. That’s what they’re calling themselves.” Harry shrugged at their guests. “Don’t know much about Torchwood, much less ones in parallel universes. You aren’t exactly big fans of them, and uncle Jack doesn’t talk about them much either.” He looked out of the door. “What? No, I’m not the Doctor. Why would you think that? No, no, that’s dad. DAD! Please? I don’t like being mistaken for you.”

The Doctor grinned but acquiesced to his child’s request and came down to the door.

“Hello, how are you?” He opened the door wider.

Two people were standing outside, dressed in casual clothes and light jackets. They weren’t armed, which pleased the Doctor, but they did look confused. The man, about thirty with short brown hair and a narrow face, the girl younger with black-brown hair, brown eyes and something that said
‘serious’ about her. When the Doctor popped his head out, they stepped back, slightly started.

Zach and Gail had been warned by numerous files that the blue box that their commander hoped would someday appear was bigger on the inside. Still, when confronted by this fact, they weren’t sure what to do. It wasn’t very often that a small child and a tall, skinny man would pop out of a blue box. Granted, they had knocked first (their commander had rigged up specific equipment to detect this blue box, they had answered the call) but it was in foolish hope. So when a boy answered the knock, they had been startled.

“Um, well, We…we’re not really sure what to do about this…so…um…well, the Commander said we were to escort them to Torchwood home base….you, I mean, you, but….um….well…would you mind coming with us then?”

Harry grinned at them. “Wow, usually takes a bit longer for the tongue tying to commence. Congratulations on being the first to actually start right off.” The Doctor gently cuffed Harry on the ear, then looked at the two still uncertain operatives.

“Well, then, we should go speak with your commander. Does this commander have a name?”

They looked at each other. “Uh…” Gail said. “We, er, we aren’t really sure. She doesn’t tell people her name, not anymore. She’s been there since, well, since forever, really. Dunno where she came from.” They started towards a small, one-story building. Discreet, mostly unnoticeable. “She’s the one they call in when they don’t have any other option. That’s why she’s the Commander. Built Torchwood up from the ground, they say, but that was almost a century ago, so I don’t know if that’s true.”

The Doctor looked worried and vaguely puzzled. Could this mysterious commander be Rose Tyler? It wasn’t possible, well, that wasn’t really true, but it was improbable. He looked at Zach.

“Your commander, what does she look like?” Zach smiled.

“She’s a looker. Honey brown hair, gold eyes, face to die for, bright red lips, smoking body. Still, she doesn’t have anyone at all.”

Gail shook her head. “People used to say that she did have someone. Don’t know what happened to him, but she did have someone.”

More and more riddles. Harry looked up at the Doctor. “Do you think she’s the girl?” he asked in a whisper. The Doctor shrugged, but his face remained worried.

“I don’t know Harry, I really don’t. And it was so long ago…I don’t think she’s still alive. Might be one of her children…”

Zach opened the nondescript metal door and ushered them into a pristine, white-washed room. As soon as the door closed, the room lit up and scanned them.

“Welcome back, Torchwood operate Zachary Longswordth and Gail Collins. Third Party identified as The Doctor. Fourth party unknown. Please state your name and intentions.”

Harry raised an eyebrow at Zach and Gail, who shrugged and nodded for him to acquiesce.

“Er, Harry, here with the Doctor….” That seemed to satisfy the voice, and a door opposite them opened. Zach and Gwen motioned them towards it and they entered what appeared to be a pleasant sitting room.
“Sit, please. I’ll go and call the Commander.” Zach and Gail vanished down a side corridor, and they heard the ping of elevator doors opening then closing. Harry threw himself onto a couch, and the Doctor looked around the room, wondering if he could access any information from here.

His search for answers was interrupted by a door sliding softly open and a figure stepping out. A very very familiar figure.

When the Doctor appeared rather tongue tied, Harry crossed to the woman and offered his hand.

“Hi, I’m Harry. Don’t worry about him. He usually talks too much, so it’s rather nice to see him astonished.” The woman smiled down at Harry, then crouched until they were eye level.

“I know. He’s always spouting on about things and expects you to know all about it. Thinks he’s so clever. So, who might you be, besides Harry?”

Harry smiled. “That’s my dad, when he’s not too busy being a prisoner, chased, or evicted from various planets.” The woman’s smiled dipped just a bit, then steadied.

“Where’s your mum then? Back in the Tardis?”

Harry shook his head. “Nah, dad adopted me, took my after my parents were killed, though I don’t remember them. “ He shrugged. “Still, I think I would go mad if I had to stay in one place, I love the Tardis. She goes anywhere in the universe and we even got to go see the landing of the first shuttle on Pluto! The first attempt was fifty million miles off an they were drifting into Neptune's orbit. Nearly hid a fringe Solar community, that's how far off they were. But the second one was a success! It was awesome!” Harry grinned. “Did you used to travel with the Doctor? He said he had a friend here, that they couldn’t leave.” The woman smiled sadly.

“Yes, I did, a long time ago.” She looked up at the still speechless Doctor. “Long, long ago, when I was still a kid. I wasn’t sure I would ever see your dad again, Harry.”

Harry frowned. “Yeah, dad said it was impossible to travel to parallel universes, but then I found a diary from one of the old Time Lords and it talked about traveling to other dimensions then dad figured it out and here we are, though he said we got here really late and you might be dead. Since you aren’t though, dad must be happy. What’s your name?”

The woman looked slightly astonished at him, then smiled brightly. “You are just like your dad, huh, talking a million miles a minute. I’m Rose, by the way.” Harry’s eyes widened.

“I found your room! The Tardis showed it to me. Had your name on the door and everything. Even found one of dad’s ties in there.” He snuck a look at his dad, a grin on his face.

The Doctor finally spoke. “Rose? Is that you? Really you?”

Even with her right in front of him, her hair undyed, her eyes a shocking golden hue, he wasn’t able to believe it. Then she sat and talked to Harry, smiling with her tongue between her teeth, her eyes lit up. Then she said her name. The Doctor finally found his voice again, and he croaked out his question. Rose looked up at him, then patted Harry on the head before stepping over towards him.

“Hello Doctor. It’s been a while.” He reached out to touch her, just brush his fingers over her arm, something to affirm her solidity. His fingers met the cool flesh of her hand, and without waiting for anything else to be said, he pulled her into a tight hug.

Her arms went around his waist, pulling him tighter into her frame, and her face buried itself into the crook between his shoulder and neck. She shook without crying, her entire body shaking, and the
Doctor held her close. Tears ran down his face and he kept his eyes tightly shut. He heard Harry settle into the couch with the diary. Harry could keep himself occupied for a little bit.

They stood, melded together the full length of their bodies, until Rose pulled back, looking up into the face of the man she never thought she would see again.

Brown eyes stared into gold, and Rose smiled.

“Hey.”

“How?” The Doctor breathed in. “How…how are you still still here? How long…” he couldn’t finish that sentence. Rose smiled.

“Almost a hundred and fifty years Doctor. It’s been a long time. Way too long.”

“How?”

“I don’t know. I really don’t. But I’ve spent a century trying to figure out how, how to get back to my world, how to get back to you, how to do anything. And since I’m death-resistant, well, it meant that I had all the time in the world to figure it out.” She smiled at him, a wobbly, huge smile. “You just got here first.”

The Doctor just pulled her back into his arms. “Oh, Rose, Rose Rose Rose, you are amazing. Absolutely amazing and brilliant. How did you ever end up with an old mad man like me?” Rose’s hand smacked him lightly on the back.

“A question for another time, Doctor. But here I am, and you are not leaving me again, not ever.” She grinned at him, the looked at Harry. “Hey, Harry, what do you say to cheering up your old dad?”

“Sure, as long as I can dunk him in the Silusian Springs!”

“Deal!” Rose laughed. “I like your kid Doctor!”

The Doctor blinked. “You…you’re coming with me?” Rose quirked an eyebrow.

“You have a problem with that? I don’t have anyone here, not anymore. Tony’s daughter never had kids, mum couldn’t have anymore, and everyone else I knew died fifty years ago. I’m not staying here any longer and I’m sure Harry could do with another person around that isn’t you or Jack. A better role model, at least.”

“Oi!” the Doctor’s look of comic surprise had Rose laughing. “But, no really, you still want to travel with me? After…after all that time?” Rose sighed.

“Doctor, I waited a hundred years for you to come back here. What did you think I would do, stay? I’ve been planning on leaving soon anyway. Your way is just safer than mine.” She brushed a soft kiss against the Doctor’s lips, then pulled away. “I’ll be in my office, when you’ve finally wrapped that big brain of yours around the fact. Harry, wanna come with me to get my stuff?” Harry grinned, shoving the diary into his pocket.

“As soon as the elevator started moving (down, Harry sensed) Rose collapsed to the floor, pulling her
legs in and tucking her head into her knees. Quiet sobs reached Harry’s ears.

“Rose? Rose? Are you okay?”

She had held it together up in the waiting room, she had been strong and steady and even flirty. But she had also been keeping the shock and surprise and pain hidden, closed off behind a curtain she didn’t want the Doctor to look behind. When the elevator doors had shut, she had collapsed, folding in on herself and dropping to the floor. Rose didn’t know what to say. She had lived through a hundred and fifty years on slim hope, on something that she thought would never happen. After the death of the metacrisis Doctor, the one who hadn’t been able to find his feet on the ground much less find her amidst his confused emotions, what she had lived for most was the advent of space travel. The ability to go out amongst the stars again. The Doctor….seeing the Doctor again was something she kept locked away in the back of her mind in cold storage, since the possibility of it happening wasn’t high. She wouldn’t contemplate it, she couldn’t. Otherwise she would never get anything done. Now though, that he was here, here and alive and still with at least one of the same faces she had fallen in love with when she had been a child, a girl of barely twenty years, well, she wasn’t sure her heart could handle it.

She felt a hand on her shoulder, a soft gasp, a small shudder, then her fear and hope and anger and every other emotion that had sprung to her mind when she had seen him on the monitor screen softened, and she could think properly again. She lifted her head and looked at the tiny boy that was the Doctor’s son, holding a gold necklace in one hand and touching her shoulder with the other. His eyes were screwed shut and he was breathing in small pants.

“Harry?” her voice was hoarse. Harry opened his eyes.

“You alright now Rose? You weren’t breathing very well and you wouldn’t stop shaking.” Rose blinked.

“What did you do?”

“I, I siphoned some of the emotional overload away.”

“You really sound like him. What did you do, in less confusing terms.”

Harry smiled, then took his hand off her shoulder. Rose felt the hand leave, felt her emotions swirl again, but she controlled them this time. “I’m a touch empath. I can feel someone’s emotions when I touch them. I wear a necklace to stop it from happening all the time, but when I need to, I can take some of the harder emotions from someone, so they can think. Only do it to dad very occasionally. He told me not to do it, but sometimes, when he’s too sad, I take some of it. It helps when he has to think of a way out of a prison cell without his sonic screwdriver.”

Rose still wasn’t certain she got the entire story, but the elevator beeped and told her they had reached their destination. She hauled herself up off the floor, wiping her face clear of tears and held out a hand for Harry. The boy put the necklace back on again before taking it, and they headed into the large, blue colored office that was Rose’s home.

Upstairs, the doctor was still standing where Rose had left him, blinking. Rose was still alive. She was still alive, she still wanted to come with him, and she still…she still…he touched his lips, grinning rather stupidly. She still loved him, he thought. He hoped.

And Harry liked her. And Rose liked Harry. And she was still here. He couldn’t wrap his mind
around it. Who waits that long for someone, who has measures in place for the possible arrival of someone who shouldn’t be able to travel to this dimension? Only his Rose would.

He stepped to the elevator, pressed the button, and waited. His Rose, here still.

Behind him, he heard another elevator ping open, and Zach stepped out.

“Um, sir, Doctor, sir, the Commander…where was that elevator?” Zach blinked. The Doctor grinned.


“I was just going to tell you, the commander isn’t here. I couldn’t get a hold of her…” The Doctor grinned.

“It’s alright. She’s here.” Zach raised an eyebrow, then shrugged.

“Alright then. Let me know when you’re leaving. I’ll buzz you out.” He headed back to the elevator and pressed a button, nodding to the Doctor as he headed out and down. The Doctor grinned madly. Rose, his Rose, was here.

The elevator in front of his opened up, and he stepped in. There was only one button.

“Well, that’s easy enough.” And down he went.

He had traveled maybe a five hundred feet underground when the elevator came to a halt and the doors opened. He stared at walls that were painted Tardis blue, at a wooden desk with an electronic interface, a wall panel that slid out to monitor the whole of the happenings at Torchwood, and then at the two people that were now in his life, making him whole and sane and complete.

Harry and Rose were pouring over various pictures and laughing.

“Did dad really look like that? With the big ears and nose and all?” Rose smiled.

“Don’t knock it. He was brilliant. I loved that leather jacket, I did. Still remember the smell, even after all these years.”

“Dad in leather…man is that a weird mental image.” Rose laughed, and the Doctor felt himself shiver at the sound. It had been far too long since he had heard her voice. Far, far too long.

“What are you two up to then?” Harry grinned over at him.

“Rose was just showing me pictures of you! You’ve never had good fashion sense, have you?” he questions, smirking a bit.

The Doctor mocked affronted anger. “I will tell you that ties are the height of fashion,” he said, nose in the air. Harry chuckled.

“When, 1950’s Earth?”

The Doctor huffed and Rose laughed.

“Alright you two, come on. I’ve got a few bags that I have to have. Mementos, of family.” She shrugged slightly, but the Doctor could see how much she missed them. No more Jackie to hug him, then slap him for bringing her daughter home late, no Pete and his weird inventions, he would never
meet her little brother, Tony. All the years she had lived without him, never dying, stuck on a planet where people grew old around her. He looked at Harry significantly, and he sighed, then ran past Rose and into the room she was headed for. The Doctor snagged her arm and pulled her into a hug. One she didn’t protest to.

“Oh, Rose, beautiful brilliant Rose. My Rose.” Rose sighed into the embrace.

“It’s been a long time Doctor, longer than I thought possible. God, I never thought you would be here. I couldn’t find a way back, not without tearing reality apart, and I couldn’t justify it. I couldn’t destroy a universe to reach another, I couldn’t. I sat in that room, staring at that wall, holding the button to the dimensional cannon.” Her eyes misted. “Now, now you’re here. After so long…” her voice choked up and the Doctor pulled her close.

“I’m so sorry Rose. So so sorry. I never meant for that to happen. Never. I thought…I thought I was saving you, leaving you here with him. God Rose I’m so sorry.” Rose looked up at him with watery eyes.

“When Harry said he was your son, I think my heart almost stopped. But he is amazing, isn’t he? Almost like a mini Doctor, the way he speaks.” She leaned up on tiptoes. “Don’t you dare stop me Doctor, I’ve been waiting a hundred and fifty years to do this.” Then she kissed him.

Not the chaste kiss from earlier, no, this one was full of pent up passion and need and had teeth and tongue and the Doctor wound his hands through her hair and pressed her closer and noses mashed and teeth clashed and he was sure one of them had drawn blood but they didn’t care and the world could have blown up and they wouldn’t have noticed.

It could have gone on forever, neither of them really needed air anytime soon, but it was the habit of breathing, helped by the wolf whistle from Harry, that had them pulling back from each other and panting heavily. Harry was smirking, a few bags at his feet and tiny hands crossed over his chest. The Doctor caught sight of a video phone from New Earth in his pocket, but said nothing. No doubt as soon as they were back in their universe it would be sent off to Jack for review, but at the moment, he could care less. Whatever the future would hold for him, for her, for them, for whatever happened, Rose was back and he figured he could handle just about anything with Rose and Harry there. He smiled.

“Anyone up for a trip back to the Tardis?” Harry smirked.

“Don’t you wanna christen Rose’s bed before we leave this universe behind dad?” he leered. The Doctor blushed down to his shoes.

“You’ve been letting him hang around Jack too much,” Rose accused him with a smile wide across her face. The Doctor couldn’t quite meet her eyes. “It’s alright Harry. I’m sure there are plenty of other places to christen, whenever I manage to loosen that tie around his neck.” Here she gave a lavish wink to the Doctor. Harry groaned.

“Alright, alright, enough. No more innuendos, please. He’s my dad!” Harry complained loudly. Rose smirked.

“Alright, alright, enough. No more innuendos, please. He’s my dad!” Harry complained loudly. Rose smirked.

“Shouldn’t have started then.” The Doctor was still rather mute, but upon seeing the look in Harry’s eyes, and the suggestive squeeze of Rose’s hand, he delved deep for the inner sexual being and yanked on it. He swept Rose towards the ground, a deep back bend that ended in a kiss. Harry made disgusted noises.

“If you all are gonna do that, I’m heading back upstairs! No way am I sticking around long enough
to watch what happens next!” And with this, he stalked off towards the elevator and pressed the call button. The Doctor grinned into Rose’s mouth.

“How long should we let him stew up there?” he asked softly. Rose smiled.

“I have enough monitoring screens in here to make this place safer than UN Headquarters. We could give it a few hours.” An eyebrow went up and hands pulled Rose up to slink further down her body.

“Well then, best get started.” Rose laughed delightedly.

“Let me show you something first.” The elevator doors closed behind Harry and started its journey upward as Rose pulled the Doctor into her bedroom and headed to the nightstand.

The Doctor stared around the room in wonder. The walls were covered with star charts and diagrams, various constellations and graphs of orbits and locations, plans for interstellar travel (a nearby magazine article, carefully printed out and taped onto the wall, announce plans for the first passenger craft to the Mars habitation in two months. Rose had tickets taped next to it. Her bed was a dark blue color, black and yellow pillows covering the top, spilling off the side. It wasn’t made, rather abandoned in a hurry. Rose never made the bed, he recalled. A pink sweatshirt lay over a chair, a desk top was covered in various reports and paperwork, a mirror was melded into a far wall, a door led into what he assumed was a bathroom. There was no closet. Had Rose really forgone the unreasonable number of clothes she used to carry with her? The small things that would litter the Tardis wherever she left them? Had they truly vanished?

Rose ran back, holding out a small box towards him. His eyes widened.

“You…you still have this? Really? After all this time?” Rose smiled.

“What, d’cha think I’d leave it on the Tardis? After all that trouble to get it?” He reached out with trembling hands and grasped the box, holding his hand over hers.

“And it’s…it’s still there?” Rose huffed a laugh.

“Of course it is. Where’d ya think it’d go to? Always helped me remember when things got bad though, that there was hope, that you were still out there, somewhere, cause, well…”

“Venusian crystals are sustained by the life force of the other, the giver. And the brighter it glows, the more the other loves them…a genetic transfer that links directly to the original owner. Those who mine Venusian Crystals have to wear gloves so they don’t taint the crystal. First skin contact initiates the genetic transfer, secondary contact completes it…” it was a rote scientific fact that he held onto as he opened the box, and the light emanating from the heart of the crystal overwhelmed him. Rose smiled.

“Whenever I felt like jumping off a bridge, I’d pull this out. It never failed.” She smiled, lifting the crystal out and taking the Doctor’s hand. “Do you remember what happens when both parties touch the crystal again Doctor?” she asked casually, holding his hand scant centimeters above the crystal. The Doctor’s breath came in soft pants.

“The crystal…it…it becomes two halves, one of which inscribes….” He couldn’t finish. Rose took over from him.

“Inscribes the name of the partner into the stone. It’s one of the reasons the crystals are highly valued, because they have always been a part of a Venusian couple’s bonding ceremony.” Rose’s tone was off handed, but the Doctor could feel the hard, fast pulse of her blood in her hand, the small tremble in her body.
“To become bonded without one is frowned upon, because there is no knowledge of true love in the union. The telepathic and genetic link the crystals form is a reflection of the bond already present between the two. The crystal is given from one member to the other, and only when the bond is considered complete is the crystal offered again.”

They stared at each other, and Rose dropped her hand from the Doctor’s. His hand reached out to finish what he had started all those years ago.

A scream rang through the room. A scream the Doctor knew well, a scream that had him rushing to the elevator and desperately pressing the call button.

Harry smiled widely to himself. As strange as it was to see his dad kissing anyone, much less the nice and pretty Rose who knew the Doctor liked to stroke the Tardis and always had a banana and laughed with him, he was happy that his dad was happy. His dad was very very happy. He resolved to keep himself out of their way for a while. Uncle Jack might be corrupting him in various other ways, but Harry was still a seven year old. Some things were better left for people who liked that kind of thing. Harry was not that person. Not right now.

The doors pinged open to the couch filled room he had left half an hour ago, and he settled himself back into a comfy, cushion filled one nearby. The diary was back in his hands, and as he passed over the math sections of the diary and turned towards the back, his eyes narrowed. It was labeled ‘Complications’, or the Gallifreyan equivalence of the word. It encompassed the idea of urgency and emergency and problems and instability and the possibility of leakage.

He turned pages faster and faster as he read through as much as he could understand. If this was right, if his dad hadn’t compensated for the minor temporal shifts and the factors of the null dimensions in the void, they were in a lot of trouble.

He was so engrossed in his pages, he didn’t see the figure looing in front of him.

He did feel the slim needle the poked into his collarbone, the hand the grabbed him to keep from toppling over, the book falling from his numb fingers.

Then the necklace was slipped off his neck, he had no preparation, and he screamed as the person’s emotions flooded his body, his mind. He screamed so loudly, so filled with pain and hate and anger, that the person holding him back off. Harry collapsed, panting, and he felt his mind struggle to deal with the influx of new information, the drugs in his system, the lack of his necklace, the fuzzy image of Zach in front of him.

“Why….” He said, his words slurring.

“If you’re important to the Doctor, if he’s who the files say he is, then he can help us significantly. And we need leverage. We thought we would have to threaten him directly. Then you came up. Weren’t we lucky. The Doctor’s companion, his child, his son, now in our hands. And with this pretty little necklace. A hostage and the necessary funding to finish the project.”

“What….what…proj…” Harry couldn’t keep his eyes open very well, his mouth wouldn’t work, his hands were like lead. His hearing still worked though.

“This planet, such a weak planet, so easy to take over. And Torchwood has the best facilities. Did you know the Commander placed secret bases all over the globe? A network of telepathic signals, perfect for overpowering the weak, human mind.”
“Dad…dad’ll stop…stop you…”

Zach laughed. “He won’t even be able to find you.” Harry’s vision blacked out, and the last thing he felt was arms picking him up, cradling him.

The Doctor jabbed at the call button over and over, hoping that it would come faster if he just hit it a few more times. Rose was standing in front of the wall of screens, tapping on the wall with her fingers and moving images around, zooming in here, out there, poking, prodding and generally finding what she was looking for. When she did, a sound of victory rang around the room, followed immediately by one of anger.

“Zach. Why is it always the quiet ones? Damn it.” She reached under the desk and pulled out what seemed like a tube. The Doctor looked back at her.

“What is that?” Rose’s smile was hard.

“Stun ray. With a bit of a jolt. And I know where Harry is.” The Doctor’s eyes widened. “They blocked the video feed from the first ten floors manually and it would be a waste of time to start them again, so I ran a search for the vortex energy. Can’t wipe that from the sensors, and they forgot about those. No one uses them really, here. They were more precaution after an invasion a few decades back. No one left knows about them except me. They found Harry three floors below ground level and moving east. Towards an old exit I could have sworn was blocked off. Obviously not,” she added when the Doctor raised a brow.

“Where does it lead?” he asked quickly. Rose grimaced.

“Tunnel heads out to the Thames, a smuggling safe house. Closed down ages ago but the foundations still there, new hover dock and everything.” Rose bit her lip, looked at the Doctor with a critical eye, sighed, looked at the elevator door that still wasn’t there, looked back at the Doctor. The Doctor raised an eyebrow.

“What?”

“Just….not used to having someone come with me ‘nymore. Been nearly, oh, eight decades since I took someone with me…girl, barely out of her teens, fast, good with a gun…” she stopped, didn’t need to finish the sentence. The Doctor sighed. He did know.

“I’m coming with you. I don’t care, he’s my son and I am not losing him to anyone. What do you know about Zach?” Rose sighed.

“Only as much as what’s in the files really. I try not to work too closely with the members of Torchwood. They don’t know my name, I’m only there once a week to run them through training simulations and I don’t hire them. I vet them, check their records, make sure we don’t get anyone crazy.” She frowned. “He must have slipped through the cracks. Quiet guy, had a run in with an invasion about….thirteen years ago. Worked in the science department for seven years, transferred to field six years ago. Quick on his feet, good thinker.” A slip of an ironic smile. “Little too good, apparently.”

The Doctor fidgeted, then rushed into the now present elevator. Rose pressed an almost invisible button and a screen shimmered into existence on the side wall. She selected the third floor and the elevator started moving. “You’ve gotten cynical Rose,” he said, staring at the doors. He missed the flash of sadness in her eyes.
“Comes with the territory Doctor. You’re not exactly the most cheerful person in the universe, no matter how hyper you are.” The Doctor grinned.

“True that.” His hands ran repeatedly through his hair, making the ends stand up as if electrocuted. He tapped his fingers together, then on the wall, then his leg, until Rose, fed up with the noise, just grabbed his hand in hers and held it still, fingers entwined. It had been too long, she realized, since she had held his hand. Way too long. The look on his face indicated the same.

“There. Now stop fidgeting. We are getting Harry back.” She stopped, screwed her face up in what looked like a grimace, then frowned. “It feels weird saying that to you, that’s your line.”

The Doctor laughed. “Usually is, but it is good to hear it.” Harry, he thought, his little Harry. His magical in every sense of the word Harry. His hand clenched around Rose’s. “If he’s hurt, Zach had better hope you get to him first,” he promised in a low voice. Rose stared into eyes that raged. She hadn’t seen eyes that dark in over a century.

“Zach had better hope that whoever he’s working with has got some mercy,” Rose said. “I’ve got none for him.” Children were children, and it didn’t matter what species or planet of origin, they deserved to be protected. Harry just happened to have a protector who could and would tear the universe apart to find him again. That protector just happened to have along a Bad Wolf who could and would demolish you down to your atomic level. She knew how to fiddle with stun gun technology. She had created it.

The elevator door pinged open and Rose pulled a small screen out of her pocket as they headed out. “That way.” Left it was. With Rose directing, they raced through hallways until they arrived at a brick wall. Rose didn’t hesitate, pressing a small button on the side and watching the brick slide backwards and to the right. The Doctor grinned.

“Brilliant. Secret doors. I love a good secret door.” He ran in and pulled out the sonic screwdriver.

“The detectors don’t go any farther than this. We’ll have to guess.” Rose hoped they guessed right. The Doctor grinned. “No need. Got this.” He brandished his screwdriver. Rose sighed.

“I might not have seen that in years Doctor but even I know it can’t detect humans.” The Doctor shook his head.

“Not that. A special king of psionic energy. Harry’s brimming with it, leaves a trail where ever he goes. Useful in making sure he doesn’t get too lost.” Rose raised an eyebrow. “I’ll explain later. Alonzy!” and he raced down the passageway. Rose grinned. It had been a long time since she had had that heady feeling one got with the Doctor, as if everything would turn out alright.

More twists, more turns, more bends. The Doctor turned unerringly at every corner. The passageway was rough, hewn from rock that was hundreds of years old and hadn’t been touched by modernity. There were still alcoves were lamps and iron rings for torches, something she hadn’t seen in, in, she wasn’t sure. Damp and slimy and dark (she was holding a small globe that illuminated the area around her), Rose checked every so often to make sure her footing was sure and steady. It wouldn’t do to tumble down and break her nose. Her ability to not die did not extend to instantaneous healing.

They stopped abruptly in front of a plaster wall and the Doctor stared at the Sonic Screwdriver, his eyes screwed up, confused. Rose sighed. She had forgotten, over the years, that despite the Doctor’s absolute genius, he was still a bit thick. She shoved him out of the way and raised a foot. She planted it directly through the wall and kicked out into open air.
“Fake wall. Easy to put up, especially if you have a head start.” The Doctor looked at her admiringly. Rose grinned back, tongue between her teeth.

“Brilliant Rose!” He beamed, and he and Rose continued to dismantle the wall bit by bit. When they could finally fit through (it took a bit of punching and kicking and the Doctor almost busting a knuckle before deciding his feet were more sturdy that his hands) the Doctor turned a smile at Rose and went for it. She stopped him with a hand.

“You don’t have a stun gun and I would rather not have a you with a new face if they decide to shoot upon entrance.” The Doctor looked like he was about to protest. “And I’m sure Harry would rather not see you regenerate either.” He froze, then sighed reluctantly and let her head through the hole first, stun gun in hand. She had fiddled the settings into a stun-and-shock mode. It was more than the bugger deserved.

She made sure the room they emerged into was clear before telling the Doctor to come through. Or she would have, if he hadn’t slid out right behind her.

“You’ve gone and grown up on me,” he said offhandedly. Rose gave him a tight smile.

“I didn’t have much of a choice now did I?” she shot back. Then she sighed. They would have to talk about this power thing when they had the chance. She wasn’t a twenty year old London shop girl anymore. He couldn’t treat her like it either. “Now, where’s Harry?”

The Doctor was already taking readings. “Come on then Rose.” He was heading for the door opposite them. It wouldn’t open. He buzzed at it with the sonic. It stayed locked. “Deadlock seal. I didn’t think you all had them yet. Still too far ahead of your time.” Rose shrugged, then narrowed her eyes.

“Zach’s not working alone. Check the connection with the electronic mechanism. Do they use a fusion blend of hyper-zirconium and something similar to copper?” The Doctor raised an eyebrow but checked obligingly. When he had proven Rose right, she cursed softly. “Damn it. He’s working with the Zotlings. They were the aliens that crashed here thirteen years ago, the one Zach was mixed up in. Tall, blueish species with three eyes and long, thin fingers; brilliant with electronics, the friendly ones at least. Got their ship fixed and they headed back out.”

The Doctor listened in silence. “That’s not all though, is it Rose?” he said softly. Rose shook her head.

“It was a prison transport ship, moving quadrants. A riot had broken out and one of the inmates had messed with a few couplings and the nav system. They left missing about four inmates. Most of us figured they died in the crash. Zach said he had seen some burn up….” Rose narrowed her eyes, then sighed.

“He was lying then, wasn’t he.”

“Yeah. That particular combination of metals comes from their ship. It wasn’t top of the line so when a few spools of wire went missing no one questioned it.”

“Very good Commander,” a crackling voice spoke. “And you’ve done well in finding this place. We weren’t sure if you would.” The Doctor jerked his head up sharply. A screen was set above the doorway and a tall, thin, blueish creature with three eyes sat in front of it. Rose could see Harry laying on a couch in the background.

“What do you want with Harry?” the Doctor asked. The Zotling tilted its head.
“He is only bait, Doctor. We need you.” It looked over at Rose. “And you, Commander. This child was just a means to an end.”

“If you’ve hurt him,” the Doctor started, but the creature waved it’s abnormally long fingers dismissively.

“No, no, why would I do that? Only if I need to would I hurt the child. He is my…leverage, as you would say it. My insurance to assure that the work I need done will be completed.”

“And what’s that?” the Doctor asked. The creature’s eyes widened in a smile of sorts.

“Why, my future plans. With the police long gone from this quadrant and this species, this primitive species, so far from being able to build the necessary equipment to return to any planet with some form of civilization more…advanced than this petty human race, I have decided that I shall place myself as their commander and take control of this pitiful and weak species. It would be a boon to them, a helping hand in their time of need. They are most definitely so far behind what I need.” The Doctor glared at the screen.

“And so you took Harry to force me to help you complete a machine that you would use to take over the world? How daft are you?” The alien looked amused, rather than insulted. Rose wondered if the Doctor had any sort of plan at all and was about to take control of the situation, when she noticed Harry standing up behind the alien, his hand removing his necklace, his other reaching out. She remembered when harry had said earlier, about his ability to removed emotions from people. What was he going to do?

She turned her attention back to the Doctor. He was distracting the alien, keeping him occupied on him so he wouldn’t look behind him.

“Young Harry is my insurance, my green card, to use one of your world’s quaint phrases. He is here to make sure you work quickly. Zach will lead you to the device. And Commander, if you decide to shoot Zach, I would make sure you don’t care too much about young Harry here,” the alien turned around to gesture and was met with Harry’s face. Harry smiled widely. “What? How?” The alien didn’t get much farther than that.

“Time to sleep,” Harry said viciously, then clamped both hands around the alien’s face. He screamed soundlessly, and the alien screamed with him. They both collapsed and the Doctor looked like he would jump through the screen if he could. It was lucky the door clicked open, otherwise Rose was sure the skinny Time Lord would have tried his luck ramming through titanium alloy. Zach was met with the very angry face of the Doctor.

“Take me to see your boss, now.” Zach quivered, quailed. He looked at Rose, who was pointing the tube at him. He gathered his courage, stepped visibly back from the Doctor, then said,

“He..he said that if you hu-hurt me, he’ll hurt the child.” Rose raised an eyebrow.

“Look at the screen, Zachary. You’ll see that you’re a little behind the times.” Zach nervously stepped into the room, looked up at the screen, noticed the two unconscious figures, gulped.

“Al-alright. This-this way.” Rose looked at the Doctor.

“Couldn’t you have tracked him?” she asked, pointing at the screwdriver. The Doctor shook his head.

“No, this whole place is lead lined. Only got as far as this door, that’s it. Then it cuts out, caput, gone.” He looked at Zach. “Now, take me to my son.” Zach nodded tightly.
It was a short journey, a few flights of stairs and a few turns, then the room they had seen on the camera was suddenly in front of them. Rose stayed with Zach, keeping the stun gun aimed at him, while the Doctor rushed to Harry. He gently placed the necklace back on him before picking him up and holding him close. Rose was sure Harry was going to get some kind of lecture later about risking his life (when did the Doctor not lecture someone on the principle, despite the hypocrisy that particular lecture brought about) but right now, all she could see was relief.

Rose pulled primitive handcuffs out of a pouch on her belt (no one knew about them anymore so no one could pick them) and attached Zachary to the metal tubing running floor to ceiling. It was strong enough to keep him in one place. Then she walked over to the two figures on the ground. The Doctor was carefully holding Harry to him.

Harry looked so much smaller when he wasn’t awake, Rose realized. Absolutely tiny. His hands fit whole in her palm, his tiny nose and mouth wouldn’t have been out of place on a much younger child. If she hadn’t known better, she would have put Harry’s age at four. She gently touched the Doctor on the shoulder and he looked up at her, his face drawn in that bottomless agony she had seen so long ago, when he hadn’t been able to save someone in time, or when she had gotten hurt. She cupped a cheek, then took on of his hands and placed it over Harry’s strongly beating heart.

“He’s fine Doctor. He’s alive, he’s breathing, he’s not bleeding. We need to get out of here, I need to have this stuff swept up by Torchwood employees, I need to have my senior officer re-vetted and then have him do a sweep of Torchwood. And I need to figure out what to do with Zach and our blue friend here, so take Harry and get back to the Tardis. I’ll meet you there in a little while.” She smiled at him. “And don’t leave without me.”

“Rose…I can help. I really can…” Rose raised an eyebrow, then looked down at Harry.

“Doctor, the bad guys are unconscious or handcuffed, there’s no imminent threat of impending explosion or other massive problem that only the brilliance of you could defeat, so you can take a bit of time and take care of your kid. He deserves that much at least. It can’t be easy on him, messing with emotions like he did.” The Doctor’s eyes widened.

“How…”

Rose smiled. “He’s your kid in every sense of the meaning Doctor. Including babbling too much. He told me.” Rose stroked a hand down Harry’s cheek. “He’s special, he is.”

The Doctor nodded, then stood up, Harry’s head balanced on his shoulder and arms dangling by his side. He looked at Rose. “I’ll wait here until you can get someone else here. I don’t want to leave you alone.” The at all was implied. Rose smiled.

“Let me call Javier. I can trust him.” She reached for her communication device and dialed a specific number, then held it up in front of her. A face swam into view.

“Commander?” Its tone was confused.

“Javier, get two people you trust implicitly and follow this signal. Bring a full kit, dismantle and destroy. Interrogation kits as well.” The face on the screen looked puzzled but didn’t argue. It faded to black and a small blue light clicked on the top. The Doctor settled onto the couch Harry had been laying on, looking at Rose with unreadable eyes. Rose ignored him, checking instead on the former Torchwood employee who was now leaning heavily against the wall, head against the pole. Zach looked up at her.

“Well now, what are we going to do with you?” The way she said it made Zach gulp. The
Commander’s reputation was scary. Scary and unnerving and made Zach shiver in his boots. Before all this, the idea of being exposed as working for an alien taking over the world had given him nightmares. He wasn’t the bravest person, he wasn’t the smartest, but he had realized opportunity to get his share of a world that had screwed him from the beginning. But looking at the eerie gold eyes that held absolutely no mercy for him, he didn’t think even the glimmer of possibility was worth it.

“Wh-what are you go-go-going to do to m-m-me?” he stuttered. Rose didn’t smile.

“I’m sure there’s sufficient punishment awaiting you. A bit of retcon maybe, a stay in the dungeon cells, though I could just send you to the remodification center. You know the one.” And Zach did. Where the mentally insane were sent, their brain modified, they became an entirely new person. The faults were stripped away, something just slightly more human that a robot emerged. One’s identity was completely gone. Destroyed by probing tools and chemicals and the promise of a better future. It was something the Commander had fought with all her power behind her against, and seethed when it had been pushed through the Union Federation’s congress. Still, she wasn’t above threatening with it. She did so now with relish.

“Please…please, not there. Not there, anywhere but there, please…” it was a whispered plea that got an ironic smile from the woman in front of him. She pushed her blonde hair out of her face, stood up.

“I’m not cruel enough to send you there, but I’m not the one deciding your punishment. It wasn’t my child you kidnapped Zachary.” She turned to the Doctor. “It was his.” The Doctor met Rose’s eyes, his own wide in shock.

“I….I am not, no, Rose, no. I can’t, Rose. You know I can’t.” He grimaced. “This is why I don’t like to stick around afterwards. I don’t deal with the consequences.”

“And look where that’s got you Doctor.” The Doctor frowned.

“I won’t Rose. Can’t, won’t whatever the word you’re looking for, that’s me.” They stared at each other for endless minutes, then three figures rushed in the door. Rose turned to them.

“Javier, make sure that one over there,” she pointed at Zach,” make sure he’s dealt with appropriately for betrayal. Then him.” Another gesture towards the still unconscious Zotling. “Then I want a systematic check, room by room sweep of this entire warehouse. Top to bottom. Any foreign tech, cordon off, call me. I’ll run by it. Doctor,” she turned, found him already out the door and almost to the stairs. Javier raised an eyebrow, then nodded after the Doctor’s retreating back. Rose rushed out the door.

She caught him halfway up the next flight of stairs. “You know the way out?” she asked. The Doctor raised an eyebrow.

“I’m sure I can find it. I’ll be in the Tardis, whenever you’re done. Isolating Harry is probably the best thing for him. His mind is still healing; he forced too many emotions at once through it.” Brown eyes looked into gold. “I’ll still be here, whenever you’re ready. To come or stay, whichever.” He leaned down, kissed her gently on the lips, then the forehead, pressed his forehead to hers, then left, back up the stairs before Rose could say anything. She watched him go.

Her Doctor, he was still alive, still the same, stubborn man he’d been since she met him, still handing out mercy like it was a little league trophy. She was glad at least that hadn’t changed.

But she had, she had changed so much since she had left him. Since he had left her, something else she needed to talk to him about. But right now she needed to deal with clean-up, delegation of responsibilities and a rogue alien prisoner.
The Doctor found the Tardis easily enough. As soon as they had hit ground level, the pull from the telepathic link guided him gently towards her. She sat at the edge of a square, near an unused fountain. The doors opened for him and he carried Harry inside, shutting them and heading towards Harry’s rooms.

Everything seemed to happen to Harry, everything bad that had ever happened to any of his companions, little seven year old Harry managed to out-do them by a mile. Well, with a few notable exceptions, but it wasn’t as if he was jeopardy-friendly or a trouble magnet. It was is if danger only had to get a whiff of him and it was off, Harry was in trouble; he always ended up in trouble somehow, and he never felt any better for knowing that Harry was still alive.

He set Harry down gently on his bed, took of the tiny boots that Harry insisted on wearing and slipped off the small jacket he had found in the wardrobe. He tucked the blankets around him, watched Harry curl up in them, and sighed softly. Little Harry, so unpredictable, so uncaring of his own life. At some point he would have to make a more concentrated effort to remind Harry that he was only a child, that he could get hurt. Now though, now, with Harry isolated and contained and out of harm’s way, he had other, more pressing matters to attend to. Like Rose. Rose being alive, Rose being unable to die, Rose being…Rose being here. Here and solid and he could hold her. Rose being a hundred and fifty years older than she had been when he had left her. Time had passed for him, enough time that her loss wasn’t a festering sore that sent agonizing pains through him every time it was prodded, enough time that Harry had filled a part of him he didn’t even know he needed filling and had helped him heal, enough time that he didn’t turn and expect to see her grinning at him with her tongue between her teeth, brown eyes alight with amusement and happiness. But a hundred and fifty years was a long time. Long enough for him to know Rose had changed. She had grown up, she had become responsible and determined and able to handle herself without him. He didn’t even know if he was still necessary, if she still needed or wanted him around, if he was anything more than a distant memory. Human memory was a very strange thing. He remembered his past if perfect detail, all of it, a side effect of being a Time Lord. Human memory was fluid, the details could and would change; the more often one remembered something, the more it changed.

He lounged in a chair beside the pool, a book in his lap, his eyes not reading the words. He had come here to see Rose, to make sure she had lived a good life, loved, moved on. He hadn’t counted on making it here a century too late and still finding her. Still finding Rose, defending the Earth. Even had her own name, the Commander. And her eyes, gold and bright. The same golden light that had emanated from the Tardis console, light that indicated Huon particles and vortex energy and so much more.

Rose had never been meant to be cursed like she had, to live forever in an unending life. If he was right, she would outlive him now, never mind the forever part. It scared him, because time had a changing quality on everyone it touched. No one was ever the same after being affected by time, and a hundred and fifty years of it would change anyone. Even Jack Harkness, con artist extraordinaire, had changed. He commanded attention, he knew the value of life, since his own was never ending, he longed for death because he couldn’t die. It was a scary thing.

He knew how time changed a person. He had started out, exiled on Earth with his granddaughter, a haughty, stubborn old man with a penchant for looking down on humans. Always trying to be older, wiser than he was because his own people couldn’t. Now, older than he could remember (he said nine hundred like a woman in her forties said twenty. He just didn’t want to remember), he tried to hide the years he had lived in a bundle of energy and movement and knowledge and unending thirst.
for adventure. With Harry, he had someone to show the universe to. Someone to share it with, someone who would value it because it was his home, the entire universe his home. There was some lesson about corrupting influences there, the knowledge that Harry might never be satisfied with a stationary life on one planet, the possibility of him dying young, but with those wide green eyes, he couldn’t help but let him see the universe in all its magnificence.

Now he was back on Earth, back in a parallel universe where Rose was immortal and might travel with him again, and he felt the blame for it fall squarely on his shoulders. Rose had been affected by the time vortex far more than she had said. It hadn’t shown, not at first, but no one could hold that much power in their body, control that much energy, without being changed on a fundamental level. Rose was timeless. Timeless and unending and would become an integral part of the universe, he could feel it. And the reason could be put on his shoulders. On the shoulders of a him with large ears and nose, who wore a black leather jacket and tight jeans, who had just found a ray of sunshine after years of torment and had taken it for himself.

He was still sitting beside the pool when a warm, female hand clasped his. He looked up into gold eyes and tried not to let the emotions running through him show on his face. He had evidently failed because Rose sighed softly and pulled away, then yanked him into a hug.

“Doctor, when will you stop blaming yourself for things you couldn’t control?” she asked, almost as if not expecting an answer. Good, because he didn’t have an answer for her.

Rose had taken the time necessary to speak with Javier alone, away from the prying ears of those he had brought along. He looked at her seriously, his dark black eyes flat. Rose appreciated this in him, his seriousness and commitment to duty. It was what made him the functioning head of Torchwood, since Rose couldn’t and wouldn’t be in any government documents.

“Commander, you are leaving then?” Javier wasn’t surprised then. Rose nodded.

“Yes. I will be turning over control of all Torchwood operations to you, the security map and grid of every Torchwood base around the world. The heads of the Asian and American bases already send their reports to you, the African, Antarctic, and Australian bases will be notified of the change of command.” Javier’s eyes widened imperceptibly, then he nodded.

“Will you be coming back at any time in the future?”

“No. I doubt it. I trust you to take care of things here.” Javier smiled a thin smile.

“I don’t doubt that Torchwood will be less without you, but we can take care of business here just fine. We might just have to find a new heavy hitter for the fields.” He quirked a brow. “Or a team.” Rose smiled.

“You will also need to run full backgrounds on everyone within the compound and any new employees you hire. I will run a check of my own before I leave and send you the results, before I lock my station.”

“I am to assume your offices will remain locked for further use?”

Rose waved a dismissive hand. “No. I won’t be coming back, it would be a waste of space. You can take control of them or appoint someone to them, but don’t leave them to get dusty. They served me well.”

“I understand Commander, and if I may be so bold, may I ask your name, since you won’t be
returning?” It was something that he had wondered about for years, ever since he had been hired on and the young-looking woman had appointed him her second in command without so much as an introduction. Everyone else had told him she was the Commander. Rose smiled a wide and genuine smile, one he hadn’t seen before. Her eyes lit up.

“Rose. My name is Rose. Someone in this universe should remember the Tyler family, since I won’t be here.” Javier’s eyes widened.

“The Tylers? Rose Tyler, you’re Rose Tyler?” And wasn’t that just a kick in the ass. Rose Tyler, long lost heir to the Tyler family fortune, believed to be running around somewhere in the wilderness (or her progeny at least), Commander of Torchwood. Rose smiled and nodded.

“I’ll leave you to finishing the work here. I’ll make sure the security codes are sent to your desktop and the employee files. Goodbye Javier, and thanks for your work here.” Javier saluted and Rose smiled lightly. “No need for that.”

“You’ve saved the planet enough times to deserve it Comman…Rose Tyler.” Javier smiled though. “It was good serving under you.” Rose nodded. Then she left, heading out and up to the surface, finding her way back to headquarters and down to her office.

Harry had packed what little she had (the little imp had packed her underthings too, she noticed, a smile on her face). He had missed the secret compartment above her bed, where she kept things from before, when her family had been alive, when she had traveled with the Doctor. Her phone, still working. It had been well used, its photos well perused, the buttons no longer showing any numbers. A camera, new battery made it still operational. It held pictures of her family, Tony and his partner Jeff, their adopted daughter Kelly (she had died before having any children, an auto accident). Her mother and father, the Doctor’s metacrisis, then pictures of her Doctor, both of them. The memory of this model had been expanded as technology improved, and the thousands of photographs had been viewed and loved and printed out many many times. Eventually, as memories pressed, she had put the camera away.

Her pink sweatshirt, now grey with age. Small collectibles she had in her pockets from her times on different planets, in different times. She put them all inside one of the two bags she had. Then she ran the background tests again, checked deeper, sent the results to Javier’s terminal with an encrypted email with the passcodes. It took her ten minutes to finish. Technology had grown easy and quick to use over the years, something she found both intriguing and annoying. When one had all the time in the world, one relied on some things to slow one down. When the computer started operating efficiently about seventy years ago and only improved in speed, she had had to find other ways to fill her days.

As the lights powered down and Rose stood in the elevator, watching as her office shut down, she could only feel a sigh of relief. After all this time, all this waiting, staring up at the still unreachable stars and yearning to see them again, to do something, anything than stay on the ground where no one knew her anymore, and she didn’t really know anyone either, she was leaving. And she was leaving with the Doctor.

The Tardis wasn’t hard to find, a blue police box stood out among the bright reds and yellows and crisp greens and whites of the buildings, and the fact that it was relieved by the black stone of a monument to those lost in the third World War made it all the easier to find. She fumbled, trembling with the key, and opened the door.

The bright pulse of light staggered her backwards, and she held onto the cool metal railing she hadn’t felt in a century and a half. A warm song filled her mind, her ears tingled at the non-sound, her eyes blinked away tears and sparkles and light. The door shut behind her and she could hear the
welcoming presence of the Tardis, telling her she was home.

She nearly fell to the metal grated floor right there. It was good to be home, it was good to be back to the one place she had truly felt alive in. Her whole being felt whole once more, as if she had been missing some part of herself and she hadn’t known it until it was filled.

She pat the console lovingly, then asked “Can you help me find the Doctor?” The Tardis let the image of the library bloom in her mind and she smiled. “Thank you old girl. You’re amazing.” The Tardis purred in contentment. She had missed Rose too.

Unerringly Rose headed down the corridors and to the library, knowing exactly where it was. It was as if the Tardis hadn’t wanted her to get lost, had wanted her to find him. It was probably true. Rose smiled. The door was open, the rows and rows of books set around and beside a giant swimming pool. The Tardis was starting to match the Doctor for eccentricity, a swimming pool in a library. Or a library in the pool room. Something.

The Doctor was sitting, staring at a book without reading it, eyes troubled and full of self-loathing, hands folded under his chin. Rose sighed. He would always blame himself for things, would always feel as if he were the one to blame for the wrongs in the universe, all of the wrongs.

She had hoped Harry had knocked that out of him, but apparently the tiny tot hadn’t managed it yet. He was so deep in thought that he didn’t notice her until she put a hand on his. He looked up at her, and she could see the hate and pain and sorrow on his face as if he had written them there with permanent marker. She sighed. Only one remedy for this, really. She pulled him up, surprised at the ease in which he followed her direction, and wrapped her arms around him. She felt his go around her, hold her as if she might break. She sighed into his chest.

“Doctor, when will you stop blaming yourself for things you can’t control?” He didn’t answer, which was answer enough. She pulled back slightly, looked at him directly. “It’s not your fault, the fact that I’m…death-proof.” She grinned, irony in her smile. “I’ve had a while to get used to it. Long enough that nothing you could possibly say about blaming yourself would change that fact. It’s happened, it’s over.” The Doctor’s eyes misted.

“But I’m the reason you were stuck there Rose. Why you had to live alone.” Rose sighed.

“And we’ll get to the leaving me behind thing in a while, but I understand. Really, I do. I might not like it and I might have spent a decade throwing flammable darts at your picture, but I do understand why you left me. In a weird, Doctor-y like way.” She smiled. “You left me with a you, a Doctor. He just wasn’t you. Not really. Too much of Donna mixed into a personality that was volatile and couldn’t stay still for longer than five minutes. No one was surprised when he died. We were more shocked that he lived so long. He couldn’t settle down, but you couldn’t have known that. And don’t start on the I should have known that tangent. You aren’t all knowing. From what I remember, you are rather thick about things a lot of the time.” Rose sighed, looked back at the Doctor.

The Doctor didn’t really know what to day. Rose had that effect, had always had that effect, the ability to just stun him with words. He couldn’t do more than pull her into him, tighten his hold, and just feel her in his arms. Her head tucked under his chin, her arms around his waist, her hair, honey colored and curling past her shoulders, tickling his nose. Her heart beat reassuringly against his chest, her breath whooshed over his collar bone, her fingers tightened against his back, clenched in his suit jacket.

“What did I ever do to deserve someone like you? You and Harry, both of you.” His voice was soft and full of choked emotion. Rose smiled.
“You were just you Doctor. Nothing more, nothing less. That’s all you need to be. Harry needs a father, here you are, full of energy and knowledge and two hearts large enough for the Universe. When you picked me up, I needed adventure, excitement, something different. There you stood, in leather with sad blue eyes and a blue box that traveled through time and space.” She pulled back slightly, though not far, the doctor wouldn’t let her move too far away, and tilted her head up so she could look at him closely. “And I fell in love with that big eared, blue eyed mad man. Then he changed, a skinny geek with pinstripes and trainers and so much energy and excitement and smiles and laughter, but still just a mad man with a box. And I loved him too.” Her hand ran through spiky brown hair. “And if he could ever forgive himself, that mad man with his blue box could love himself again.”

The Doctor blinked slowly, dark eyes misty. How had he lived without this wonderful woman with her knowing eyes and heart full of love and just everything? Rose, his Rose who loved him regardless of how much he screwed up or how often he landed them in a jail or whatever he did, she loved him. Did she still, could she still? Had a hundred and fifty years dulled her emotions? He looked at her.

“Do you still need me?” he asked softly, heart in his throat. He looked everywhere but her face. He heard her laugh softly.

“Doctor, the day I don’t need you is the day I die, and since that isn’t happening any time soon, you’re just going to have to get used to having me around.” She tilted her head. “And you? How long has it been for you?” She pursed her lips. “Not as long as I had to wait, you wouldn’t have stayed with the same face,” she teased gently. “But how long?”

The Doctor sighed, thought back. He never misplaced years, not the years Rose was gone. His age, yeah, he forgot that on purpose, but the time since Rose had left, he would never forget it. How could he? He watched her fly toward the void, almost vanish into it, he father catching her at the last minute. She had almost vanished into the blackness of nothingness, and he had felt his hearts stop, jolt, stutter, then start again when she had been saved. Then she had come back, years later for him, only four for her, and he had felt his hearts start to beat again, pump blood around consciously, had jolted when she stood there, gun in hand, blonde hair, brown eyes, red lips, then he had left her on that beach again. And now, here she stood, a hundred a fifty years later for her, and for him,

“37 years, five months, four days, three hours and ten minutes,” he said softly. Rose blinked, sighed, smiled.

“Sometimes I forget you have time running through your brain, then you know how many minutes it’s been since you last saw me and it all comes rushing back.” She leaned up on tiptoe, face to face with him. “Well, Doctor, long enough for me to know that, no matter how long it’s been, I should have snogged you when I was still twenty and naïve.” And she pressed her lips to his gently, hand twining around his tie to pull him closer.

The Doctor felt his hearts soar and sing and possibly the pleased rumble of the Tardis in the background. The kiss in Rose’s rooms had been a desperately needed reminder that the other was there, physically, that they existed. This, this was something that, in any movie, would be accompanied by fireworks or waves on a beach or some other sappy, romantically lit scene. Here though, in a library/swimming pool room, inside a small blue box, it couldn’t have been anything other than what they had been waiting for for years.

They breathed together, hands resting, not pulling at clothes, not yanking at hair, not desperately scrambling for skin. Rose had the Doctor’s tie in one hand, the other around and cradling his neck. The Doctor was running fingers through soft tresses with one, the other resting on the small of her
back. It contrasted with the quick and heady kisses, soft and hard at once, nipping teeth and soothing tongue, the fact that one had forgotten toothpaste this morning and the other tasted oddly of garlic and spaghetti (Harry’s breakfast food choice of the day) didn’t matter. Just the physical contact, the pressure of bodies and mouths and heat and cold and the beat of hearts was all they seemed to need at the moment.

~~~~This is an Ending~~~~~

Chapter End Notes

So…here it is. Rose Tyler’s return. I hope I haven’t done it injustice (besides the extraordinarily long wait between this chapter and the last…) and there is a side story I will upload shortly as a companion to this, Rose’s story. Quite a few of your questions will probably be explained there.

As to all of you amazing, wonderful, brilliant reviewers, readers, alerters, followers, all, Thank you. Seeing your notices in my inbox all the time finally gave me the kick to get this done and put it up. I will hopefully have replies to you as soon as possible, school and paper due tomorrow permitting.

Kuroi out.
In Which the Consequences Become Obvious

Chapter Summary

So, there were some problems last time with the tunnel. What happens now?

Chapter Notes

Hey, a new chapter! How awesome! While I wasn't able to actually finish NaNoWriMo for the first time in four years, I did get the beginning of the next adventure written and should have it finished soon! Thank you all! Hope you enjoy! It is a direct continuation from the end of the last chapter, a new thing for me in this story.O.O

See the end of the chapter for more notes

~~~~~This is a Beginning~~~~~

A moment decidedly interrupted by the squeak of a small child. The Doctor and Rose separated, one sighing the other smiling. "Harry's gonna learn how to knock before walking into rooms," the Doctor said decidedly. Rose smiled.

"He's a kid, what's the worst that can happen?"

The Doctor raised and eyebrow. "His uncle is Jack Harkness. He has access and knows how to use most of the various pieces of technology used to capture images in about three dozen different formats and the ability to send said images to Jack Harkness. I would rather said Captain doesn't get a hold of some of them." Rose laughed.

"Turning into a prude in your old age, Doctor?" The Doctor's ears reddened.

"I like to keep my dignity intact, thank you very much. And what's happened to you, what happened to the blushing and turning red?" Rose shrugged a shoulder, smiled.

"After having to face down an invading army of squirming, giant pink fuzzballs in nothing more than a towel, you sort of lose that bit of modesty." Rose eyed the Doctor up and down. "And someday soon, I'll make sure the only thing your wearing is that tie." The Doctor flushed slightly, but smirked.

Harry peeked back around the door. "Dad, Rose, you done trying to suck each other's internal organs out through your mouths?" he asked, eyes shut tight. Rose laughed.

"Yes Harry, we are. Are you alright?"

"Fine. Headache's gone and everything. All good. Anyway, Dad, that diary of Rassilon's, the last few pages, did you see them?" The Doctor frowned, tilted his head. Shook it. Harry sighed. "They mentioned a few complications of the tunnel. As in, destabilization and time frames and leaking into the universal planes and the screen is starting to turn black so I thought I might want to warn you." Harry and Rose watched as the Doctor froze, then raced out of the room, mumbling under his breath.
"Of course, of course, how could I have missed it? How thick am I? I need a bigger brain!" Rose followed Harry, who had taken off after his dad and was dashing down the halls, at a more sedate pace. She was sure that whatever was happening, it would still be happening when she got there and she wasn't going to be able to contribute to the higher-dimensional mathematics in any way.

The hallways of the Tardis were still a comforting yellow shade, matching the coral of the console room. They still twisted and turned and folded out into various dimensions and directions. She missed this, the feeling of walking aimlessly in a circle while still accomplishing forward momentum and getting somewhere. There weren't very many places one could do this, except in the Tardis.

She made it to the console room not long after Harry and the Doctor did, only to find it in a state of absolute chaos. The Doctor stood at the console itself, frantically jabbing buttons and spinning knobs and pulling levers, all the while shouting to the suspiciously absent Harry.

Or so she thought, until she saw the pair of feet poking out of the floor in the general directions of yelps of pain and sparks. It also seemed to be the direction the Doctor was shouting in. The words, however, she wasn't quite sure she understood.

"Harry! You need to disconnect the flux capacitors and redistribute the positive flow with the dimensional stabilizers and plug the vortex transmogrifiers into the internal spacial reductional vents!" Rose kept herself to the back wall. Technology from 21st and 22nd century Earth she could handle with no problem whatsoever, having a century with plenty of free time meant taking things apart and putting them back together and discovering that this little wire right there would cause mass electrocution if misplaced. This dimension of engineering wasn't on her scale of feasible. She didn't have a century of taking it apart.

How Harry knew what went where, well, he grew up on the ship. It was only logical that he could recognize things. This is what she told herself to make sense of why the seven year old could engineer such a complex ship as the Tardis.

Harry's head popped back above the grill line. He smiled at her, face covered in soot and oil. "Alright dad, everything reconnected, the artron energy flow should be distributed amongst the dimensional stabilizers and manipulators, since you seem to forget those, and the vortex transmogrifiers should be compensating for the screw up in the tunnel's leakage." The Doctor beamed at the child.

"Brilliant Harry! Absolutely brilliant! Now, let's see if we can get her back through the tunnel before it collapses!"

Rose raised an eyebrow. "I thought you said it was a stable tunnel," she said, a hint of mocking in her tone. The Doctor scratched his head sheepishly.

"Yeah, well, it was, until I remembered I hadn't taken into account the lack of stabilization in the void dimension and the bleeding of time. I mean, before the war, the Void had been stabilized to allow for travel between the equations I used stabilized the tunnel but couldn't accommodate the space between the dimensions because no one knew what was there at the the time. When Tardis's could travel from dimension to dimension, it had taken an entire team working with some of the most advanced equipment to figure out the precise balances needed. It was only after they were lost that the equations and stabilizers were gone. I…didn't factor that into the calculations…." Harry snorted. The Doctor looked at him, a smile affixed to his face.

"It's something he would miss, wouldn't it?" Harry said to Rose.

"Oi!"
"Yep, it is indeed. Always forgetting the common sense," she agreed.

"Oi! Right here!"

Harry and Rose turned to the Doctor, mock astonishment on their faces. "Really? I didn't see you!"

The Doctor huffed.

"Well, if you wanted to know, we're heading back now, so I would hold on if I were you," he said, sniffing. Rose smiled. Harry clambered into one of the chairs and pulled what appeared to be a seatbelt over his shoulder and clicked it into place. The Doctor grinned at her and she climbed up beside him at the console. She held onto the railing. "Here we go!" And he threw a lever.

The Tardis rolled. Literally, on its side, and the only one who didn't find themselves flung about was Harry, who had raised his arms above his head and cheered. The Doctor and Rose were holding onto the railing and grinning at each other.

"I missed this," Rose yelled over the noise and racket. The Doctor grinned wider.

Another turn, a bump, massive, and a dizzying spin, before they were set down with a none too gentle thump. Steam poured from the floor vents and the lights flashed red. Rose and the Doctor, now laying on the grill, and Harry, unbuckling and hurrying over, sighed in relief. Until the shrill scream of the siren had the Doctor and Rose jumping to their feet. Harry gave them a withering stare.

"Where are we?" Rose asked. Harry looked at her.

"Earth, 2009, about an hour after we dropped uncle Jack off. The Tardis defaulted to the most recent stop on Earth, easiest coordinates, closest to the parallels. But we have another problem." Harry gestured to the screen. "I can't read Gallifreyian that fast, but I got enough to figure out that time isn't completely stable. It went all wonky with the transfer of dimensions. It's bleeding back into this dimension."

The Doctor's eyes were wide, reading, his lips reading out the words without sounds. Harry and Rose watched him, then he suddenly flared into life.

"Out, out, out of the Tardis! Now! Out out out!" Harry and Rose were forcibly evicted from the Tardis and the Doctor rushed after them, slamming the door shut. He sagged against it. Rose looked at him in concern.

"What was that about?" she asked. The Doctor looked at her.

"I dunno, but the warning lights….it was almost as if I had regenerated and she was trying to fix herself too…I dunno…Harry!" Harry had his hands pressed against the wooded shell and his eyes closed. His necklace was in one hand. "Don't…Rose, don't touch him." Rose had reached out to get his attention, but her hand froze inches from the boy's arm.

"What is he doing?" she asked. The Doctor sighed.

"He's, in effect, talking to the Tardis. They have a connection, through Harry's magic. They communicate, but Harry usually has to be inside for it to work properly. Outside, he has to have a physical connection and he can't have the necklace on, it restrains the intrinsic connection. But he's already had a massive shock to his brain and he hasn't quite recovered from it. The Tardis just dulled it until he could fully heal. Which means," he raised his voice as Harry stumbled away from the Tardis, "he shouldn't be messing with any magic of any sort whatsoever." Harry grinned at him, then winced, raising a hand to his head. A trickle of blood imitated a tear, rolling down his cheek. He swayed.
The Doctor caught him quickly, sighed. Harry's eyes rolled upwards to look at his father.

"She's…fixing herself….the travel…messed with her systems…she has to…change…slightly...locked up…for now." His speech was halting and slow, and he had a couple more shallow breaths before he fainted. The necklace was still in his hands, and the Doctor replaced it, the shimmering gold loops standing out brightly against the black of Harry's shirt. Then he bundled the boy up, holding him to his chest protectively. He looked at Rose.

"Torchwood is just over there. Jack'll have something for Harry and you two can catch up." He sighed, looked down at his child. "Why does he always manage to get himself hurt?" Rose snorted. The Doctor looked at her, eyebrows raised. "What?"

"All you have to do is look at his dad. I mean, always running into the thick of things, always in danger. The only reason you don't end up flat on your back every single time is you've got a millennium on him. Harry's seven, Doctor, but he's already trying to be like you. I'm not surprised, really." She paused. "And what's this about magic?"

"Hail Tardis!" A loud, masculine voice shouted out. The Doctor and Rose turned, and a giant grin spread over Rose's face.

"You are telling me about it later," she warned, then raised her voice. "Hail Captain Harkness!" A sound of someone stumbling over their feet as they tried to run reached their ears, and a tall, handsome man in a long grey coat appeared around the corner. His eyes were wide, disbelieving, as he stared at the blonde haired girl.

"Rose? Rose Tyler? Is that really you?" Rose grinned impishly at him. "But you haven't been gone an hour…damn Time Machine."

"Still have that coat, I see. Haven't blown it up yet?" Jack grinned.

"Got a closet full for the occasion," he joked back. He rushed forward, swept her up in a hug. "It's been too long. How…?" he looked over at the Doctor, then saw Harry, blood dripping down the boy's face, and frowned. "Tell me later. What I want to know is what happened to the little imp over there." He glanced up at the sound of thunder. "As soon as we get back to the office." And he whirled around, taking Rose by the arm as he did so. The Doctor grinned, Harry snoring softly in his arms and followed them. Jack was chattering happily to Rose, mostly inane, nonsensical things that amounted to weather talk, but the tight grip he hand on her arm, the quick, disbelieving looks he sent at her constantly, an almost in awe of her existence and also just checking to make sure she didn't vanish in the second it took to check that walking into a wall wasn't in their path. It wasn't so different from the Doctor's current attitude towards Rose's strange and wondrous reappearance into his life. With an abrupt finding of a book that led to the creation of a wormhole that brought them to her reality where she was still alive, it all seemed somehow too convenient to him, especially since the Universe wasn't on his side in most cases. Rose and Harry, he had them both? When had things ever worked out so well.

Jack took the scenic route into Torchwood headquarters, the descending platform. Rose enjoyed the trip down, despite the commonality of similar feats of technology she had had access to in her world. She was more interested in catching up with Jack, what he had been up to, why he was still running Torchwood, how he ran it and any other number of things. Jack laughed as he kept pace with her questions.

"Still run it from here, a central hub of information, really. Used to have a team, but well, you know what happens to Torchwood agents." She had told him of her own position. Rose nodded solemnly.
"Life span isn't long."

Jack smiled ironically. "And as I can't die, well, that always makes this job suck."

Rose smiled. "I can empathize."

Jack nodded, smiling, before he stopped, his mind backtracking the conversation.

"Huh?"

"Immortality sucks when you run an organization where the average life span in 5 years, but it seems appropriate, really. You can't die, you keep everything else in check." Jack squinted his eyes at her.

"You have got to be kidding me. Really." Rose shrugged. "Don't you ever look older? I mean, I find grey hairs her and there, I look slightly older. Granted, after a couple millennia buried alive, one would, but still."

"I don't ever look older. I'm frozen in time, really, is what it comes down to. My biological structure hasn't changed in a hundred and fifty years, a hundred and fifty seven years, to be exact."

The Doctor, who had been busy setting Harry down on a nearby couch and checking over the child's physical condition, looked up, eyes wide.

"What did you say?" he said, incredulity in his voice.

Rose looked at him, eyebrows raised. "Frozen in time. My biology hasn't changed since Platform 5 when I looked into the heart of the Tardis. About the same time I brought Jack back, I think. About the same time all of this stuff happened, really. About the only thing I can affect a change on is my musculature and my hair. Mostly I just stripped the dye away. Hasn't gotten any longer since then." She tilted her head, considering. "I heal up at a normal pace, for the most part. Nails grow back to their original form. If I die mangled, I come back with bleach blonde hair and ragged nails. It's rather irritating." The Doctor looked at her with wide eyes, then looked at Jack, narrowed them, looked back to Rose, and clapped suddenly.

"Oh, yes, why didn't I sense it? Oh I am daft!"

"Well known fact, Doctor. What is it?"

The Doctor ignored Jack and gestured expansively between the two of them and himself. "You know how I once said that you were wrong Jack, since you were a fact, a fixed point?" Jack nodded, smiling.

"Yep. Made me feel all tingly inside." Rose shoved him gently.

"You still feel wrong, in a strange sense, but it isn't bad, really, just odd. But Rose here, I never got that feeling, never. Not once. I mean, something should have happened to her, she looked into the heart of the Time Vortex, even I had to regenerate, but no ill effects, nothing, well, nothing noticeable. Not at first, really. But now, now that I concentrate, knowing that she's well, immortal, I can sense a difference in the time energy that flows around her. It's less like a stone in the middle of the river, like the good Captain here, more like well, more like the river, I guess, like, well, like the Tardis if I had to give it a name." He stood there, hand tangled in his hear, a confused expression on his face. Rose laughed.

"I'm being compared to an ageless ancient time machine. It doesn't get much better than that." Jack smiled, then looked directly at the Doctor.
"Now that that's sorted, how is Rose here, why are half the scanners in Torchwood going off and why is Harry unconscious and bleeding from his ears?" This last part was said as Jack got up and moved over towards the small boy. He knelt down next to Harry, gripped a small hand in his and looked up at the Doctor. The Time Lord sighed into his hands, leaning back against the wall.

"Started about a week ago, give or take. Took Harry to the Shadow Proclamation, boy wasn't that a fun trip." He said it with enough sarcasm to get his point across. Jack smiled, Rose laughed. "Anyway, we ended up in the library and Harry found a diary written in Gallifreyian, it's inside his jacket at the moment." Jack rustled through Harry's clothes until he came up with the book, then stared at it, eyes wide. The circles and lines and circles made his head spin. "Yes, that. It's Rassilon's diary, long before he was president of Gallifrey. Before there had been stable portals or Tardis's able to breach the Void to other Universes, and he explored the possibility in that book. When Harry got to the math, something he couldn't figure out, he gave it to me. Your alarms are going off because I forgot in my haste to account for the backlash of the Time and Space vortex mixing with the Void and seeping into the tunnel I created through into the parallel universe. Right now, and for the next few hours, there is a localized field of time disturbance about fifty feet from the Tardis. And I have to make sure it doesn't get any bigger or that no one stumbles across it." The Doctor sighed. Jack nodded.

"Well, that's how Rose is here, but how did Harry end up like that? Can't be just the travel, he's had worse." The Doctor sighed, screwed up his eyes, breathed deep.

"He took his necklace off too many times for his mind to handle." A hand swiped across a tired face as the Doctor related the last twelve hours, ending with Jack's arrival. Jack sat and listened, eyes flickering every so often, then he looked over at Harry.

Rose stood back and watched them, watched Jack with Harry and the Doctor. These two people, men she hadn't seen in far too long, people she was inexplicably drawn to. Jack, also immortal, actions caused by her own hand. The Doctor, who knows how old, still a mystery and still someone she cared for, loved (that picture she threw darts at was somewhere amongst her papers in her bags). And now Harry, a child, raised in the Tardis by the Doctor, seven years old and already trying to save the universe and be just like his dad. His dad, who was not someone to emulate, Rose thought. His dad who ended up in all sorts of life threatening trouble a seven year old shouldn't be in, who got out with his brain and nerve and sheer luck sometimes. Still, it was heartening, seeing the Doctor just that much happier, his eyes sparkling with delight when he looked at Harry, shining when he looked at her, so far from the sad blue eyes he had when he met her, the manic, somehow optimistic chocolate brown when he regenerated, and that ageless pain when she saw him again. He looked happier, like he had something to live for, rather than just counting the seconds until one death trap wouldn't be escapable.

"So then, what are we going to do about the scanners?" She interrupted the conversation that was starting to turn towards Jack goading the Doctor with flirts and eye rolls from the Time Lord. They looked over at her, and the Doctor cleared his throat awkwardly. She snorted.

"Well, I was going to use the equipment here, since the Tardis is all locked up." He looked at Jack for permission, and he gave it with a nod of his head. "Then I'll go take a look. Rose, coming?" Rose smiled and nodded. While it was a strange experience, giving up command after having it for well on a a hundred years, it was also a bit of a relief. Someone else in charge would probably rub her the wrong way eventually, but for now she would enjoy not having to make the first decision.

Jack held onto the tiny, cool hand a little longer. Such a small person, Harry was. He didn't seem all that small, not when he was talking and running and laughing.
He laid a hand on Harry's cheek, marveling at how small he was, how small his cheek was. His hand could cover most of his face, and Harry's own hand, Jack judged, would fit comfortably in his palm, all fingers outstretched and everything. Harry was so small, so much life in such a tiny body.

A body that ended up unconscious and hurt more times than he was comfortable with, especially for a seven year old.

"You've known Harry for a while, haven't you?" Jack whirled around, surprised. Rose stood behind him, leaning on the railing, hand crossed over her chest and a smile on her face.

"Make more noise next time, would ya?" he asked. Rose grinned.

"It's an art I rather enjoyed perfecting," she said. Jack chuckled.

"You would. Yeah, I've known Harry a while. He was three or so. Four years for him." Rose nodded.

"For you?" Jack raised and eyebrow.

"Not much longer, honestly. I only come back here sporadically, usually to make sure Britain isn't overrun with aliens and the like. Right now I'm reorganizing a new team. Cardiff needs one at the rift, I can't just drift without someone here, but I always feel bad leaving them alone." Rose nodded at his words. She probably would have felt the same, she was sure.

"They bring a lot of life with them, don't they?"

"Enough to fill the galaxy with and more besides." Jack grinned. "Isn't life so dull when they aren't around?"

Rose laughed. "Better believe it."

Jack smiled, then sighed. "But Harry here ends up hurt more often than I like, especially for a seven year old."

Rose snorted. "Look at his Dad, yeah? It's no wonder."

Jack tilted his head. "How so?"

"You know the Doctor, always running into any dangerous situation he can whenever he can, however he can, if it's to save someone. He hasn't changed, not one bit, no matter how long it's been. And Harry's always there with him, his whole life, by the side of that crazy man. He's trying to be just like his dad. You did the same when you were a kid, I bet, trying to be like one of your parents. I know I spent part of my childhood wanting to be just like my mum. Grew out of it," Rose said. Jack snorted, but he was nodding.

"I see your point. Everyone else he's ever had as a companion before were always old enough to take care of themselves without the Doctor around, had already grown up, huh?"

Rose nodded. "All except little Harry here, who was raised by him. Can you imagine that, raised by the Doctor? I love him to pieces, but as a father figure? He isn't the most self-responsible of people. When I met him, he was just waiting for something to kill him. I'm glad that impulse is gone."

Jack sighed. "It came back, after you got trapped in the parallel world. When I met up with him again, it was like he was still trying to find death." He wrinkled his nose. "By the way, what is our dear Doctor doing with my equipment."
Rose shrugged. "I have no clue. He started on what looked like a computer array set up to monitor
the rift activity, then pulled out the sonic screwdriver and started taking it apart. Since I was
obviously not going to add anything constructive, I was coming back to ask what you knew about
Harry's magic. Now, however, it's been about twenty minutes since he's started and there hasn't been
an explosion yet, so it's due any second…"

"ROSE! JACK! COME ON! WE HAVE A TIME RIFT TO CLOSE!" a shout which was
immediately followed by the sound of an explosion, something electronic fizzing out of control. Rose
smiled.

"Right on time. Well then Captain Jack, will you be my escort to world saving?" She held out an
arm. Jack smiled, kissed Harry's forehead, and nodded graciously.

"Certainly Dame Rose, and may I say you look lovely for a spot of world saving." They giggled
back down the corridor, and Harry slept on, healing slowly.

~~~~This is a Scene Break~~~~~

"So Doctor, you figure out what set the scanners off?" Jack leaned against the wall nearest the
computer console the Doctor had taken apart. "I hope you can put that back together. The equipment
is expensive." The Doctor waved a dismissive hand.

"Works better now anyway. And yes, I have figured out what set the scanners off. When we arrived
back in this universe, the instability of the dimensional vortex that we created also messed with the
flux of the temporal field that is already slightly out of synch with the main timeline of the area but
that's caused by the dimensionality of the rift…" the Doctor and Rose watched the Doctor babble on
for a few more minutes, going off on a tangent about the rift and something about crystallization of
time before Rose stepped in, dragged the Doctor up and around and kissed him. The Doctor froze.

It wasn't a kiss meant to raise the temperature but more of a convenient way to get the Doctor to stop
talking. It didn't hurt that it was the Doctor. Jack laughed and clapped.

"Wha…?"

Rose huffed. "We didn't quite catch the reason for the scanners screamin' and you started talking
about time shards. It was an easy way to get your attention." She shrugged. The Doctor stared at her
while Jack laughed in the background.

"Can I give that a shot next time?" the captain asked from behind Rose. The Doctor glared
indignantly but Rose merely turned a winning smile on him, her eyes sharp. Jack laughed a bit
nervously. "Alright, then, maybe not."

"Thought so. Anyway, Doctor?" The Doctor looked slightly dazed, before he shook his head and
blinked several times.

"Alright, well, what I was saying"

"The shorter, human version that doesn't involve fifth dimension mathematics," Rose interrupted
him, smiling. The Doctor frowned, then nodded.

"Well, what's happened is the instability of the portal also affected the rift, and the rift is a tear in
space/time. The portal is connected to the void, which is basically nothing, though there's a lot of
debate about what is actually there, but for now, nothing works. Anyway, this nothing is seeping into
the rift, and it is bending the space/time hole and dragging things from it, or taking it away, or
something. I'm not quite sure yet on what exactly is physically happening, but, well, it isn't good."
Rose and Jack looked at each other, then Jack pushed off the wall.

"You know, you always manage to bring as much trouble as possible whenever you arrive anywhere. Is this instability affecting the people in the area?"

The Doctor shuffled a bit. "Well, it will be, soon. Crystallized Time often has a detrimental effect on people, freezing them in place, stopping their entire history, erasing things, but it hasn't gotten there yet." He paused. "I think, which is why we need to go now. I need access to your storage rooms Jack, where you keep all the alien technology."

Jack looked at him pointedly, then waved behind him. "In my office, take the stairs down to the stone floor. It's all down there. But make sure you remember what you took! I have to keep the record... wait, stop! The log is behind... ah hell, he's not even listening is he?

Rose chuckled. "Doubt it. But while he's busy building some strange device to close the... whatever's opening, you can answer some questions for me."

Jack swallowed hard. Rose pinned him with her eyes. That golden stare, she knew, broke numerous hardened suspects and would have employees of Torchwood squirming and heading for the door. Jack took it slightly better than most, but he finally sighed.

"Go ahead. Ask your questions."

Rose grinned triumphantly. "Magic. The Doctor mentioned Harry has magic. What did he mean?"

"Well, you start out easy. Harry, from what I understand and have seen, is able to mentally manipulate what the Doctor calls psionic energy, or something really similar, though it isn't quite the same as other species with similar qualities. His people, the magical, can do just about anything with will, words and a specific motion of their wand, or, if they're powerful enough and have enough concentration, just by willing it." Rose blinked, raised an eyebrow.

"So, wand-waving wizards aren't just fairy stories then?"

"Nope. Harry's the real deal. Just, without the wand, from what I understand. Not that he always needs it." Rose nodded at this.

"And the golden chain around his neck. It isn't earth-made, and it seems to control his ability to sense emotions. What is it, and was he born with that ability?" Here Jack sighed deeply.

"Another straight forward question. Just a... tad harder to answer. There was a planet, the Doctor knows the specifics, apparently there was some bad history between him and the ruler. So Zeus, yes, yes, Zeus, took Harry as punishment. Did some things to his brain and his nervous system that really screwed with him. I have never seen the Doctor more pissed than at that moment." Jack swallowed. "He... I think, from what I understood of the situation, the Doctor basically tossed them into a dimension outside of our own, erasing them from the universe. It was a... well, terrifying is a good word."

Rose stared in the direction Harry was sleeping. "A three year old child. Three, three years old, and they..." she couldn't finish the sentence. She breathed deep, knowing that she couldn't do anything about it now except accept it and move on. It didn't mean she wasn't pissed. "Why did the Doctor take Harry with him?" she finally asked. Jack shrugged, smiled.

"Dunno. All I know is that his birth parents were killed when he was barely a year old and the Doctor somehow got a hold of him. For whatever reason, it was good for him, made him happier, saner, saved him, is what Harry did. I remember him after you were trapped, and after he left you..."
again. He thrives on having people around him, they act as a buffer between him and himself, anything he can do to keep from living in the past. But you Rose, you changed him. I didn't notice it at first, not when he had those big ears and blue eyes, but after, after you were gone, he had lost something, something very very important to him. He was scary, Rose. Scary and dangerous and very much looking for a death wish. And now, now he has Harry, the tyke that makes him and just about everyone else smile. You're back too. I'm betting he's wondering what he did to deserve it, cause he can't believe he does. He's just too stubborn, too head strong, puts his life last on the list."

Jack and Rose stared at each other, both knowing the truth in that statement, and Rose sighed. "I'm glad he found Harry before he deliberately flew the Tardis into a black hole then." She smiled at Jack, her eyes shimmering slightly. "It's good to see you again, it really really is."

Jack snagged her and pulled her into him, hugging her close, and Rose hugged back. "Good to see you too kid," he whispered into her hair.

"Oi, if you two are done, we've got a timeline to save!" Rose huffed and smiled up at Jack, then pulled away and started after the skinny, manic frame of the man who saved the world all too often. Jack trailed after her, shouting something that garnered a laugh from Rose and an eye roll from the Doctor.

~~~~~This is a Scene Break~~~~~

Harry blinked slowly, his head pounding and his ears ringing. He was laying…on Uncle Jack's bed? They were back from the parallel world, he remembered, they had made it. Then….then…oh, right, dad had realized there was a problem with the tunnel he had created…

So where were they? Why was he in Uncle Jack's bed? Had he fainted? Something itched his cheek, and he scratched at it. Blood came away, dried and cracking. He followed the trail up to his ear. He had overextended himself, he though ruefully. It wasn't as if he hadn't done it before, but he had…he thought about it. He had taken his necklace off and messed with someone else's emotions….twice, one of them major, after he had been drugged, and then the Tardis, he had to communicate with her. He wasn't supposed to take it off, not unless he had too. Now he was paying the consequences.

Boy what consequences they were too. His brain was trying to break out of his skull and he wasn't sure he was going to be able to hear anything in the near future. He also couldn't see his dad, or Uncle Jack, or Rose.

"Dad? Uncle? Rose?" he couldn't hear himself, his ears were full of bells and electronic white noise. Still, no one came into view and he looked around. There, a small blue cube, sitting on the other side of his pillow. His dad always left one, a voice recording, telling him where he had gone in case Harry woke up before he came back. He would have to wait until he could hear his hands clapping before he listened to it, but that's alright. His dad was fine, he could wait to figure out what had happened.

Now he could explore headquarters.

If his body would let him sit up. It took a few attempts, him finding the floor with his face before his feet, but he eventually ended standing up. His head spun. He grasped the bed he had been laying on, finding his balance, and when the world finally decided it would settle down into something resembling stability, he let go and toddled out towards the main room.

He rarely got to explore the Torchwood headquarters, his dad didn't like Torchwood and Uncle Jack didn't bring them here, not unless they didn't have any other choice. And he was never left alone either. But, from what he could see (he still couldn't hear) no one was here. He could explore to his
hearts content.

If that blasted beeping would stop….He could hear again! And he could hear a high pitched beeping all around him, accompanied by a bright, flashing red light.

And he was sure his dad was at the center of it.

He walked unsteadily back to his bed and picked up the voice cube. A button on the side flicked it on.

"Harry, before you go haring off to find me and inevitably get into trouble, remember that you have a mild concussion and have damaged some of the synapses in your brain. So stay still. Sleep, read a book, write something, anything. I left the diary for you. Don't follow me, whatever you do. I don't want you to get even more injured. Stay in Jack's rooms, inside Torchwood. And don't mess with anything. Love you. Dad."

Harry sighed, staring at the now inert cube. Of course his dad would have him laying down and keeping it easy when there were interesting things going on. Then again, his head was still spinning. Maybe when it wasn't he would find dad and Uncle Jack and Rose. For now, he was going to wait till the ground was stable.

~~~~~This is a Scene Break~~~~~

Rose and Jack followed the skinny frame of the Doctor as he raced towards the Tardis, or the general area of the Tardis. Rose and Jack laughed amongst themselves.

"You know, no matter how long it's been, I will never get tired of this!" Rose yelled. Jack laughed.

"I know the feeling!" The Doctor suddenly vanished in a bright golden glow, and Rose and Jack halted suddenly. "Except when this happens."

Rose blinked, looked around.

"Doctor, Doctor!" She sighed. "I've been head of an institute that deals with aliens for the better part of a century and a half and he always manages to find something brand new no one's ever seen."

This had Jack blinking, thinking it over, before joining her in laughter.

"Isn't that the truth."

A sudden shout reached their ears. "Jack! Rose! Come here! This is amazing!"

Jack and Rose looked at each other, raising eyebrows, sighing in unison. "We can't go anywhere unless we know where you are Doctor!" Jack yelled into the swirling mist of gold light.

"What?" came back out of the light.

"Doctor, we can't see you. Where are you?" Rose qualified Jack's statement. Spiky brown hair, followed by shining eyes and a wide smile, popped out of the golden light.

"Come on then. You don't get to see time being crystalized all that often!"

"Are we gonna vanish into some random time if we head in there? Is it only for special Time Lord biology?" Rose asked, eyebrow raised but looking like she was ready to head into the swirling cloud.

The Doctor looked perplexed. "What? Why for? No, of course not, no side effects, well, none that I
know of, well, nothing too bad, well, you two will be fine." He held out a hand, and Rose smiled, took it. She held out hers for Jack.

"Never fails to surprise me, you two," Jack commented. Rose and the Doctor grinned, and the Doctor pulled them into the Time Storm.

All around them, golden mist swirled and spun and filled the air. The Doctor held on to Rose's hand tightly, watching as she gazed up in wonder at the dazzling mix of color and light all around them.

"It looks like the light from the Tardis," Rose breathed softly. The Doctor grinned.

"Not quite. It's the vortex, but since it's been filtered through multidimensional space and the rift, the atron energy is being crystalized instead of swirling through this universe and messing with the timelines." He looked over at her, smiling, then froze.

Her eyes were glowing gold, echoing back to that moment on Platform 5. He shook her gently, but she didn't respond. Jack hurried over, worry in his eyes.

"What's wrong?"

"She's glowing. A reaction to the vortex, but I don't know…” Rose's eyes blazed with power, and something spoke through her, a tone the Doctor would never forget.

"I am the Bad Wolf. Born from Time and eternal." Jack's eyes widened and he took a few steps back. The Doctor held onto Rose's hand all the tighter.

"Why are you inside Rose?" He asked, directing the question at the spectral energy. Golden eyes snapped to him. A small smile curved Rose's lips.

"I have always been here. The Past, The Present, The Future, Rose Tyler has been my child, just as you are, Time Lord." Rose's head tilted to the side. "My child is a vessel, Time Lord, a vessel for the will of that which you proclaim lordship over. She has always been, will always be and must always be, just like you will forever evade your fate, the immortal will strive towards death and why your young child will defy the universe."

The Doctor's eyes hardened at the mention of Harry, and he gripped Rose's hand all the tighter.

"What are you doing to Rose? Why her?"

A soft laugh was the reply. "Because, Time Lord, the Bad Wolf must always have a vessel. Rose Tyler was a child born with the fate of the universe written into the fabric of reality. What more perfect host than she?" The Bad Wolf looked up amongst the forming crystals of golden time, condensed and capturing eternal moments. "These are the Crystals of Time, a result of the fusion of time and reality and the void, pieces of time taken from the timelines and frozen into perfect crystal shards. It must also be stopped, before it rips the timelines apart."

The Doctor nodded. "That's what I was planning on doing."

The Bad Wolf laughed. "I am sure, Time Lord, just as soon as you were done showing off and expounding on your knowledge about time and space and any other number of things. But we cannot wait for you to finish regaling your tales, this must be sealed."

"Doctor? What's going on?" Jack was standing back from them, pinned by a number of crystals and looking slightly panicked. "I can see the burning of the Library of Alexander in here Doctor!"

"Just...just a minute Jack, I'll get it fixed." He sighed, ran his free hand through his hair, looked back
into the blazing gold eyes. "And what about Rose? Why can't she age? She isn't immortal, like Jack. It's something else. You are the Bad Wolf, you create yourself, what does that mean?"

A slow, easy smile. "You ask a lot of questions, Time Lord. Rose is the vessel of Time and until her task is complete, she will remain alive. And as for that task, that is self evident, my child. The Bad Wolf has and always will create itself. It is the nature of the vessel to create themselves, at some point, to come into their power. Rose created herself when she looked into the heart of the Tardis and thus I was created, yet I have always existed." Laughter at the look of confusion on the Doctor's face. "I shall enjoy watching you over the years. Your life is such an interesting one." Gold eyes looked around.

Shards of golden crystals were falling from the sky, crashing into the ground. Several other people had entered the swirling mist of disassociated time and a few were trapped within the crystals. The Doctor's eyes blazed.

"Now, Time Lord, your work here must be finished. Time should not be leaking like this, and I cannot help you. It is not my place. I was granted speech because of the saturation of time in this area, but I cannot fix it. That you must do. Farewell, Time Lord. We shall meet again."

The Doctor watch, helpless, as Rose's eyes closed and her entire body sagged. He lowered her gently to the ground, then stood up, cracking his knuckled, whipping his glasses out and holding some device he had Macgyvered. He looked at Jack, a wild grin on his face.

"Alright Captain, ready for the fireworks?"

Jack, bemused, confused and slightly concerned for probable outcome of this mad fix, just nodded. He wasn't really ready for anything, but he wasn't about to say that, not if the Doctor could get rid of this view of the Coliseum in Rome, somewhere between 15 B.C.E. and 25 C.E.

The Doctor marched towards the center of the spiraling band of gold energy, sonic screwdriver and strange contraption in hand. Jack was stuck helplessly between the bits of….crystalized time. His days with the Doctor never failed to end up strange and convoluted.

In the center was a rip in time and space, a crack created by the Tardis and exacerbated by the presence of the rift. Two (or more) points of time that shouldn't touch. Definitely more than two, since the crack spiraled outwards and had multiple cracks connecting to each other. He plunged his hand into the center of the cracks and held the device outwards, turning the sonic screwdriver on and hearing the boom of transfused energy reach out and touch the cracks.

They sprung wide open, pulling all that has slipped through back, the shards of time rattling, breaking apart and returning. People stuck within the shards were released, unconscious and possibly comatose. The Doctor grimaced but didn't stop. He couldn't, not now. The cracks were expanding, impossibly wider and hungry, drinking in the misplaced energy. The golden light was pulled from the air, yanked back into the cracks, and finally, it closed, sealing itself with nary more than a sigh.

The Doctor fell to the ground, eyes rolled up into his head, unconscious. Jack, now released from his prison, stared at the two unconscious bodies, and sighed. Then he looked around.

People were still and unmoving, there were tendrils of gold floating through the air, and one of the shards still lingered near Rose, touching her hand. He peered into it.

The image trapped inside was of a giant, flying lizard, soaring through the mountains of a time long since passed. A….a dragon? If he had to take a guess, that's what it looked like. He sighed, didn't touch it. He didn't know what it would do. He checked Rose's pulse, found it, and smiled. Alive.
Then the Doctor. He wasn't sure about the pulse, with a double heartbeat the Doctor could have a four beat pulse or no pulse at all. He was breathing, so that was a good sign. He started the rounds of checking for life signs of those who had wandered into the mist. A couple young children, alive. An older woman. Her pulse was thready and the sounds of an ambulance reassured him. A couple, one with a strong pulse, the other thready. The others were fine.

He concentrated on how he was going to get Rose and the Doctor out before the authorities showed up. He definitely didn't want to deal with the police or Unit, who would be called in without a doubt. He sighed, covered up the shard and shoved it into the Doctor's pocket before hoisting him onto his shoulder. The skinny man was way too light for his height. Then he reached Rose, picked her up as best he could, she had muscle on her frame, and headed quickly towards Torchwood headquarters, praying Harry hadn't messed with anything. He didn't think he could handle two unconscious people and a headquarters assaulted by the genius child.

When he finally made it down the stairs and to the nearest couch, where he set Rose down as gently as possible, then the Doctor on the next couch, he examined Torchwood operations. He smiled; headquarters was fine. Aside from the Doctor's tinkering, it looked as if it hadn't been touched. It was a relief, a small one albeit, but a relief, until he realized that might be because Harry was still unconscious. The notion was shattered when the child stumbled out of his office, holding onto the wall, blinked over at him.


"I don't know kid. You're gonna have to wait until your dad wakes up to tell you." Harry sighed.

"Fine. Is Rose okay?" Jack looked over at Rose. He shrugged.

"I have no idea. If you asked me to recount the last hour, I wouldn't be able to with any sort of accuracy."

Harry grinned. "He has that effect, doesn't he?"

"If you're talking about your father, than yes, he does. And more. Makes him a real pain in the ass." Harry laughed weakly, holding onto the railing as he slowly toddled down the steps. Jack looked over him, concern in his eyes. Harry waved away the inevitable questions.

"I'll just sit down here, help you keep an eye on them. Head's spinning too much to cause any sort of trouble." Harry gingerly sat himself on the floor, back against the couch, and turned hazy green eyes to Jack. "The scanners...are still showing something strange."

Jack stood up, nodding. "I'll go take a look. Thanks Harry. And stay still. You should still be sleeping, from what I understood of your injuries. Which you will tell me about in depth later. Imp."


"When your dad hears I've taught you American slang I'm sure I'll get the longest lecture in the history of the universe, but it will so be worth the look on his face." Harry giggled, then leant back, sighed. His eyes fluttered shut. "Sleep well Harry. I'll go make sure nothing else is happening."

Harry waved a hand, then nodded off to sleep. Jack paused to look at the three of them.

Little Harry, seven and full of bright life, with a home like no other and father that showed him the universe. The Doctor, an impossibility and a savior, wrapped in a pinstriped suit and smiling broadly. Rose, jeopardy friendly Rose who defies all logic. Seeing them, all together, made Jack smile
brightly. If the universe was kind enough to bring back Rose, then they could face the worst the Universe could throw at them together.

Harry woke up on the couch, underneath a blanket. Quite different from where he went to sleep at, on the floor. And his dad wasn't anywhere to be seen. Though, when he sat up (thanking the universe for the lack of spinning) Rose was still asleep on the couch next to him. And Jack was puttering away at a nearby computer. But his dad wasn't anywhere to be seen.

He threw the blankets off and stood up, heading easily over to Jack. His head wasn't throbbing, his inner ear wasn't trying to tell him he was walking on the ceiling, or attempting to. His magic felt low, but it was better than a splitting headache and falling over his feet. Jack looked up at his approach, smiled.

"Hey sunshine, lookin good. How're you feeling?"

"Better than when I woke up yesterday."

Jack laughed. "Yesterday? Try two days ago. Though your dad only woke up about six hours ago, so he was out for a while too. I tucked you up onto the couch after you passed out. Couldn't let you sleep on the floor." Harry frowned.

"He was out that long? Really? What did he do?" He looked over his shoulder at the still sleeping Rose. "And Rose is still sleeping."

Jack waved a hand. "Nah, she woke up sometime yesterday, ate something, then went back to sleep." Harry's stomach growled at the mention of food and the boy grinned sheepishly. Jack smiled. "And it sounds like you're hungry. Whatya want?"

"Whatever you have, as long as it's not that weird purple vegetable you people seem to like." Harry looked around. "And where is my dad?"

Jack laughed. "I shoved him into the archives to reassign the labels. He did a number on my computer databases, so I thought it was only fair. Besides, he's probably having a field day down there. I've got alien junk that's fallen to Earth since the late 1800's." Jack beckoned for Harry to follow him. "How does grilled cheese sound?"

Harry nodded. "Good, so long as you have that tomato soup stuff to go with it. And no ham, please. I hate ham." Jack snickered, but didn't say anything about Harry's taste in food as he cooked something up. Harry took a seat at the improvised table. "So what happened yeste….whenever it was that dad did that knocked him out?"

Jack shrugged. "Something about a disassociated time stream and time being crystalized. I was too worried about being pierced by shards of time (and isn't that weird, shards of time? A literal shard of time) to pay too much attention. Though Rose started acting strangely for a while. It was odd, really. Your dad will be able to explain it better. Give me an alien invasion any day over some complicated time event. The Time agency, all those rules to stop paradoxes and loops and shifts. Then the Doctor comes in, skews your entire perception of time, stabs it thoroughly with the horn of a Phenisian Whale and sends it skittering across ten lanes of traffic on Vegas 5."

Harry giggled. "Sounds like dad. Thanks," he said as Jack plopped the grilled cheese in front of him, slopped some red tomato soup into a bowl and slid it across the table. Harry devoured it quickly. Jack laughed.

"I sometimes forget your seven and still growing, then you start eating and I can't help but be
reminded of an insane dinosaur tearing through it's meat." Harry glowered at the comment, and Jack
grudgingly whipped up a few more sandwiches and watched in fascination as Harry downed them
all.

When he had gone through three and a half, he settled back and sighed. "Alright, time to find dad."

Harry headed towards deep storage, in the general direction Jack had indicated, and set about
looking for the elusive, skinny frame of his father.

The Tardis let them back in after another day sulking and repairing in the alley, and by then Rose
had woken up. She was still groggy and her head pounded, but she wasn't sleeping the day away on
the couch.

~~~~~~~This is an Ending~~~~~~

Chapter End Notes

All of you reviewers are so amazing! Thank you for your awesome words and
encouragement! When I hit the end of semester with four essays and two final exams, it
was awesome to see that you all were still reading this and reviewing and letting me
know that I could write. Thanks so much!

The next adventure should be up soon! I'm on winter break so I should have more time
to write and everything!

Happy Holidays to everyone, whatever holiday you celebrate and where ever you may
be! Hopefully some of you have snow (I think where I live has forgotten it is actually
December, which means WINTER in the Northern Hemisphere and is instead hovering
about 70 degrees. Which Isn't bad, but it doesn't help the holiday feeling here any.
Reminds me of Guam, where we went to the beach on Christmas once. 0.0)

Kuroi
In Which Harry Gets Into Trouble

Chapter Summary

Harry manages to find himself in a rather unusual predicament. And with no way out on his own, will he ever fix it?

Chapter Notes

Hey, a new chapter! And so soon! thank you all!

I hope you all have some knowledge of Classic!Who, and for those of you intimately familiar with it, I hope that you will be so kind to point out any mistakes I might have made.

Thank you!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

~~~~This is a Beginning~~~~

The Tardis let them back in after another day sulking and repairing in the alley, and by then Rose had woken up. She was still groggy and her head pounded, but she wasn’t sleeping the day away on the couch. It was a sign for them to leave.

Jack would be sticking around in Cardiff for a bit longer, keeping an eye on the rift until he could train up a good enough team to take over for him, but he had a phone and Harry would answer the Tardis’s so he wasn’t stranded forever. Rose had one too, her old super phone from when she used to travel with the Doctor and he made sure she could still keep in contact with her mum. It had become slightly obsolete over the years as it didn’t get signal in her world, but its sentimental value was too high for her to part with so she kept it in her keepsake cabinet. So Jack wasn’t stuck on Earth for an indeterminable amount of time this go round.

But for Harry, his father and Rose, it was time to leave. The Doctor, for one, had taken apart and rebuilt enough of the electronics in the Torchwood hub to irritate Jack. Harry was also getting itchy, wanting to feel the Tardis again.

The interior of the Tardis wasn’t that much different. Aside from a bit of a raise in the dias surrounding the controls and an extra couple of seats, the coral structures and low lighting had remained much the same. Harry was sure there were some changes down the corridors and in the rooms, but he was glad the control room had remained much the same.

Jack waved them off, giving Rose a long hug. "Be safe Rose. And keep those two from doing anything stupid."
"Of course."

Harry pounced on Jack as soon as Rose headed towards the Tardis doors, and Jack laughed, sweeping him up. "You be safe, imp. Don't let me hear that you've been doing things you shouldn't before I get back. Keep yourself in one piece, you hear?"

Harry nodded, sighing reluctantly. "Yes Uncle Jack. I'll be safe." Privately he thought it was rather impossible to be completely safe in the Tardis, not with his dad driving.

With a bit of reluctance, his uncle put him back down before he turned to the Doctor. "Keep them safe Doctor." He saluted and the Doctor smiled slightly, returning a little two finger salute, a sigh pulling at the corner of his mouth.

"See you Jack. We'll swing by to pick you up in a bit, yeah?" Jack nodded, then watched as the doors to the Tardis closed and, a few seconds later, the universal noise of the Tardis disappearing filled the air and the blue box faded from existence. Jack stayed there for a few more moments, then he headed back to Torchwood Headquarters. He had a team to assemble and a few promising candidates to go over.

~~~~~~This is a Line Break~~~~~~

The Doctor spun a few controls into position before he turned with a manic grin on his face, facing his son and the woman he thought would remain forever beyond his reach.

"Alright, who wants to go where? All of time, all of space, pick somewhere."

Rose laughed. Harry sighed. His dad was on a theatrical streak and it seemed to be heading towards epic and huge proportions ending in the eventual capture, grimy prison cell, evil plot and triumph of the righteous that his dad was known across time and space for. Harry wasn't sure he was up for a couple days in a prison cell. Not this time.

"I'm going to go work on my....my project. Have fun dad, Rose."

His dad looked at him, eyes wide. "Not up for an adventure Harry?"

Harry scoffed. "You're gonna end up landing on a planet that is, somehow, embroiled in civil unrest, end up in a jail cell, meet the mastermind of the evil plot and overthrow it. I just want to skip the cell part. I'll be in the lab." Harry spun on his heel, heading towards the corridor.

"There won't be any evil plots, promise." Harry looked at him over his shoulder, a smirk on his lips.

"Sure. I'll stay here for now. I have some things I want to do in the lab anyway. Have fun, take Rose somewhere."

The Doctor watched Harry stroll out of the control room. "Don't blow anything important up Harry! And keep your communicator on!"

"Yes dad!" was heard, drifting back as Harry travelled deeper and deeper into the depths of the Tardis.

Rose laughed. "He is your son. Willful and precocious. Does he do this often?"
"Do what?"

"Head off on his own?"

The Doctor sighed. "Sometimes. He likes to tinker with things. At least he knows which lines deal with the gravity and antigrav couplings so I don't have to try and reconnect them while suspended between the walls."

Rose laughed. "He is your son, Doctor. Eccentric, willful, and obsessed with tinkering."

"That's what I'm afraid of. Knowing him, he'll cause more problems than any civil unrest we come upon." The Doctor looked at the doorway that Harry and vanished down.

"I'm sure Harry will be fine. He's resourceful and he knows the Tardis. He'll be fine." But her words didn't quite erase the concern from the Doctor's face.

He knew Harry was resourceful, smart and willful. That was what worried him. He knew how trouble-prone he was as a child. He had most of his Family in an uproar and caused so many problems at school that he was shocked they didn't kick him out. Harry was so much like him as a child that it was a cause for concern. He hoped the Tardis would keep an eye on him.

"Alright Rose. Where to?" Rose smiled.

"Pick somewhere Doctor. I'm sure it'll be awesome." In truth, she was just glad to be back on the Tardis. To travel again, through time and space, it was something she never thought she'd get. She would revel in it.

"Alright! Adventure!" And the Doctor started spinning and turning controls. The control room began to rock and Rose laughed as she felt memories of being twenty and naive and traveling surface with a clarity she hadn't felt in many many years.

~~~~~~This is a Line Break~~~~~~

Harry felt the distant shake of the Tardis, not as pronounced back in the lab because it was protected from the tilting and shuddering by enough stabilizing fields to keep a planet from orbiting it's star. It was important though, the delicate nature of the work in the lab meant that the slightest shudder could send the universe into an implosion sequence if it was jostled enough. Not the best idea, really. He rather liked the universe the way it was, mostly.

His concentrated on his project. It was meant to be a multi-dimensional transporter, able to move through time and space over short distances. Not as impressive as his Uncle's time agent wrist strap thing but he couldn't recreate that because his dad forbade uncle Jack from letting him see it at all. He had to deal with fumbling around and trying his best. But that was fine. He knew enough about Time and Space that he could create a short distance hop. A couple years, one way or the other, was the max limit. At least, that was what he figured would be the limit.

He checked his equations again, pulling out the holopad he snitched from a mall on Sirius Prime during his birthday last year. (The Doctor had sighed and paid for it as they left the store, glaring at Jack as he did so. Jack grinned unrepentantly.) The intricate mathematical equations sprang up, a three dimensional rendering of the project he was working in. He looked over the base functions, the quantum models, the temporal schemas. Something had been bugging him about one of the temporal calculations. There was something just a bit off and he wasn't sure what it was. He knew it would
severely affect something with the prototype, he just wasn't sure what it was.

He peered at the figures, dismissing some of the outer functions that were working properly to get at the problem. Finally he was left with a sprawling matrix and a series of gallifreyian numerals encircling it. There was something there....he fiddled with a few of the numbers that were obviously off, and tweaked another equation into a more efficient model.

Then he stared at it. For about an hour. Alright, nothing for it. He would have to feed it into the prototype to see the actual problem. He wouldn't use it, wouldn't touch it, but he could examine the software and hardware in action.

He plugged the tablet's external jack into the prototype's memory bank and started the compiling process.

And waited.

And waited.

And started spinning in a nearby chair. This is what he got for using the code from Yafrix v. While it allowed for the most freedom of expression it took forever for anything to happen. If he didn't have the Tardis's capacity for processing power to access he would be sitting here until his next birthday. As it was, he was going to have to wait for another few hours at least.

He didn't get that long. Instead, a bright glow started to fill the room, covering everything with an effervescent filter and Harry, staring in astonishment, promptly vanished from the room. The glow stayed.

~~~~This is a Line Break~~~~~~

Harry blinked, trying to clear his vision. Something had clearly gone wrong with the prototype but, unless he could see it, get to it, he wasn’t going to figure out what exactly happened. As suddenly as the light appeared, it vanished, clearing Harry’s vision and leaving behind little black spots of overexposure as a present. Harry reaches for something solid to stabilize himself while he tries to clear his vision.

He was touching the Tardis walls, he realized. He could feel the warm, golden energy swirling underneath his palm and wondered just how far he had staggered in the bright light. Obviously far enough to reach a wall.

Then he heard an echoing giggle. The Tardis was amused. This never ended well for him. He asked her what was going on, exactly, if she knew what had happened with the experiment. He didn’t get anything useful back, just some giggles and sounds of amusement.

“Bloody helpful 12-dimensional being you are,” he muttered at the wall. “Can’t even help me out of a scrape with my maths, can you?” A ringing sound of righteous indignation, obviously a front as Harry heard what sounded like laughter floating through his mind, flared then faded and Harry was alerted to another presence heading towards him. He straightened up. Obviously not his dad, the Tardis would have told him that, but he couldn’t get her to tell him who it was. He frowned, but nothing.

He would have to do thi the normal way. The figure rounded a corner, clearly heading somewhere, then stopped, shocked, as she saw him. Harry took her appearance in.
Slim, short, with pants that, if he wasn’t mistaken, were of Earth origin somewhere in the late 1900’s. Her hair was abnormally huge for a humanoid, especially an Earth human and she was young, judging by the young features. Did his dad pick up someone new? Had he been out for that long? And why was he in a different part of the Tardis? He hoped this girl would have some answers.

“Who are you? And what are you doing on the Tardis? Does the Doctor know you’re here?” Harry blinked. Everyone on the Tardis knew who he was.

“I’m Harry.” He wondered how to answer the next question, decided on the safest option. “Can you take me to see da...the Doctor?” If she didn’t know who he was, ‘dad’ was likely not going to get him anywhere.

“Harry? Is that your name?”

“Of course. What’s yours? You’re from Earth, judging by the Earth-English, a regional dialect of England, your pants, sometime from the late 1900’s, and your humanoid appearance.”

Harry didn’t think he had seen someone so astonished. “How...who are you? How do you know that?”

“It’s obvious. Accented speech consistent with English of the 1900’s, late 1900’s, if I have to judge, pants that are either from 8900’s Earth colony Halifrex VII8 on Pluto or, as would be more consistent with your accent, 1900’s Earth.”

The woman stared at her, slightly taken aback. “You sound like the Doctor. Well, you’re on the Tardis, I better take you to him anyway. He’d want to know you’re here. I’m Sarah Jane Smith. Are you from Earth? You look human.”

Harry paused to consider this question. It wasn’t exactly an incorrect assumption. He was human, or he was born on Earth and therefore fell under that category by virtue of planet of origin if origin was taken to mean birth planet. But he wasn’t really from Earth. “I was born on Earth,” he conceded. Sarah Jane Smith looked at him consideringly.

“What does that mean?”

“It’s....complicated. Let’s go see the Doctor, okay?” Harry headed towards the control room. It was the only hint he got from the Tardis as to where his dad was.

Sarah Jane was confused. She had wandered back towards her room in the Tardis, intent on finding her camera and swimsuit. The Doctor was taking her to the Crystal Falls of Jryia, a planet whose beauty was renowned as the most spectacular in the universe for it’s time. Then she had stumbled onto a child. A child, dressed in some of the oddest clothes she had ever seen, and that was saying a lot considering the Doctor’s penchant for scarves that were twice as long as he was tall. His shirt was some shimmering silver contraption that wound around his torso, without a beginning or an end. His pants, a dark green and wrapped around his waist and tied at his front, were wide and airy and had pockets. He wore shoes that seemed to allow him to hover several centimeters off the ground. He was human, so she gathered from the strange statement “I was born on Earth.” His eyes were a bright, unnatural green and he wore a golden chain around his neck.

And on top of that he was absolutely tiny. He was just over three feet tall even though his vocabulary was much much older than his features. He sounded like the Doctor, rattling off a list of observations
and facts that were both strangely accurate and oddly alien. She was used to it from the wildly intelligent alien she traveled with, but from a child who looked human was weird and disconcerting.

She hurried to catch up with him. How did he know where he was going? She had never seen him before, how could he possibly know where the Doctor was?

“The Doctor’s in the control room, yes?” he asked. Sarah Jane nodded, then spoke up, realizing he couldn’t see her.

“Yes, though, how do you know where the control room is? I’ve never seen you before, how could you know where anything is?”

Harry sighed deeply but didn’t answer. Everything was all strange anyway.

They walked in silence for a while longer until they reached the control room. Sarah Jane could see the Doctor underneath the panels, fiddling with something and muttering to himself.

“What is it? What went wrong? We haven’t even left the vortex so how could there be temporal leakage?” Then she noticed that Harry had frozen, staring at the Doctor and shaking his head as if to clear away some unpleasant image.

“Doctor? Doctor?” Sarah Jane tried to get his attention.

“What is it? There’s something wrong with the Tardis. Some kind of temporal disturbance and I can’t figure out why. Must be a disconnected coupling somewhere...”

“Doctor, there was something strange....Doctor!”

“Doctor,” Harry spoke up. The Doctor banged his head against the console trying to get out from under it.

Harry stared at the man that was, somehow, his father. Well, would eventually be his father, he supposed. Or was his father at some point. Though judging by the Tardis’s amusement, this Doctor was younger than his father was. He wore a colorful shirt, trousers that might not have been out of place from where ever Sarah Jane got her pants and wild, wild curly brown hair.

The Doctor looked at Harry. A small child, messy, longish black hair, bright green eyes, some strange, unusual gold necklace, clothes and shoes he had never encountered before. Also, some strange knowledge in those young eyes. He was human, the Doctor would put his sonic screwdriver on it, but that wasn’t all.

“Who are you? And why are you on the Tardis? How did you get on the Tardis? We’re in the Time Vortex, it should be impossible...”

Harry laughed. “I was messing with an experiment. I think it must have gone much more wrong than I originally assumed. It’s probably why the Tardis is a bit tetchy. I messed with the Temporal Stability Generators when I breached the time vortex to end up here. Obviously didn’t touch the spatial plane, judging by where I ended up. I knew I had messed up something with the Temporal Calculations. I just didn’t anticipate this.” Harry looked around him.

The control room was geometrical, having taken a fondness for lines and cleanliness and spheres. It wasn’t the natural, coral-esque configuration he was used to, but a rather more mathematical type of
structure. He could hear the Tardis’s amusement at his predicament.

“You knew this would happen, didn’t you?” he said, putting his hands on his hips and glaring at the console. He felt the Tardis brush his mind soothingly, a laughing confirmation. Harry frowned. “Sly thing you are. You could have just told me what was wrong with the project. Now dad’s probably freaking out and I’m going to be in so much trouble and I just said all of that aloud, didn’t I?”

The Doctor (not his dad, though it was his dad, just, not yet) and Sarah Jane Smith were staring at him.

“What were you just talking to?” the Doctor asked. Harry shifted on his feet, uneasy and not appearing too willing to answer questions. The Doctor didn’t look pleased at all. “You appear in my Tardis, talking of a Temporal mishap that might have torn apart the vortex and speaking to invisible entities. I would like some answers. Your name, for one.”

Harry sighed. “My name is Harry. I was talking to the Tardis and I am from your personal future Doctor. Unfortunately that’s all I can say. Which face is this? I’ve seen it before but I can’t quite remember which one.”

Sarah Jane listened to this with confusion and shock. Someone from the Doctor’s future? How could that be possible?

The Doctor was thinking along the same lines. “My future? How? This isn’t something that just happens. You don’t just mess with temporal anomalies for fun.”

Harry shifted again, clasping his hands at his back. “I, well, you see, I was working on a, a, well, a kind of vortex manipulator. I mean, da...I wasn’t allowed to see uncle’s and so I wanted to make my own. I just...I think I miscalculated something within the temporal framework so when I fed it into the hardware I was using for the prototype it fritzed and sent me here.” Harry scuffed a foot. Even if it wasn’t his dad’s face looking at him, it didn’t make it feel any less like his dad.

“You did what? How in Rassilon’s name did you manage that? You’re, what, five? Six human years old?”

“I’m seven, I think. And I’ve been messing with temporal physics since I was old enough to understand quantum calculations.”

The Doctor didn’t quite know what to make of this. “What were you doing on the Tardis then? How did you get onto it?”

“I live here. I’m sure I could find my room if I looked hard enough, she likes me well enough. I didn’t move anywhere spatially, just temporally. Which might have been the problem in the first place.”

“And a future me lets you do this?”

At this, Harry scuffed his foot and looked at the floor. “Well, you see...you don’t...exactly know about my project. It’s been a bit of a secret.”

Sarah Jane laughed behind him. “You managed to keep a secret from him inside the Tardis?”

“Well, it isn’t that hard. You just have to know how to talk to her. She’s rather amenable, though she
could have just told me what was wrong with the equation, she was compiling it.” Harry glanced at the console with a scowl. It flashed brightly and the Doctor and Sarah Jane jumped. The Doctor turned shocked blue eyes to the small boy that had, somehow, invaded his Tardis.

“What in the universe are you? Not just anyone can speak to the Tardis! I can’t! Almost no Time Lord has ever been able to communicate with a Tardis directly. And you say you live in the Tardis. Who are your parents? And how did I ever allow it?”

Harry was silent for several moments, before he sighed. “I can’t tell you that. There’s this rule, see, about timelines and preserving the temporal fidelity and all that. We’re inside a 12 dimensional being of immense power but knowledge is knowledge.”

The Doctor frowned at Harry and looked at Sarah Jane. “What do you make of all this, Sarah?”

“I think it’s all a lot of nonsense. Time talk and temporal whatever. I’m still trying to figure out how a seven year old even knows about any of that!”

Harry sighed. This wasn’t getting him anywhere. He was on a Tardis, in the wrong time, with a Doctor who didn’t know him and a companion who wanted to constantly point out his age. And he had no idea how to get back to the proper time. The Tardis wasn’t being helpful either, laughing at him as he sighed.

The wild haired, blue eyed Doctor stared at him, still not sure what to make of everything that had happened.

"So, let me get this straight. You are a....companion? from my personal future, having messed with the temporal lines so thoroughly that you ended up in a past version of the Tardis and you don't know how to realign the temporal strings so, until you manage to correct the error, you are stuck here," Harry nodded. "Alright then. So, how about a jelly baby while we figure this out then."

Harry looked at the wrinkled brown bag curiously, then his eyes widened. "You're the fourth Doctor! Sarah Jane told me about your fondness for Jelly Babies. Granted, we didn't get to stay long with her, something about aliens and such, but she mentioned it." Harry turned round to look at the younger Sarah Jane he hadn't recognized before. "So you're Sarah Jane then. My d...Doctor told me about you. Brilliant woman, he would say. Determined and stubborn but always managed to figure it out in the end." He smiled. "It's a pleasure to meet you Sarah Jane Smith." Harry smiled at the young woman. The Sarah Jane he remembered wasn't flustered easily and rarely stood around looking confused.

"Um....alright then."

"Though, I wonder why you didn't know who I was when I met you...you obviously met me before so you should have know who I was. You wondered why I was in such a dangerous situation, seeing as I was a kid. Not that it matters much, I caused it. Dad should remember too..." Harry trailed off, realizing he'd said far too much.

"So your dad's on the Tardis too. Have I really gone domestic in my old age? How do I get away with it without the Council interfering?"

Harry scuffed his shoe again. He should really learn to keep his mouth shut. "I...er, I can't really tell you. I mean, it's your future. I can't just go about telling people their futures you know. D...the Doctor would probably lock me in my room for a week and take away my screwdriver and comp-
The Doctor and Rose rushed back into the Tardis, laughing breathlessly. Despite the running, they hadn't been chased or run off a planet. The planet they were on was rather well deserted, mostly jungle and beautiful waterfalls and jeweled rivers and streams. No, they had been running for the memories. Rose had insisted and the Doctor wasn't about to let a good run get away.

"I forgot how much I missed that. Don't really do a lot of running really. Well, not much with anyone to hold hands with."

The Doctor grinned. "Run!" he said, then chased Rose up the gangway and around the console, laughing and shouting.

Well, until the Doctor realized something was wrong. The Tardis was glowing a bright, unmistakable shade of gold, far brighter than she should. The Doctor looked at the console, concerned.

"What's that for? What's with the glowing?" The Doctor pushed a few buttons on the main console. "What's wrong? There's no temporal disturbances here. In fact, this whole planet is so temporally stable you shouldn't even be flickering." He pulled the screen towards him and Rose leaned over his shoulder.

"Could it be a blip in the vortex?" Rose asked.

"Nah, something like that would be more catastrophic and less...glowy. No, something's messing with the actual temporal strings of the Tardis. Which could only happen if something had gotten into the Tardis and messed with the Temporal Stabilizers, and the only ones who know how to are Me and.....Harry." The Doctor stopped, looking through the door leading to the back corridors. "What has he gotten up to? I told him not to mess with the stabilizers. He is supposed to tell me if he is doing anything that might jeopardize anything important, or compromise anything." The Doctor took off for the back rooms and Rose followed, concern etched on her face. If anything happened to Harry...well, she didn't know what would happen to the Doctor, but she could bet it wouldn't be good.

The Doctor raced down the hallways, taking turns at seeming random points, worry on his face. Rose followed him, keeping pace and worrying for him. Little Harry was far too intelligent and could get into infinite amounts of trouble with the resources he had available in the Tardis.

Trouble he seemed to have found, if the bright white light emanating from the room up ahead was any indication. The Doctor skidded to a halt, eyes wide.

"I told him not to go messing with temporal technology! He doesn't have enough experience with the mathematics! What did he do?" The Doctor headed into the room and Rose, swallowing hard, followed him in.

The room was empty save for a strange device that looked somewhat akin to a hypercube and what Rose might call a Universal Technology Drive, what eventually replaced the USB, plugged into the side. The Doctor cursed.

"What? What is it?" Rose asked worriedly. "And where is Harry?"
When is the better answer, if I have to judge by what he was messing with. I told him not to mess with this stuff! I told him! He doesn't have enough knowledge of temporal calculations!"

"What is it though?"

The Doctor turned to look at Rose. "It's....you know Jack's Vortex Manipulator?" Rose nodded. "Well, a while back I told Harry he couldn't play with it. I mean, there's enough technology in there that he could possibly poke a hole in the vortex if he wasn't careful, those things are rather delicate and dangerous and far from perfect in their usage. But apparently he decided that he really wanted to mess around with the concept of space/time manipulation. And it looks like he screwed up a very basic equation. Which is why I told him to leave that stuff alone!" He seemed to be yelling at a Harry who wasn't there to hear him.

That didn't make Rose feel any better. Time manipulation was a difficult process on its own, she had watched the Doctor screw it up often enough. Knowing that a seven year old boy was playing with the same concepts....

"Is he alright?" she asked, worried. "Where...when is he?"

"Oh, he's in the Tardis, he hadn't quite finished the spatial calculations to be elsewhere, and the Tardis keeps an eye on him. So he's in the Tardis. The question is when is he. And I don't know. The equation is so unrefined that it's impossible to pinpoint. And I'm going to have to untangle it to get him back in the correct timeline. This is gonna be a process." The Doctor looked at Rose.

"Would you mind grabbing some tea from the kitchen? I have to start untangling my wayward son's experiments."

Rose nodded. The Doctor was in a mood and she didn't envy Harry at all whenever he got back. He had the music to face and she definitely didn't want to be in his shoes. Having the Doctor for a father was probably both exciting and terrifying, especially when one screwed around with things they shouldn't be touching.

-----This is a Line Break-----

Harry, stuck in the past with the fourth Doctor, Sarah Jane, and a laughingly unhelpful Tardis, was sighing. The Doctor, so much like his father but not at the same time, had dragged him around until they reached to central control.

"So, you've gone and messed with Temporal Stability and yet no one from the CIA has come to get you, or me. So, let's see what you've done to my Tardis exactly. And how we can fix it."

Harry looked at him. "I can't fix it from this end. The equations and the manipulator are back in my Tardis. And unless the Tardis wants to be helpful and reveal a room that, to you, doesn't exist yet, we're going to have to rely on the Doctor from my time to work out the problem." Harry looked at the wall. "Provided he doesn't spend half the time ranting at the wall about how irresponsible I am for messing with things I shouldn't be messing with."

"So you can't do anything from this end? Do you know how long you'll be here or anything?"

"Nope. No idea. Though..." Harry pulled out a piece of his paper and a writing utensil and started scribbling down equations. The Doctor looked over his shoulder, eyes wide.
"Is that Gallifreyan? How do you...how could you possibly know...?"

"Perks of being raised in the Tardis, you get to know the native language. Now shush, I'm trying to concentrate." Harry drew out a few more equations before he turned the paper over and scribbled a few lines in some language it took the Doctor a moment to recognize.

"How could you possibly know that language?" he said incredulously. Harry waved him off.

"Alright, here's the equation that I think I messed up. With some of the base equations outside it, but this is the main one. So, oh brilliant Time Lord, what did I do wrong?"

The Doctor, with wide eyes, took the sheet of paper from Harry and glanced at it. Then he narrowed them thoughtfully.

"I see why you screwed up. Have you taken a look at the Temporal Localities as Described by the 12th dimension and how they effect the relocation of the matter? No, I thought not. You failed to take in the actual temporal locality of the space you inhabited. If you came from the Tardis, which I assume because that's the only way you could have ended up inside the Tardis, Then you forgot to factor in the Tardis itself. The fact that it exists in twelve dimensions, in all possible times, well, then it becomes a matter of factoring that out. You might want to listen to me when I tell you not to mess with temporal anomalies."

Harry sighed and looked at the floor. "Of course that's what I did. Now I just have to hope that the Doctor can fix it before I'm stuck here forever. If the Tardis would just cooperate this wouldn't be so hard, would it." He said this last bit just a bit louder and glared at the walls. The laughing echo filtered through Harry's mind and he groaned. Of course the Tardis wouldn't be any more help. He had screwed up. It would be his mistake to figure out.

"I still don't believe you speak with the Tardis. It isn't something that can be done, no matter what you are. I can't speak with the Tardis."

Harry looked at him. "it isn't so much speaking as exchanging feelings and pictures. My words translate because of our unique bond, but otherwise she speaks to me with an impression rather than words or cohesive sentences."

"Unique bond?"

"Can't tell you that. Timelines to preserve and all tha..." Harry started to fade out, a white light encompassing his body. He looked at the fourth Doctor. "I guess dad figured it out. Bye, Doctor. It was nice to see your earlier face." Harry waved and then, with a bright white effusion of light, he vanished.

The fourth Doctor looked startled for a moment. Dad? Then, with the disappearance of the white light, his memory of the event vanished. He blinked, looking around. What was he doing in the control room?

~~~~~~~~This is a Line Break~~~~~~~~

Harry felt like he was falling. He wasn't sure where he was falling to or what he was falling from, but he fell. A golden waterfall of energy surrounded him and he sighed as he wondered what was gonna happen when he ended up back where he was supposed to be. He was sure his father wouldn't be pleased. He could see it now. Small, black haired boy found suspended in time,
punishment for messing with temporal calculations he couldn't fully understand. He might be left
there for years. He moaned. His dad was going to be so upset.

He braced himself for the inevitable as he felt the light leave him. Any minute now he would see his
dad's face looming over him.

Except, he didn't. Instead there was a young, boyish face with strangely old green eyes and a bow tie
filling his vision. Harry blinked. Then he groaned.

"I'm in the wrong time, aren't I?"

"Indeed you are Harry. Just a bit overshot of your time, I should think. missed the mark, I did. Sent
you too far forward. Well, I suspect I'll get it right at some point but for now, here you are. Here you
are! Isn't that amazing!"

Harry looked up at the face of this Doctor. "So I take it you're a later incarnation of dad then?" he
asked.

"Yep. Next one, actually. Eleven. Quite a bit of a mess, you created for yourself. End up bouncing
through time. Forward and back and all around. Messing with time isn't the safest thing."

"You ended up with twice the energy didn't you. And you look like a teenager dad. I bet you'll end
up a child by the time you reach 13. By the looks of you, you just age downward with each
regeneration. And what's up with the bowtie?"

"Bowties are cool."

"What does Rose have to say to that?"

"Rose likes them just fine!" the Doctor protested. Harry sighed.

"And I guess I can't ask too many questions can I?"

"Nope, sorry. Timelines to preserve and all. I suspect you won't be here much longer either, seeing
as I was quick to fix all the little errors I made when retrieving you. Though for some reason I can't
quite remember how this whole thing ended."

"I bet it'll end with me being grounded for half of forever for messing with temporal anomalies and
such." 

"Oh, I bet you can count on it."

Harry got to his feet and looked around. "This is a rather nice look for her, you know. Clean lines
but a bit of insanity. Matches you quite well Dad." The stairs were elegant and glass, a beautiful
combination of usefulness and oddity. The glass theme was repeated everywhere. The floor around
the console, the flooring in general.

It was a very very different Tardis that the one he knew. At least on the outside. The Tardis’s essence
still floated around him, caressing his mind and laughing at him. But still, with regeneration, the
Tardis changed with it's driver, the Doctor shifting faces as staggeringly shocking as the Tardis did.
A facelift of epic proportions. He wasn't sure he would enjoy that, if it happened while he was still
alive.
Harry looked at his dad closely. Really looked. He looked so old, yet his face was so young. His dad, reborn into this strange, pseudo-similar shape that he knew so well, yet it was wholly different. He could see the excitement in his eyes, and he also saw a strange sort of longing. Harry held his hands out, a kind of unspoken request that he knew his dad would understand.

A smile filled the Doctor's face and Harry was picked up and hugged tightly. It was the kind of hug that Harry loved, tight and warm and full of love. Maybe a little too tight, a little too desperate, but Harry was sure that, by now, if he was still around he was an old man and this Doctor had never held the little boy that he had raised.

"Hey dad," he whispered in the Doctor's ear. He heard the sniffle.

"Hey Harry. No matter how angry I get at you for this stunt you pulled, remember that I am so glad you did so. I am so glad I got to see you again." He tightened his grip on the little boy.

The Doctor held on tight to the small form that was his son. His son out of time, out of his proper timeline, but his son all the same. It was someone he never thought he would see as a child, not with this face. He held on all the tighter. It was a privilege to hold onto the young, brilliant child Harry was.

"Doctor? Who...who's that?" Harry raised his eyes. A red haired girl with a Scottish accent (his dad, with the face he knew, was really good at Scottish) descended the stairs. "Rose said something was up but...what is a child doing on the Tardis?"

Harry turned to look at the girl, then at his father. He smiled. "Hi, I'm Harry. Pleased to meet you..."

"Harry? The Harry? The Doctor's son Harry? But I thought....aren't you....why are you a child? Did something happen? I don't understand...." the girl looked at a loss. "Doctor, what's going on. I thought Harry was...."

"This is my son from the past. Well, my past, my personal past. He had the misfortune to misplace a few numbers in a calculation he was doing and feed it into a temporal manipulator and he is currently in a Time Shift between various parts of the Tardis's history and future. Constantly shifting back and forth and back and forth, well, until I can do something about it. So, Harry, meet Amelia Pond, current companion and fiance to Rory Williams."

Harry smiled at Amelia. "Hello Amelia. How are you?"

"Um, er, well, hi Harry. It's a pleasure to meet you. Just, just Amy, please."

"But Amelia is an awesome name! There's a planet in the Nebula V7 galaxy named Amelia and all of its people are called Ameliaлитes. It's fascinating."

Amy looked startled. "Really? A whole planet named Amelia?"

"Well, in translation it's Amelia. They speak in a series of squeaks and whistles so when it's back in Standard it's Amelia. Fascinating place, really. They have some wonderful music there."

Amy laughed. "You are your father's son, that much is true. I wondered, but here you are, a child and you still sound like him."
"Hazards of living on the Tardis, I'm afraid. Eventually we all sound like dad. It just sorta happens."

"No, just you. Rose doesn't talk like that and she's ancient. Supposedly. Well, er, um, she's, she doesn't look old, but she says she's really...." Amy trailed off when the Doctor looked at her, eyes piercing and shushing her.

"Amy dear! There you are! I was looking for you!" a voice called out, ringing through the Tardis as a woman with springy, curly hair entered through the far door. Harry blinked up at her, emerald eyes curious, and the woman made a gasping sound. "Harry? Harry, is that....is that you?"

Harry looked at the Doctor, who hoisted Harry onto the other hip and looked at the woman with stern eyes. "River, this is Harry, from the past. He's gotten himself mixed up in a bit of a time shift. He'll be here for a bit, at least until I can fix his math error in the proper time he belongs to."

River's eyes sparkled with tears. "Oh, oh, I see. Um, well, Hello Harry. I'm River. It's nice to meet you."

"Hi River. I would ask you more since you seem to know me rather well but I'm afraid my dad might get all fussy about that and he's not pleasant when he's fussy. Tends to throw tantrums and such." Harry smiled, a mischievous edge to it. "But it is so much fun to do that. He gets all worked up and such and starts going on these long rants. I find it rather amusing."

Amy giggled and River smiled, covering her mouth, but Harry could still see a kind of strange sadness in her eyes, a sadness he didn't expect from someone he had yet to meet. He tugged on his dad's bowtie and whispered in his ear, "Why is River so sad? Did something happen?"

"Oh Harry, you know I can't tell you that. I have to preserve the timelines and everything. If something happens differently....I couldn't stand that. No, no. It'll be alright. River's just glad to see you. Everything's fine, alright?" The Doctor told him, stern, but Harry wasn't fooled. It wasn't too hard to figure out when his dad was telling him things because he had to. Harry had gotten good at seeing the sadness hiding under the mask of good cheer.

But that didn't mean he could do anything about it. He sighed and resigned himself to being left in the dark for a while. "Fine. Whatever. I suppose." Harry rested his head on his father's shoulder for a moment, before he looked up. "Where's Rose?"

The Doctor smiled. "She's taking care of something. Besides, she says you never met her when you came here, so she's keeping out of sight. Can't mess with the timelines, can we? Alright Harry, I guess it's almost time for you to go, huh?"

Harry looked around himself. Within the Doctor's arms, he was starting to glow a bright white. The sign that he was shifting again. Falling through the timelines and into the past. Or the future. Or wherever he would end up next. he didn't know.

He hugged on tight to his father, hoping the next time he saw his dad it would be the one he knew and not one of his father's previous incarnations. He wasn't fond of the one time he met a Doctor who wasn't his father. "Bye dad, I love you," he said. "Tell Rose bye too. Bye Amy, River. I suspect I'll see you again sometime."

River smiled at him through the sadness on her face and Amy nodded solemnly. "Yes Harry, I suspect we will." And Harry vanished in a swirl of white light, leaving the Doctor, Amy and River standing alone in the console room. Little Harry had vanished and the Doctor dropped the happy
"It'll be alright Doctor. We'll figure something out, yeah?" Amy laid a hand on the Doctor's shoulder and the Doctor looked up at her, face drawn and full of pain.

"Yeah, yeah we'll figure something out.

~~~~~~~~This is a Line Break~~~~~~~~

The Doctor, in his 10th incarnation and with Rose beside him, fought with the machine his son had built. "Dammit Harry, when I tell you not to mess with something, I mean it! There is a reason you aren't supposed to mess with the temporal flux! You don't know enough!" He fiddled with something. "I hope this is the right one," he muttered.

Rose looked at the Doctor with concern. He was concentrating on getting Harry back so hard she didn't know if he could stand it if he never made it. What would happen if his misstep cost him dearly? She couldn't fathom how that would effect the Doctor.

~~~~~~~~This is a line Break~~~~~~~~

Harry was falling again. It was a golden tunnel of some sort, a pool of golden energy. He frowned. How was he getting out of this? He knew his dad would have to pull him back, he couldn't get a hold of the proper tools himself seeing as they were all with his dad in his proper timeline. But would he end up there this time? Would it work? He didn't know, but it couldn't hurt to hope.

When he landed, he looked around, hoping to see something, anything, familiar. And, no, he was definitely not back where he belonged. The Tardis was strange. White. Very white. And geometric, while regular spherical holes in the walls in a repeating pattern. Definitely not the Tardis he knew. He wondered how far back (or forward, though with the decor he sort of doubted forward) he had gone.

A couple chairs sat in one corner and the door (not the wooden doors of the exterior shell he knew but rather a set of white doors, matching the interior). The console was geometrical in design and blinking brightly, the central column was narrow, the room simple in concept. He must have gone quite a ways back.

Oh, and there were people. Staring at him. He sighed. Of course he had to come in in the middle of an altercation, since that was what this was, obviously. An older man, dressed in a suit and tie, stood beside one of the chairs. A young girl stood at the console, a woman and a man, both teachers of some sort if Harry guessed right. Wonderful, just wonderful. He waved a little. "Hi."

"Who are you, and what are you doing inside the Tardis? What is it with people entering the Tardis without permission?" the older man spoke. Harry smiled slightly. This was the Doctor, he would bet.

"Hello Doctor. I’m sorry to drop in on you like this, I wouldn’t have chosen it, really I wouldn’t have, but as of late I’ve been sort of...stuck in a Time Shift.” Harry fidgeted. “Have to end up this far back, don’t I? You could have just told me what was wrong with the equation, but no, you had to let me screw it up. He’s going to be so angry with me when I get back. And you’re just laughing at me, aren’t you?” The Tardis was definitely laughing at him. He could feel it, the tinkling bell of the laughter from the eleven dimensional being filtering through his mind. And he wasn’t getting any help from her.
“You’re in a what?” The male professor said incredulously. Harry raised an eyebrow.

“A Time Shift. A...I guess you could say I’m being bounced from one point of time in the Tardis’s timeline to another. I’m not going anywhere spatially but temporally I might as well be a ping pong ball, reliant on my Doctor fixing my mistakes.” Harry gestured around him as he spoke. “I’m staying within the parameters of the Tardis, actually I’m re-appearing directly where I left from the previous shift. But I haven’t made it back to my time yet.”

“You sound as crazy as them. Don’t tell me you believe all this nonsense about space and time travel! This is 1963! It just isn’t possible,” the man exclaimed. Harry blinked rapidly.

“Wait...you...aren’t companions? What...what are you doing in the Tardis then? How did you get in the Tardis?”

The young girl spoke up, “They followed me. Though I must know, who are you? How do you know so much? I haven’t even learned how to manipulate temporal/spatial locality and you’re younger than me!”

Harry smiled wryly. “Technically I wasn’t supposed to be practicing them. But I didn’t tell my Doctor that I was and, well, ended up...messing it up a bit. I’m Harry, currently occupying the Tardis, technically born on Earth but I never lived there long. Nice to meet you.” He held out his hand to the girl. She took it, smiling.

“I’m Susan, the Doctor’s granddaughter, born on Gallifrey at the end of the Age of Chaos as the reign of the Pythias ended. Nice to meet you too. You’ll have to tell me what equations you were using! He never lets me study any-”

“Enough! I cannot let this absurdity continue any longer! Susan, you must stop this childish game, it isn’t healthy!” the female professor said, hands in the air. Harry blinked in astonishment at her, then looked at Susan, who shrugged.

The Doctor, who had been watching with confusion and curiosity, came over to stand next to Harry and Susan. “My boy, if what you say is true, then you are rather far from your proper time. I have never heard of such a remarkable mistake, but I imagine that I have had quite a lot of trouble with you.”

Harry grinned. “You have no idea.” He turned to look at the two other adults in the room. “Who are they, and why are they here?”

“Grandfather isn’t letting them leave. They shouldn’t have come in in the first place and they refuse to believe us about the Tardis. They were my teachers at school but the followed me here.” Susan glowered at her teachers.

Harry raised an eyebrow. “Really? And you’re trapping them inside? Why? It’s not like anyone would actually believe them if they left and you can just leave after you let them go.”

“The council would be furious. We’ve already been exiled from Gallifrey, we do not need another reason for the Celestial Intervention Agency to interfere with us,” Susan said. Harry’s eyes widened.

“Exiled? Then you...you’re the First! The very First Doctor! Oh, wow, I mean, I knew I went back, but all the way to the beginning...man, dad must be having a tough time with the problem...” Harry murmured.
“Dad? Is your father aboard the Tardis as well? Please don’t tell me I’ve become an interstellar nursery.”

Harry smiled. “Nope, just me. And I’m bad enough.”

“I imagine so my boy. I imagine so.”

“Ian Chesterton and Barbara Wright, I know those names! Oh wow, I really went all the way back, didn’t I.” Harry looked at the two stunned humans by the door. “Hello, it is an honor meeting you two.”

They just stared at him.

Harry would have said more, but he felt the energy around him gather and he hoped he would end up back where he belonged this time. It was getting shorter and shorter, his stay in each time. He couldn’t hear what anyone around him was saying anymore, though they were clearly astonished at the chain of events. He could hear the Tardis again, whispering soothingly in his ear. He wasn’t sure what that meant, but he hoped it meant he would be getting back soon.

~~~~~~This is a Scene Break~~~~~~

The Doctor was, Rose saw, now standing directly in the center of the light, fumbling with controls and cursing softly, eyes feverish. He was frantic, she could tell, though he was very very careful to keep it under control and make every move with precision. She heard his mutterings, mostly aimed at his wayward son and his ill-choice in hobbies.

“Really Harry, you couldn’t have chosen anything less dangerous? There’s black hole technology here, quantum experiments, wave travel, but no, you had to go for temporal/spatial transportation. When you get back, you are going to be cleaning out the storage halls until your next birthday.”

Rose was starting to feel a bit bad for the tot that she had met for barely more than half a day. He was in for a lot of work when he got back.

~~~~~~This is a Scene Break~~~~~~

The white light left him, and Harry was sprawled on the floor of the Tardis. These trips were becoming painful, he realized. Painful and mentally unbalancing. He hadn’t noticed it before, but the shift was making his head spin and his mind was going crazy. He knew if his magic hadn’t been restrained by his necklace it too would have exploded around him. As it was, he could feel his skin sparking as it tried to escape. He hoped this was the right time.

He felt his hope soar when he looked around at the Tardis console he ended up it. It was the strange, coral shape he was used to, with the soft lighting and the dim blue colors. But it was, somehow, not the right one. He knew almost right away, as soon as the hope ebbed. There was too much pain for his Tardis, too much raw pain and despair and he could only guess this was the 9th Doctor, the one who survived the Time War, and he shuddered. His father rarely spoke of that time. It wasn’t a pleasant memory for him, clearly, but Harry wasn't sure he was ready to confront a Doctor fresh from pain that, occasionally, overwhelmed his own father.

He didn't have much of a choice though, it seemed, since the ninth Doctor came striding into the console room only to stop short at seeing Harry on the floor in the corner.

"Who are you? Why are you on my Tardis?"

Harry sighed. He really wanted his father back, really wanted him back. He would take the yelling
and the grounding over this confusion of identity and lack of knowledge.

"My name is Harry. Unfortunately you don't know me yet. I'm from your future. Yes, yes, you have a future, stop looking so grim. I'm in it, I should know."

"How am I to believe that? You're just a kid!"

"I was messing with temporal calculations and I screwed up a few. Whoops. So now I'm stuck in a time shift of sorts. I guess my Doctor will sort it out soon enough. I hope. Otherwise I'm going to be shifting from time to time for a while." Harry scratched his head, looking at the Doctor. "Which I am not enjoying nearly as much as I should. It's rather irritating, to be honest. Meeting different yous who don't know me is frustrating and I really just want to go back to my proper time. It's also starting upset the chemical balance in my brain and my internal core is being thrown off."

The Doctor spluttered at the boy standing in front of him. "Impossible. There should be no way you could have done that! The mathematical calculations, the dimensional expansions, they shouldn’t be feasible for a child!"

Harry raised an eyebrow. "This is why I like my Doctor better. He learned the value of the word impossible as something that should never be said because someone would go and break it."

"It doesn’t change the fact that it shouldn’t be possible for you to...to do what you did! You’re, what, five? Six?"

"I'm supposed to be seven, thank you, but that isn’t important. Since when has age ever been of import when it comes to what someone can or cannot do?" Harry brushed himself off and leaned against a coral structure, trying to regain his bearings. The Tardis tried to caress him, but the pain was still too fresh and she couldn’t push it aside. He stroked the coral strat soothingly, letting her taste his magic and wrap around it a bit. He looked accusingly at his father. "You haven’t been taking very good care of her,” he accused.

The Doctor stumbled back, shocked. "You...are you talking to the Tardis? That’s impossible!"

Harry sighed. “I really am very glad you got rid of that word by the time I came around. It is rather annoying. And it still doesn’t change the fact that you haven’t been caring for her. She’s in pain and she’s trying to find some comfort in you, help you, and you won’t let her."

The Doctor glared at him. “I...I can’t. I just, what I just did...I shouldn’t even be here. It’s her fault I’m here. I should have...I should have been there, with them, but she wouldn’t let me! She wouldn’t let me stay and die with my people!” Harry stiffened slightly at this. He had underestimated how bad this time was for his father.

"That still doesn’t make it right! She’s all you have left then, yeah? All you have left of home? Then you should treasure her! Find comfort in her, she’s home for you now, all the home you have! Ignoring her won’t make it any better, you or her!"

Blue eyes pierced him. “I destroyed my entire race, all of them. How will I ever get ‘better’?"

“You will. It’ll take time, and others. It’ll take a lot of time and you’ll feel terrible for a long while. It won’t go away, my Doctor still hurts, but it’s better, and he loves the Tardis.” Harry was still trying to wrap his head around the destruction of the Time Lords at the hands of his father, he had never really heard that before. He never actually knew what had happened and his dad was sure that he
was kept away from any of his own personal documents about Gallifrey. He thought it was for other reasons, maybe embarrassment, his dad didn’t want Harry getting a hold of his school records or whatever, but maybe...maybe it was worse. He knew Gallifrey was gone. He learned as much when he was younger and had wanted to go. He knew it had perished in a terrible war with the Daleks, but he was never sure how. He would have a talk with his father when he got back.

If he got back.

Harry and the Doctor stared at each other, blue eyes against green.

"Who are you? To me? Who are you to your Doctor? Because you aren’t just some companion to him, no companion would ever speak to him like that. Like...like you have some kind of power or knowledge."

Harry sagged against the coral strut. “I can’t tell you that. You should know that. Timelines have to be preserved, they are fragile things.” Harry sent him a weak smile. “You’ll have to find out in time.”

The Doctor frowned. “I...I sort of remember you. You...you’ve shown up before, in the past. Why do I remember them now, when I see you, but I couldn’t before?”

Harry gestured around him. “The Tardis. She does what she can to preserve the timeline by not letting anything slip through when it shouldn’t.”

“How could you know that?”

“I sort of talk to her.”

“That...that’s impossible,” the Doctor stated flatly. Harry raised an eyebrow and refused to answer him. “How do you talk to the Tardis? She’s an eleven dimensional being who exists at all points simultaneously. How could you possibly talk with her?”

Harry patted the coral strut. “Mostly through emotions and pictures. It’s easier. DON’t have to deal with all that talking business. Tenses get in the way when you travel in time, or when you exist at all points in time.” Harry shrugged “And I don’t think I’d be here much longer. My Doctor is getting better at fixing whatever error I had in my calculations.” He appraised the Doctor. “And you need to start helping your home. She’s upset, just as much as you are. And she couldn’t lose her Doctor. Whatever she did, she did it to save you.” Harry smiled at him. “And I am so glad she did. You are the best thing that ever happened to me.”

The look of astonishment on the Doctor’s face as he disappeared in a swirl of white light. It was getting tiring, it really was.
white light, Rose fretted more. Harry had yet to reappear and she could see the panic rising in her
Doctor.

She didn’t know how much longer he would hold out. She hoped Harry would be back soon.

~~~~~This is a Scene Break~~~~~~

Harry landed and his eyes were filled with white light. It was getting worse, these trips. Each time it
was worse and worse. This time it took a while, fifteen seconds, for the light to clear from his eyes
and his vision to register more than just pure white.

And, judging by the dark wood construct around him, he was still not home. This was becoming far
more than just frustrating. It was becoming irritating and he wanted to be with his dad and not his
previous incarnations who he couldn’t tell anything about himself. If he could just tell them he was
their son, from the future, it would be far easier, but his father had drilled the preservation of the
timeline into his skull since he was old enough to understand the concept of time travel. The Tardis
could only hide so much, and something significant as a son would break through the wall at some
time and the timeline would be broken. He couldn’t.

Which meant the man standing over him with the floppy red hair in ringlets and dressed in a velvet
green coat was, judging on the fashion sense, his father. What incarnation, he wasn’t sure, but it was
definitely his dad. Only his dad had such bad fashion sense.

“Well, hello there. Who might you be? And how did you appear inside my Tardis?” Harry groaned,
pushing himself up. He felt hands lift him, steadying him. “You are a small one, aren’t you? So how
did you get in here? I saw the white light, so some sort of transportation, but nothing I can trace. No
spatial transference.”

This was the, Harry counted, fourth time he explained this. It was getting tiring. “I messed up a
temporal calculation. I’m shifting only in time, not space. It’s a Temporal Shift and I’m stuck in it
until my Doctor can fix it. So I’ll be guesting in this version of the Tardis for a bit.” He smiled
weakly.

“Are you okay? You look a bit unstable,” the Doctor said, concern rushing across his face. Harry
raised an eyebrow. This incarnation of the Doctor was far more concerned with well being than most
others, especially those who didn’t know him.

“Just...the shifting is starting to cause physiological effects. It’s a side effect of temporal travel
without a stable transport method or shell. Much more and I won’t be in one piece anymore. If I
wasn’t who I was, I would probably have been a goner much sooner. As it is I only have one, maybe
two trips left before my body starts to break down.”

The Doctor looked disconcerted, worried. “But you’re just a child! How could this have happened to
you?”

“I messed up a calculation at the core of a temporal/spatial transport device and fed it into a device.
And until my Doctor stabilizes it I’ll be shunted through time until I’m in little pieces or until the
Doctor manages to get me back in the right time. Which I dearly hope is soon.”

“I as well, if this is so dangerous. How did I ever let you do this?”

“You didn’t know. I was just experimenting. I didn’t think it would do anything, but I must have fed
the activation code in as well when I sent the calculations in.”

The Doctor led him to a rather comfortable armchair, letting him sit down and take stock of his body as he bustled off somewhere. Harry could feel his heart straining just a bit, calming down now as he had a break between shifts. His stomach was churning uncomfortably and his brain was racing. He would take any amount of punishment right now, just to be back home.

The Doctor hurried back in, a steaming mug in his hand, and Harry smiled. The tea. Of course. What else could it have been?

“Here, tea. It should help soothe you some. If nothing else it tastes amazing. From Frion, the Tea Planet. Settled by descendants of the British, who managed to turn a local crop used for health purposes into a drink. Made a fortune. And excellent tea.”

Harry grinned wider. “My favorite.” He took the mug, sipping and sighing in contentment. The Doctor watched him intently, and Harry looked him over. A very effeminate man, this Doctor. Longish red-blonde hair, delicate features, velvet green jacket. Harry would tease him about it for a long time to come.

“So, young one, what is your name, and how exactly did you manage such a spectacular mistake? Why haven’t the Time Lords interfered? This should register as a rather large disturbance on their instruments.”

“In order then. I’m Harry, I think I forgot to account for the extra dimensions within the Tardis and I fed the activation code into the device as well as the basic code, and” Harry shrugged. “Not sure. Possible because I stay within the Tardis each time I shift so I don’t really go anywhere spatially and the Tardis protects me from their peering eyes.” He smiled.

The Doctor chuckled. “You are an interesting young one, Harry. I take it you’re rather brilliant, so I can understand how you might have managed to do such a wonderful job of mucking up your numbers, but how did you do so without me noticing?”

“Er...I sort of borrowed a spare lab in a back corner of the Tardis. And I never told you about it.”

The Doctor laughed. “Oh, I see you’re going to be a right handful when I finally meet you.” Harry hid his face in his mug sheepishly. “So, when do I meet you?”

Harry tilted his head at him. “Really? You’re trying to find out the future?”

“Have to give it a shot.” They traded grins. “I knew there was a reason the Time Lords exiled me. Never conventional. Teaching children temporal mathematics. I bet that tickled them.”

Harry blinked in shock, before he collected himself, but it didn’t escape the Doctor. It was news, that the Doctor was exiled. What else didn’t he know about his dad? “Um, yeah, I guess,” Harry hedged. The Doctor looked at him closely.

“You...you don’t know anything about it, do you? About the Time Lords. Just what am I teaching you about?”

Harry shrunk into his chair. He didn’t trust himself to speak. This incarnation was sharp, sharper than he had expected, and he caught every shift, every twitch.
This is a Scene Break

“Ah-Ha! Got it! That boy, when he gets here I’m going to be sitting him down with all remedial math and dimensional calculations and he won’t be touching technology until he can name the calculations and expansions for all of them. This will not be happening again!”

The Doctor ran a hand through his wild, gravity defying hair and typed in a few more numbers before he spun around and raced for the door. Rose grinned. The white light in the room flashed brightly, before it died down. The Doctor spun in a circle in the hallway, smiling.

“Did...is Harry coming back Doctor?” Rose asked softly.

“Oh yes,” he said, smiling broadly. “He’ll be back, and he has quite a bit to answer for.”

This is a Scene Break

Harry gasped softly as his body was surrounded by light. He looked up at the Doctor and smiled weakly. Everything that was coming before him, the Time War and the loss of his people. Harry could only offer a wave as he vanished in a swirl of light. Hopefully for home and his dad and the Tardis he knew.

His body protested the travel even more, and when he landed (he still had the mug from the earlier Doctor) his entire body shuddered in protest. The Tardis filtered into his mind, concerned, no longer laughing. Harry knew he had no more of those shifts left in him. His body was not happy, not happy at all. His magic sparked and danced on his skin and little lightning bolts of energy flared up and down his body. He groaned.

“I so hope I’m back in the right time. I really do.”

He heard voices filtering down the hall. “Is Harry coming back Doctor?” It was Rose.

“Oh yes.” He heard his father say, sounding relieved. “He’ll be back, and he has quite a bit to answer for.” So he was back. His relief at being returned to the right time overshadowed the trepidation at the consequences of his actions.

He called out, “Dad! Dad! I’m in the console room!” He hoped his weak cry would reach them.

And, hearing the running footsteps, it obviously did.

“Harry! Harry! Oh, Harry, you’re back! When I’m done hugging you you are in so much trouble!” Harry was summarily lifted off the floor and hugged tightly. He didn’t have the breath to protest, not that he wanted to. His dad was here, he was back in the right time, and there was nothing better than that.

“Hey dad,” he whispered. “I had quite the adventure.” His dad laughed weakly, and he saw Rose standing behind, smiling happily, tears in her eyes. He smiled at her, before dropping into a dead faint. He had had a long day.

This is an Ending

Chapter End Notes
Thank you! Hope you enjoyed it! For those who read and leave kudos, thank you so much! I really appreciate them!

Kuroi
Chapter Summary

Hogwarts, just not the Hogwarts Harry is supposed to be at....

Chapter Notes

Ack, sorry this took so long! 0.0

~~~~This is a Beginning~~~~

Sirius Prime Entertainment Paradise was a spectacular feat of engineering, made up of several species’ advances in technology and suspended in geostationary orbit around the outer moon of a human-friendly planet. It was made up of a dozen platforms, each ascending platform slightly smaller than the one below it, encapsulated in an impermeable bubble of oxygen and nitrogen rich air, breathable for the majority of species in the alliance of the time.

The lowest level, largest and most expansive, was home to the offices, homes, and maintenance required to house the workers and keep the platforms running. With a standing workforce of ten thousand, they needed a lot of housing and plenty of basic necessities. Which meant the platform above that was the shopping district, with marketplaces, stores, restaurants, general supplies and a sizable town full of nothing but essential supplies for living.

But the Entertainment part started on the third platform, with the majority of crazy, insane rides and space-travelling roller coasters taking up enough space to entertain a small planet. Which was generally the number of visitors they received weekly. Above that were the gaming arcades, booths for 3-D immersion and any number of the latest tech in entertainment.

The fifth through seventh floors catered to the spas, relaxation and restoration clientele, with a full array of spa immersions, skin treatments for all kinds, and hotel rooms that were ludicrously expensive. The eighth floor was all for tots, the young ones who had an entire floor child-proofed so any species’ youth could explore, play, and have fun while parents or older siblings went elsewhere.

The ninth floor was devoted to the up and coming in the tech world. A techno-lover’s paradise, with presentations on what was interesting and fascinating, new finds, and even research laboratories for experimentation. The tenth and eleventh floors were home to rotating spectacles, reserved for the next best thing in the universe. Currently there was a musical performance from one of the nearby planets on the tenth and some kind of art demo with 4D projections and an interactive exhibit on the eleventh. The top floor was for the explorer, reaching out into space so far that it had special outlets in the bubble and anyone who wanted to explore had to sign several waivers and take personal responsibility for their exploits. Suits were mandatory and young children weren’t allowed.

All along the outer rim were shuttle bays with convenient short-range teleports to the main lobby in the center of the platform, whereby any level (save the lowest one without permission) could be accessed.
It lasted for six centuries before war tore it apart, but it was one of the most peaceful and prosperous six centuries in the universe.

And it was where Harry had decided to spend his birthday. Smack in the middle of the Paradise’s height was a birthday outing for the out-of-time and out-of-place boy.

Harry laughed as he danced along the edge of the platform that made up the third level of Sirius Prime Entertainment Paradise, enjoying the rush of his favorite ride still coursing in his veins. Below he could see the platform where the market place was and, in the far corner, his favorite booth, selling miscellaneous electronics parts that the ancient owner had collected over the centuries (or at least so Harry believed. He had always been there, no matter what century in the platform’s history they showed up in). He would beg to go down there later, but for now, he was enjoying the Star Shavings and waiting to get on the next ride.

His dad, Rose, and uncle Jack weren’t far behind, laughing and eating their own sweets. Harry could feel his dad’s eyes on him more often than not though. Ever since that incident with the Time Shift, Harry’s freedom had been limited and anything he wanted to do experiment wise had to be passed through a rigorous examination, where Harry had to have a goal, a plan on how to get there, and whenever he wrote out any calculations he had to show him to his dad. It least he wasn’t doing basic maths again. He had been stuck doing basic calculus forever, and that was after he proved he knew his algebra, geometry and trigonometry. Over and over again. He never wanted to see a basic algebra book again if he could help it.

But he wasn’t here for the market and its technologies. It was his 8th birthday and he had chosen to come and celebrate it here, where he could ride the zero-grav roller coaster, the quantum slingshot, and take part in all the awesome sweets that were available at theme parks. And, from what he knew of the Paradise’s history, there had been no altercations, malfunctions, or problems with this particular point in time. Which meant that, no matter how much he loved running around and chasing after his dad on save-the-world missions, his birthday wouldn’t end up turning into one of them. Especially since the last time he was here they had to prevent the total collapse of the infrastructure caused by metal-eating nanobots unleashed by, it would seem, an irate former employee.

Turning eight also meant he would get to go visit Merlin again, a trip he had been looking forward to for quite awhile, ever since the wizard had helped him fix his magic. Which was why he was eagerly dancing along the edge of the platform, working off nerves and wondering if he could ask his dad to visit Merlin or if he should just program the Tardis himself. Though that would no doubt get him into trouble, which he really didn’t need to get into right now.

He shouldn’t have been worrying, especially since he wasn’t the only one looking forward to seeing Merlin again. His dad was well aware of it, and Jack was certainly conscious of the ever closing date. But Harry didn’t know that and he was worried.

He saved his questions until, after several more trips on the Centrifugal Cyclone and Magnetic Bumper Balls, a trip through the market and a stroll down part of the shopping district, they ended up back in the Tardis. The moment the door shut behind them and the noise and constant hum of electronics vanished, Harry turned to look at his dad.

“Um, so, I was wondering, well, I just turned eight, I think, well, what with not really knowing my birth date and all and the Tardis and such, I might be eight, or seven. I mean, since we’re basing my age off the cycle of Earth, which is really biased, I mean, since Jefraxian has a 50 day cycle, but their days are really long, so I mean, on that planet I would be ten if I do the math right, though you would have to account for the occasional shift in Jefraxian orbit, which often makes their days a little longer and their years a bit longer, then it wouldn’t be quite the same, so I might be five there, maybe, but
since we don’t really have an age-based measuring system in the Tardis, I don’t really know, even though the Earth has a 365 day or so cycle, seeing as there is a leap-year every four years. Though that could mean something else entirely, but I’m not supposed to look into it right now, but that’s not the point. I mean, I suppose I’m eight now, or something, but that’s not really important, cause we decided today was when I turned eight so that’s alright, so I was wondering if, I mean, cause I’m eight now, if we could possibly go see, um, go see Merlin again?” He ended on what might be called a mumble, eyes glued to the floor. He wasn’t all too sure of why he was so hesitant, though seeing as how he had finally gotten back into good enough graces that he wasn’t doing basic maths anymore and was actually allowed to touch things in the labs, he didn’t want to do anything that might jeopardize his newfound freedom.

He hesitantly looked up in the ensuing silence, only to find his uncle trying not to laugh hysterically, shoulders shaking, Rose suppressing chuckles and his dad blinking, mildly surprised.

“Oh, that was brilliant. Absolutely amazing!”

“He is his father’s son!”

“The part with the orbits, that was great!”

“You owe me a fiver Jack!”

Harry looked at his dad, then over at the two other laughing members of the Tardis. His dad smiled at him.

“Of course. Though you could have just asked outright. No need for all the mumbling. It’s been approximately four years, eight months and two days since we last saw Merlin, you’re old enough now.”

That only sparked another round of guffaws from Jack. The Doctor pushed Harry gently to the other door.

“Can we go now?” Harry asked plaintively.

“No. We’ve just had a long day. Get some sleep first. We’ll go tomorrow.” Harry nodded, smiling, before he took his presents and headed off to his room. The Doctor turned to Rose and Jack.

“Alright, what is this all about?” he asked, gesturing to the laughing pair.

Rose looked at him with a beaming smile. “Harry is absolutely adorable!” she exclaimed, giggling.

“It’s just...him standing there, debating his own age, he sounded so much like you. I wish I had a video!” Jack managed to stop laughing, standing up straight. “I bet Rose here that he wouldn’t be able to ask at all. I lost that one!”

“Why wouldn’t he ask?” The Doctor looked mildly incredulous. He turned to the console and set a course for the vortex. They would hang there until Harry woke up and then they would head off for Merlin.

Rose and Jack traded looks. “Have you seen how hard you’ve been on him since the incident with the Time Shift, Doctor? I’m surprised you let him out of the Tardis without holding his hand, frankly.”
“That incident had more to do with mathematical incompetence than an inability to think logically. A problem I have, recently, rectified. It shouldn’t have had any effect on his ability to follow directions in a dangerous situation, much less a quiet outing on Sirius Prime. And besides, he’s known he would go see Merlin whenever he had his eighth birthday. It wasn’t exactly a secret.”

“You’ve been keeping a close eye on him. I wouldn’t be surprised if he was scared to ask,” Jack said, a little more subdued but a smile still stretched across his face.

“Nonsense. He asked, we’re going. It’s fine.”

Rose and Jack traded significant looks, before Rose dragged the Doctor out of the console room. “Time for a quick lesson in childhood punishment perspective,” she said to him firmly. “A peek at how children see a punishment.”

Jack laughed at the mild look of panic that spread across the Doctor’s face. He was glad to be back on the Tardis with little Harry, the Doctor and Rose. He headed for the library. He could get a few more laps in before bed.

Harry scrambled out of bed and raced for the console room, barefoot and in little mobile planet pants. He had forgone a shirt going to bed the night before. This didn't seem to concern him though, and he skidded, barefoot and wide eyed, into the console room. Rose and his dad were already there, though Jack, in true Jack fashion, had not appeared, though Harry didn't doubt that he was awake somewhere in the Tardis. He sometimes wondered if his uncle ever slept. His dad rarely did, only lured to bed by Rose, and Harry did NOT want to know what happened there. At all.

His state of undress did not go unnoticed by Rose, at the very least, who giggled and tapped his dad on the shoulder. The Doctor turned, catching sight of his son, and suppressed a laugh of his own.

"Harry, before we can go anywhere you might want to be decently clothed. Merlin might not appreciate a pupil who can't put on a shirt at the very least." Harry blinked, looked down at himself, then turned on his heel with a cheeky grin and dashed back to his room.

"I would probably be less anachronistic half naked then you would be in that suit dad!"

Rose giggled. "I sometimes wonder how much of that cheeky personality he got from you and how much was his naturally," she commented offhandedly.

"Oh, that's the Doctor's influence if you ask me. And it is such a brilliant personality, if you ask me." Jack wandered in, a piece of half eaten toast in one hand and a cup of coffee in the other.

"Thank you for your opinion on my parenting skills. Now, we are going to visit Merlin. No idea how long, but it would be better to try and not seem too out of place so..." The Doctor stopped talking as Rose and Jack burst into laughter. "What? What is it? Do I have something in my teeth?"

"Blend in? You talking about blending in? Did you not just hear your son? You've never changed out of that suit and jacket!" Rose giggled in his ear. Harry popped his head back in, black hair as orderly as it ever was, though as it got longer it was a bit more tolerable, eyes wide.

"Dad going on about blending in again?" he asked, catching sight of his father's incensed face and Rose and his uncle's laughter. "You never blend in dad, you can't give those lectures unless you want to change into something less...out of place." Harry gestured at his father's clothing. The Doctor frowned.

"These are perfectly fine. Besides, I've never gotten in trouble in any time no matter what I've worn."
Harry shook his head.

"Yeah, whatever dad. That's because you tend to overwhelm them with things that are a little crazier than your clothing." Harry was wearing a slightly shiny silver shirt, loose but comfortable, with black pants that cinched at his waist and were loose down to his bare feet. He was still unwilling to wear shoes and the Doctor hadn't quite won that battle yet.

Rose and Jack finally giggled their last and breathed deeply, smiling at the father and son.

"Still not wearing shoes Harry?" Jack asked.

Harry shook his head. "No. They're evil. I hate shoes. Irritating and not fun."

The Doctor rolled his eyes towards the Tardis ceiling. "Save me from impertinent and stubborn children," he muttered. Rose, to his misfortune, heard him and smacked his arm.

The Doctor sighed and looked at Harry. "Alright then, off to Merlin then. You ready Harry?"

Harry bounced on his toes, smiling widely. "Yes! Yes, yes yes!" The Doctor laughed and threw switches and levers, Harry laughing as he danced around, feeling the Tardis leave the Vortex and head towards Earth. "Merlin! Merlin! Merlin!" When the Tardis landed, he headed towards the door and flung it open.

Rose watched from the console, Head resting on the Doctor's shoulder, smile on her face. Jack hung near one of the Coral struts. "You gonna head out after him?" she asked the Doctor softly.

"As soon as he leaves, yeah. He's still inside. Which is a little odd, really." He scowled thoughtfully, until Harry turned back towards him, exasperation on his face.

"Dad, we've only just left Merlin from last time! You forgot to calibrate the Time Rotor, didn't you?" He sent a wave back over his shoulder and headed towards the console, hand reaching for a lever and looking at a certain dial.

"Harry," the Doctor said, reaching over to stop his son. But he wasn't quite quick enough and had barely brushed Harry's hands when Harry had turned the dial, stumbled, hit a lever and then pulled another. The Doctor groaned.

"Um...sorry. I...didn't mean to," Harry said. The Tardis blinked brightly and the Doctor looked up.

"I think...she wants us to get out. Yeah, now. Right now. Out! out out out!"

They all piled out of the Tardis, into a stone hallway and mildly confused. Harry glanced at the closing doors of the blue police box the Tardis always was when it materialized. "What's wrong dad? I didn't hear anything from her."

The Doctor looked at him, then at the Tardis. "She was not pleased with the controls being messed with the way they were. The flashing lights are not good. We'll have to give her a bit of time." He looked around. "In the meantime, we can take a look around. We can't be that far from where we left, time and place wise. Still Earth, still early 1000's or so." He glanced around, sticking his hands in his pocket. Without his long brown coat he seemed underdressed. Jack was also missing his long coat, but otherwise wasn't too odd in classic jeans and a button up shirt. Rose wore loose pants and a wrap around light blue shirt.

As they loitered in the hallway, debating which direction to set off in, they heard a startled sound from down the hall. Harry was the first to turn, and caught sight of a woman in yellow robes with
light, honey colored hair staring at them. He smiled. "Hi there. Could you tell us where we are? Afraid we got a bit lost."

The woman looked puzzled. "How could you not know where you are? Apparition points are restricted to the main hall with permission and floo hasn't been connected here." She looked at the group more closely. "And you are unfamiliar to me. Which is impossible."

"Oh, um, well, we're new here. Just got here in fact. Just popped in, really. Not too sure of where we are, just wondering..." Harry was cut off by Rose's hand on his shoulder and he looked at her gratefully.

"Hello. My name is Rose, the chattering child is Harry, the tall man in suspenders is Jack and the bloke with the suit is the Doctor. We apologize for the confusion. While I can't explain exactly how we got here, we would be grateful if you could tell us where we are." Rose's tone was of calm and confidence, achieved over years of working with panicked people and in dangerous situations. It worked, and the woman's alarm and confusion dwindled.

"Well, in that case, if you could come with me, it would be easier if you could join my colleagues as well. We are at Hogwarts," she added, a smile twitching at her lips. "Though I would still like to know how you managed to get somewhere without knowing where you were going."

Jack smiled. "The same question I'm always asking, fair lady," he said with a bow. "And may we have your name?" It was unmistakable to miss the flirtatious tone in his voice.

Harry though was far more excited about their location, and he tugged at his dad's arm. "We're at Hogwarts dad! Hogwarts!"

The Doctor smiled widely. "I heard. Not a bad detour, huh?"

Harry shook his head. "Nope! This is awesome!"

The woman leading them down stone halls and up and down stairs was laughing at Jack's flirtatious smiles. "Young man, I teach plenty of students who try the same thing every year. Though to answer your question, my name is Helga Hufflepuff. I am one of the four founders of Hogwarts." She gestured at a statue of a gargoyle. "And this is the entrance to our offices. Apero!"

The gargoyle came to life, shivered, as if getting rid of its stone coating, and looked about itself. "Who wants in?" it said, voice gravelly and distinctly neutral.

Helga sighed. "I believe we put too much magic in the building of this castle. Everything in it has such an attitude." She turned to the statue. "Helga Hufflepuff and guests, requesting access," she said. The gargoyle eyed her and then the guests behind her, before shifting, and the wall behind it moved aside. The stairs it revealed, moving, had Harry wiggling on his feet.

"Magic dad! Magic! Actual magic!" The three adults didn't think he could get any more excited. Helga Hufflepuff looked at Harry in mild surprise.

"Is there something shocking, young man?" she asked Harry.

Harry smiled widely. "I just, I've never seen magic from someone else! I know there are other human magic users, it's just, I'm usually the only one."

Helga looked at him, then at the Doctor, Rose, and Jack. "So you all do not have magic then?" At a negative head shake, she frowned. "Then how did you manage to get into Hogwarts in the first place? Non-magicals should not be able to enter."
Harry raised his hand. "Probably me. I've got that kind of effect."

"So, let me understand you correctly. The only one with magic here is the child,"

"Harry," Harry interrupted.

"Is Harry," Helga repeated with the air of one who is long used to children. "You can't tell me how you got here in the first place, and you didn't even know where you ended up." She looked at them with a clinical eye. "I'm sure my colleagues will love chatting with you."

Rose caught the Doctor's eye and smiled. Jack clapped them on the shoulder. "Well, we've managed to land in it this time. Sharp one, she is," Jack said in an undertone.

"I'm sure we'll figure something out. It isn't as if she's threatening us," Rose whispered back. "And Harry will no doubt distract them with some feat of magic or whatnot."

The Doctor smiled tightly at her. "That's what I'm worried about," he said softly.

Rose and Jack looked taken aback. "But why? Harry's a pretty capable magic user. I'm sure he'll manage to worm his way in." Rose looked at Jack. "Right?"

"Yeah. The little tyke is a rather good magic user..."

"That's the problem. If, no, when, because this is Harry, he shows something off, his unusual capability for magic will, no doubt, be something that they find astonishing. I'm worried that they will be more likely to figure out why then they will be to teach him. Or help him, or just leave him alone. It's the drive of the intelligent that, when they find something unusual, they have to investigate, which I am not willing to let happen." Before they could discuss any further, they reached the top of the stairs and Helga opened the door at the top.

Immediately they heard a rather high pitched yelp, followed by a growl of frustration. "Come on Salazar, it was just a joke! In good sport!" a loud, male voice yelled, a tinge of humor and fear in it.

Another voice, deeper and full of anger, replied. "Just because your sense of humor hasn't evolved past the age of ten doesn't mean you need to inflict it upon my person. Now take your punishment like a man and stop darting about!"

"Not if you don't put that sword down. I'll stay as fairie like as possible until then." The whistling of a sword through fabric sounded and then an exasperated sigh.

"Alright, I know that you two can't get along without having to show some sense of masculine superiority in a childish display of stupidity, but unless you can sit down and shut up until Helga joins us I will turn you both into small rodents and stick you to the outside of the tower." The voice was female, calm, and tinged with warning. It was enough for the two others, and they sat down without further ado.

Helga, who had been keeping them outside the main room, fond amusement on her face, opened the door and walked in. "Hello Wen, I see you've managed to tame our two children. I have brought some guests as well."

"Guests? But it is the Harvest. There shouldn't be anyone here, not for another three weeks." Helga gestured them in, and Harry needed no more incentive.

"Hi! I'm Harry. This place is brilliant! So much magic and everything! It's so amazing!" Harry spun in circles. The Doctor, Rose, and Jack entered much more sedately, and the took in the room and its
occupants. Wen, the woman Helga had spoke to, sat at a desk with a pen in hand, a slender length of wood in the other. Her pitch black hair was tied in an intricate knot, skin tanned from work under the sun. Vibrant blue eyes looked at them, appraising. Salazar, distinguished by the long, slender sword in one hand, was darker skinned, olive, with unusually light colored hair and bright moonstone eyes, and was eyed them impassively. And what could only be an overeager ten year old in adult form sat, quivering in excitement, with flame red hair and pale skin dotted with freckles. He looked like he burned easily in the sun.

"Who are you? And how did you get inside Hogwarts without disturbing the wards?" Wen said, voice cool. Harry spun on his feet to look at her and spoke before his dad, Rose, or Jack could say anything.

"This is amazing! You all have magic! I have magic to! We were supposed to be meeting Merlin but got slightly misplaced! It's nice to meet you!"

Wen looked at him. "You are young to know so much. Many come to us from magical families, but you do not, it seems." She looked at the Doctor, Rose, and Jack. "No, I think not. So how do you know you have magic, young Harry?"

Harry smiled. "Cause I can make things just by asking my magic. It's really easy!" And, before his dad could so much as say, "No, Harry!" Harry had twirled his fingers around and conjured his miniature solar system.

Rose turned to look at the Doctor. "Is that what you were afraid of?" she asked softly.

The Doctor looked at his soon with proud, if exasperated, eye. "Yes. Unfortunately Harry is often far more concerned with showing off than with thinking rationally when it comes to magic."

"So a bit like you with technology then," Rose commented cheekily. "Oi!" Rose laughed at him. "I'm sure Harry will be fine Doctor. It seems like they're far more interested in how he did it rather than anything else." Which was true enough. The crowd of Hogwarts Founders were, as a whole, wide eyed.

"How old are you child?" Salazar asked.

Harry turned. "My name is Harry and I'm eight, I think. Most likely." Harry spun his solar system around in a circle, before he collapsed it. "I like magic, it's really pretty, friendly."

"For one so young, that should be impossible. How can you do such things?" Wen asked.

"I've never really not been able to do whatever I wish with magic, unless it's really big. I mean, mostly just making my solar system and bringing small objects to me. Oh, and I don't really get hurt." Harry pondered.

"It is unheard of," Salazar said. "But not impossible. If one's magic was powerful enough than it would be readily accessible from a young age."

The bouncy young man in the far couch sprung up. "That is amazing young Harry. I wish you would show me what you did." Harry looked at him. "I am Godric, young Harry. It is a pleasure to meet such a powerful young magic user."

Harry smiled brightly. "Alright. I mean, I don't really know how I do it, I just ask my magic and it helps me make what I want."

"This is most unusual." Godric leaned closer, watching closely as Harry spun his hands around and
his solar system reappeared. "It seems...yes, it does seem that your core is enormous. I have never seen such a large magical core."

Harry peered at him curiously. "Core? You mean where my magic is, right?" Godric nodded. "Yeah, when I was younger I had some help in expanding it because something happened. So now it fits against the inner layer of my skin."

"That's impossible," Wen snapped suddenly. Harry looked at her, eyes wide. "No core can possibly be so large, that would require an enormous amount of energy, and...and....how could you possibly know?"

"I would like to know as well," Helga said. "It is unheard of for one so young to know their own magic so well." Harry looked around him, then back at his dad, unsure of how to explain.

The Doctor smiled at the lost look on Harry's face, then stepped forward, clearing his throat. Everyone turned to look at him, momentarily confused and slightly irritated. It was as if they had forgotten they were there. "Well, I may not have magic, but Harry is my child so I can speak on what happened to him with some authority."

The four studied him for a moment, then Salazar gestured for him to continue. "Go on then, Doctor. I suppose a parent would have authority on their child, even if the parent has no magic."

The Doctor smiled at him. "Yes, I have no magic, but that doesn't mean I don't understand some things about it. Harry was born with a large amount of magic, more than most adult wizards have. It only grew as he did, but then something happened to him when he was three. He was injured by a party who had a grudge against me, and his magic was locked inside him. It took a very powerful and, thankfully, friendly wizard to help release it. To do so, from what I understood, he expanded the edges of Harry's core until it had an access to the surface of his skin by directly touching it. His core doesn't escape his body, but rather nestles inside of his skin, a second skin, if you want to think of it like that." Harry had moved to stand by his dad, Rose and Jack coming up behind him.

"So, if I understand, Harry's core is...the same size as him? But such a core would be...unimaginably powerful. And unstable. There is a reason magic is limited to an inner core within the body with a network of connections to reach the skin. It is unsafe for it to be so large." Wen turned her head sideways, appraising Harry.

Harry looked uncertain, frowning and fiddling with his dad's jacket. "But, there wasn't another way. Before my magic was freed to its present state, it had been trapped. I couldn't use it, and it was making me sick. So when it was opened up, it helped rather than hurt. Though I was told that it was unstable. Not the first time, though this probably helps contain it somewhat." Harry touched the necklace around his neck, revealing to the room the gold, looping chain.

Wen stood up, coming around the desk to kneel in front of Harry. She reached out, then thought of something. "May I?"

"Alright, but be careful. I can't take it off...I never heard your name," Harry said suddenly.

"I am Rowena Ravenclaw, young Harry. And thank you. I shall keep that in mind. You needn't take it off." Rowena reached out a hand and touched the necklace gently, closing her eyes. "This...this is very unusual. Some kind of magic, but not a kind I am familiar with. It...it is a binding magic, keeping...keeping something in. Not just magic but also....I do not know. A kind of energy. Something I am unfamiliar with. But it is very strong. I can understand why it restricted your magic. How long have you been wearing it?"
"Since I was three, or thereabouts."

Rowena looked at him closely. "For five years? There must be a more important reason. Such a magic is unhealthy for a developing magical child. And you allowed it?" She looked at the Doctor.

The Doctor glowered. "You have no right to question my actions. I did what was best for my child, and due to the specific condition he has because of what was done to him, that necklace is the only thing between him and the loss of his mind." Rose put a calming hand on the Doctor's shoulder and Jack pulled Harry back, next to him. A united front against the four founders.

"I suspect that the actions taken were for the best, Rowena, and you should stop poking your nose where it doesn't belong," Salazar said from the chair he was seated on.

Rowena spun round, glaring at the other man. "But, the damage that it could have done, there could not possibly be a reason for the use of such a necklace. The things it could do..."

"Which is why, I suspect, Harry's core is so unusual. To make sure it can't hurt him. Calm down and use that brain of yours, rather than that indignation you are so intent on holding on to." Salazar looked at Rowena with raised eyebrows.

The woman huffed, spinning on her heel and returning to her seat behind the desk. Godric sprang up again. "Well, I think we can teach him a thing or two. Nothing too serious, he's still a tyke, but for now, there are some things that Harry can learn. And it might help stabilize his magic, make it less chaotic. So much chaos, you have." Godric smiled at Harry, who looked up at him. After a few moments of the staring contest, Harry nodded firmly.

He turned to look at his father. "Can I? Not for too long, but for a little while? Please dad?" The Doctor looked at Harry, then over at the four founders.

Rose's hand touching his shoulder made him turn around. "Doctor, it can't hurt. You can keep an eye on it, and besides, we can't leave at the moment. The Tardis won't let us in for a little bit, so Harry can learn until we leave."

"Yeah, I mean, what harm? Between the three of us little Harry here can be watched. There's just one of him and three of us." Jack beamed. "Though that doesn't necessarily mean Harry won't just slip away."

The Doctor looked at Harry again, then knelt down to look at him eye to eye. "Harry, are you sure?"

Harry looked indignant. "Of course I am. I know what I can do. I'm sure I can handle a few lessons in magic."

The Doctor sighed. "Alright, but just for a bit. It isn't your time to stay here for long." Harry nodded, understanding.

"Alright. I understand."

"Excellent," said Salazar from behind them. "Your lessons shall start immediately. Come with me." He looked at the other three founders as if daring them to disagree with him. No one said anything, though Helga had a smile and Godric looked crestfallen.

Harry wasn't quite sure where he was going, only that the tall, sword wielding man was leading him down numerous corridors and stairs without a word. Behind him, Jack was following, an amused smile plastered on his face. He was obviously not too concerned with Harry's predicament, other than making sure Harry was safe.
Which meant Harry was on his own with an unstoppable force for a founder. "Um...where are we going?" Harry asked. Salazar looked back briefly.

"To my teaching rooms. I shall evaluate you there, see what I can teach to one so young."

"What do you teach?" Harry inquired, head tilting.

"Primarily potions and transfiguration, though I share the former with Helga, since I have no hand for growing or caring for plants. Occasionally Godric gets it in his head he can wield a wand well enough for transfiguration and butts into my classes. Those are usually disastrous. Godric's ability to use a wand is, at best, non-explosive." Salazar glanced at him. "I pity your Defense lessons with him, he has an unfortunate habit of making students learn defense the hard way, at the edge of a sword." A considering head nod. "Maybe he'll take it easy and give you a dull sword. The question is will he use a dull one as well."

Harry paled slightly. He wasn't good with weapons. At all. Give him some random circuitry anytime, but hand him anything with a pointy end and he might end up sticking himself. He hoped Salazar was joking.

"Um, will he really do that?" Harry said worryingly.

"Most probably. Though I can say his wandless magic is quite powerful. You will do well listening to him." Salazar huffed. "Doesn't make him any less a child."

Harry wondered what kind of wizarding world he had dropped into, then shrugged and decided that he didn't really mind. Though, he thought, it would be strange living in the same time. Was there anything he would have to learn? There was something about how days were counted, specifically the length of them. But he wasn't really sure what they were. So many races had so many different methods, how was he supposed to figure out just one planet's? Even if it was a race his father was very fond of (and one he had been born from).

The walls were closing in slightly, and they were getting darker. Harry stumbled and put a hand out to steady himself, then froze. The walls, they...they were alive.

He stared in wonder at the stones, hands flat against them. He wondered why he hadn't felt it earlier, but it must be like the Tardis; if he was outside of it, he had to be in contact to talk to her. That...that must be the same here. Hogwarts was a castle built with magic, it would only be logical that the magic used would, in the process, gain the personalities of its builders and inhabit the stones.

But it was so powerful...the founders must be amazing magicals. His halt in progress was noticed by Salazar, who stopped and came back. Jack was behind Harry, resisting touching the child.

"What are you doing?" Salazar stopped and peered over Harry's shoulder. "Is there something on the wall particularly appealing?"

"The castle...it's alive." Harry said in wonder. "It...it has a soul, a personality and everything. And it's so young."

Salazar looked at Jack, eyes narrow. "Do you know what he is talking about?"

Jack shrugged. "Harry can sense when an object is sentient, despite its appearance. And he can speak with it."

"That...that is unusual." Salazar turned to Harry. "You say the castle is alive? How so?"
"Well, when you...built it, you used so much magic that it was absorbed into the stones. It...inherited the four founder's personalities and has formulated its own. I wouldn't be surprised if things start moving around of their own accord."

Salazar's eyes narrowed. "That would explain a few things. We have misplaced a couple rooms here and there. The stairs act odd occasionally." He looked at Harry. "Are you sure of this, young Harry?"

Harry nodded. "Of course. Though Hogwarts is still trying to figure things out. Not sure about everything...so young." Harry grinned. "I like this place! Everything is so exciting!"

Jack laughed. "Of course you'd say that in a castle that's alive. It just screams Harry."

"So...he does this often?" Salazar inquired.

Jack shrugged. "Unusual things and Harry tend to go together. It's just the way the universe works. If something odd is going on, you can bet Harry will be somewhere around it."

Salazar kept a close eye on Harry all the way to the dungeons. This young child was clearly powerful, and strange. There was something about him, his magic, everything about him, that seems so...strange. Not only his powerful magic and his unusual core, but his ability to talk to Hogwarts. They had suspected something was different about it when they had finished constructing the castle. Rooms had disappeared and reappeared when they weren't paying attention. Staircases moved around. Nothing major, but it was odd. Harry's comment on it being alive answered much about the castle and its odd happenings.

But that only added to the strange being that was Harry, along with his odd uncle that insisted on following them, Harry's father, and the young girl with the honey colored hair. Salazar wasn't sure what to do about it, but he did know that it would be interesting to teach the young boy, that was for sure. He only hoped it would leave his labs in decent shape.

~~~~~This is a Scene Break~~~~

The Doctor and Rose remained in the office with Helga, Godric, and Rowena.

"I have a feeling this isn't going to be a friendly chat," the Doctor murmured.

"What gave you that impression? Helga seems friendly enough," Rose replied. "Though I will agree that Rowena does not seem overly friendly."

"That piercing stare is quite unnerving," the Doctor agreed, though he seemed entirely unperturbed by said stare.

"Impressive. Not quite on par with, say, a Dalek, but nonetheless an impressive stare." Rose nodded her head.

Rowena's hands tightened. "Are you two quite through?" she snapped. Godric blinked.

"What's up your skirt?" he asked.

Rowena glanced sideways at him. "They are strangers, unknown and not magical, I would expect a little more respect."

"Wen, calm down. They are not a threat. While I would agree that their arrival is strange, it doesn't mean that you have to be rude."
Rowena sighed. "Fine. Fine. You two talk to them then." She turned to the wall. "I’m going to go do some research. Let me know when Salazar is done with the boy." She left with as much haughty, insulted grace as she could, long blue dress brushing the door frame.

Rose and the Doctor exchanged looks. "Well, that didn't take long. Do you think Harry can handle her?"

The Doctor grinned. "I'm sure. Though the question should be do you think they can handle Harry?"

Rose shook her head, a smile on her face.

Helga interrupted them with a soft cough. "Alright, there are a few questions that we would like answers to, and I believe we have the right to get honest answers, if for no other reason than your presence inside our castle." Helga leveled a look at them. "Can we agree on that?"

The Doctor looked between Godric, who had perched on the edge of the desk with Rowena's absence, and Helga. "Yes, that doesn't sound too unreasonable. But there are some things that, if I answer, would only lead to confusion. I can answer to the best of your understanding though."

Rose chuckled.

"Alright then. I can accept that, though it is an odd answer. I would think the first question would be how you got here."

The Doctor sighed. "And that answer would be a convoluted one. In your terms, I suppose I could say that...how do you perceive time?" the Doctor said suddenly. "I mean, what is time to you?"

"Time? You mean...the passing of days, candlemarks? Years, months, yes?" Helga questioned. The Doctor nodded. "Well, forward, I suppose. Time can only move forward, though you can review the past in memories. Rowena has been working on a device that is, if it works, used to return to a point in time that has already happened, but that is merely theoretical."

"So to you, time is a straight line, yes? Alright, so now, imagine time as more of a...big ball, all twisty and curvy and knotted. Some knots are larger than others, some lead to dead ends, others go on in a spiral, winding forever around and around. I can travel, well, I sort of, move around on those lines. One of them just happened to lead here. Don't always know where I end up, but it is always an adventure." The Doctor smiled.

Godric looked at him appraisingly. "That...is an unusual way of seeing time. I can't tell if you are really telling the truth, but you certainly have an interesting perception. Time as a big ball. Does that allow you to travel forward and backward? See how long a person lives? Is this something just you can do, or can all of you do this?"

"Excellent questions, Godric. Only, well, you saw that blue box, in the hallway Helga? Yes? Well, that is something that allows me to travel through time. It can transport those within it forward and backward in time, stopping on one knot or other."

Helga nodded thoughtfully. "So, let’s say that we accept that at face value, since I don’t quite understand what you are talking about specifically, even if it is interesting. How did someone without magic manage to raise a child with such powerful magic?"

The Doctor stared thoughtfully at Helga. "Well, I should say that an old acquaintance of mine managed to talk me into taking care of him. The fact that he has magic is merely a byproduct of who he is and we take it in stride. I teach him what I know and make sure he doesn’t use his magic in any dangerous ways."
“But doesn’t he do accidental magic?”

“Not since he was three and he hit his head on the stairs.” The Doctor shrugged. “Why?”

“Well,” Godric said. “Most children with magic often have incidents of accidental magic when they are emotionally charged. It is unusual for young children, especially powerful ones, to not have incidents of accidental magic.”

The Doctor blinked. “That might be due to his own ability to control the magic. And his necklace. It restrains magic within him until he accesses it consciously.”

Helga frowned. “I can see why Rowena was concerned over the use of this necklace. It isn’t particularly healthy, but I suppose you know what you are doing, and what the wizard who helped you was doing as well.”

The Doctor nodded, and Rose put her hand in his.

The interrogation continued.

~~~~~This is a Scene Break~~~~~

Harry stared at the tools that were the basics of potions that he would be taking. While he knew them all individually, cooking was never really his thing. He wasn't allowed to cook in the kitchen, unless it was in the various instant cooking devices. Even then it was sketchy. His dad was prone to looking over his shoulder whenever he was in the kitchen. Then again, it didn't help that, at one point, he had almost burned all edible food to a crisp and the Tardis had been displeased enough to hide not only his room, but all bathrooms. It took a lot of cleaning and begging to get one of those back, and he had been stuck in the library on the couch for a few sleep cycles. Which wasn't really all that unusual, if he was honest. He had a habit of blowing things up or burning things, which didn't really sit well with the sentient ship.

Now he was supposed to be making potions, or at least he supposed he was. And he wasn't sure what to think about the ground salamanders. Jack had whispered to him that, on earth, salamanders were small lizards without any sentience, but he still couldn't quite get the picture of those friendly fire loving creatures that had been so nice to him after they managed to save their sacred fire from being extinguished. He wasn't sure he was going to like this.

And Salazar didn't seem to be too forgiving of mistakes. If anything, he was a strict teacher, even if he had a sense of humor and didn't mind Harry's sarcastic comments. Actually, Harry thought he was pretty amused by them.

Right now though, as Harry sat and reviewed a guidebook on the basics of potions and safety precautions, Salazar and uncle Jack were talking.

"So, is this anything like cooking?" Jack asked Salazar in an undertone.

Salazar cocked an eyebrow at him. "I suppose, in the non-magical world, cooking could be equated, though no one ever lets me near a kitchen. I tend to make a rather large mess of things and Rowena is never pleased." Jack laughed.

"You aren't the only one. Harry manages to blow himself up along with his surroundings whenever he's cooking. Just...just warning you."

Salazar nodded gravely. "I will take this into consideration. I must ask though, what do you know of his strange magic? It is most unusual, especially for one so young. His father is not magical, though I suppose the Doctor isn't his birth father."
Jack shook his head. "No, he isn't but he's the only father Harry's ever known. Harry's a bright child, but impulsive and stubborn. Hard headed is a really good word for him. He learns faster and better than anyone I know, but if he gets an idea in his head, the best thing you could do is follow along behind him to make sure he doesn't hurt himself."

"What about those around him?" Salazar asked with a serious expression marring his face.

"That is never really an issue. Harry would jump in front of a bullet for a complete stranger before he would so much as scratch an innocent bystander."

"A bullet? what is this?"

Jack coughed. "Um...a type of non-magical weapons projectile that flies through the air. Very rare right about now, might only find them in Asia at the moment..."

"Asia?"

Jack rubbed the back of his head. "Um, just ignore me, ok?"

Salazar laughed. "You are an amusing man."

Jack grinned. "Oh, I'm much more than that," he said lightly, a smirk gracing his features. Salazar raised an eyebrow.

"You are an odd one. Are you always so forward with your interests?"

"Only if I see someone beautiful," Jack said, looking Salazar up and down. "And you are quite the specimen."

"UNCLE! CAN YOU NOT FLIRT WHEN I'M SITTING RIGHT HERE?" Harry yelled, hands clamped over his ears. "I do NOT appreciate the show!"

"You should be reading, not paying attention to conversations between adults."

Harry scowled. "I wasn't paying attention. It's impossible to ignore uncle Jack when he's being all flirty and obnoxious."

Salazar laughed. "I happen to find your uncle rather charming, if a bit childish. Though I would recommend a couple drinks before you try any more of those charms."

Jack laughed "It's a deal."

Harry groaned. His uncle could never go that far without finding someone who would flirt with him. It just happened to be his teacher at the moment, which didn't bode well for his education. So he plodded on with reading through the potions book Salazar had given him. Better this than listening to the flirtations from across the room.

Teaching Harry was even more trouble than Salazar had anticipated. The child was brilliant, amazingly so, but he was so determined to try things out on his own, in his own way, rather than listening to set instructions. More often than not, this produced a rather large explosion, from which they emerged with singed eyebrows and another lost cauldron. Salazar was getting rather tired of this. They were trying to brew a simple Blood Replenishing potion, a simple, almost laughably easy, potion with a set series of simple instructions and almost no hazardous effects if something was done wrong. Or at least Salazar had thought so, but in the space of an afternoon, he was proven sorely mistaken. Somehow, Harry managed to destroy three cauldrons and leave soot marks on the ceiling.
It was worse than Jack had warned him of.

Jack was leaning on a far wall, watching the proceedings with interest. He could see where the problem was, unlike Salazar, who stood opposite Harry. Harry was secretly pointing his cobbled together sonic screwdriver at the pot thing (cauldron he heard Salazar correct Harry in a weary voice). What his aim was, Jack couldn't guess, but he wondered if the delicate art of potion making was a little too slow for the manic child who, unless given math problems and a heap of pile of technology or a book, was unlikely to sit still for long periods of time. This potion making definitely called for long periods of sitting and waiting. Always a bad thing when Harry was involved.

"I don't know what you are doing, Harry, but stop it this instant! This potion is simple. How are you continually blowing it up? There should be no possible way for this particular series of ingredients to have an explosive effect!"

Harry grinned sheepishly at the irate teacher, before sliding the sonic into his pocket and, reluctantly, starting out making the potion again.

"Sorry. I guess...I don't know Salazar, honest." Jack could tell he was lying, Harry had that little half smile tugging at the corner of his mouth (and his lying skills were, quite frankly, terrible, seeing who he grew up with).

"Harry," Jack said warningly from the back corner, and Harry whirled in surprise. Jack looked pointedly at Harry's pocket, raising an eyebrow, and Harry's mouth fell open in a little oh of shock. He nervously turned back to the cauldron, stirring carefully, not even daring to go for the little sonic device now that he knew his uncle was watching him. Jack sat back in smug satisfaction. He might not rat on Harry to isi new teacher, but he was most definitely not going to sit here and watch Harry ruin another set of perfectly good utensils that Salazar (the handsome devil) was lending him.

Salazar hadn't missed the exchange and looked between Harry and Jack, brow furrowed. Jack smiled and shook his head. Salazar nodded. It seemed as if whatever the problem had been, it was over now. He could get an explanation later, whenever Jack made good on his promise for a drink.

"Alright Harry, only a few more steps left. As long as you don't mess this up, you should have a halfway decent potion." Harry's shoulders hunched in self-defense as he added the second to last ingredient and stirred the obligatory twelve left turned stirs and the six right turned stirs, before sitting back and crossing his arms.

He was bored. Potions took way too long to do anything! But he wasn't going to voice that to the man whose cauldrons he had blown up in an attempt to activate the reactions faster. And after uncle Jack caught him using the sonic, he couldn't even try that again. Now he had to wait the proper amount of time (about halfway through a mark on a candle sitting beside him) before the potion could be completed. This was a bore.

"So, now that you have some free time before you have to complete the potion, why don't you list off the uses of a silver ladle in comparison to a copper one."

Harry perked up. He liked facts. But before he could even begin, the doors banged open and in marched his father and the kindly woman who had found them in the hallway, Helga. Harry waved.

"Hi dad! I'm making a potion! So long as this one doesn't blow up." The Doctor grinned, walking over and setting a hand on Harry's shoulder. "It's for replacing the red blood cells in the body after they've been depleted, though I'm not entirely sure how that works with the ingredients I used. How does ground Egyptian Beetle have anything to do with red blood cells?"
The Doctor laughed. "Ah, Harry, the wonders of magic. I'm sure you'll learn a lot more for the next week. It'll be about that long before the Tardis is going to let us back in."

Harry grinned. Jack punched the air delightedly, then sent a wink over towards Salazar, who responded with a smirk and an eyebrow raise.

Harry was handed over to Helga by an exasperated Salazar, pleased that Harry had finally made a decent potion but frustrated with the boy who had, somehow, managed to continually explode a potion that had never produced such a reaction. He set about cleaning up the room, careful to keep magic away from the potion supplies in concern for the state of the metal used. Any magic that came in contact with potion supplies ultimately tainted the potion itself, which could lead to rather disastrous results.

Jack stayed behind to help out, grinning at Salazar as he went about picking up after his wayward nephew. "So, Salazar, enjoy your first teaching session with Harry?" he asked.

Salazar sighed. "You were right, telling me about him. He is amazingly brilliant, but I don't believe he has the patience to sit still longer than the time it takes for him to finish reading the instructions. And I still don't know how he managed to produce such a reaction from that particular potion. I chose it specifically because it didn't explode, in fact any effects that might have occurred merely produced a telling odor and color." The man shook his head. "I just, he is a handful. Can you tell me what he was doing?" Salazar pinned Jack with a look that had made many a student tell him their wrongdoings, but Jack had been on the end of an angry Time Lord glare.

Jack grinned. "I could, but it wouldn't make much sense. Harry was basically using a device to cause a much quicker reaction within the po...cauldron" he hastily corrected himself. "Cauldron, but he hadn't managed to pinpoint the frequency he needed to use, so there was an adverse reaction." Jack could see the puzzled expression. "He focused something similar to an intense beam of fire at the cauldron to speed up the potion," he simplified.

Salazar's face morphed into one of exasperated understanding. "He has no patience at all, that boy. Though I don't know what you mean by frequency, if he was, as you say, trying to speed up the reaction by increasing the heat, there could, possibly, be such an explosion." Salazar sighed. "I'm going to have to think of a new way of teaching the boy. If he is so impatient he would be a far more detrimental student than a good one."

Jack nodded. "Good thing to do is to give him something to experiment with. Give him a list of ingredients and properties and their reactions to certain things and have him work through how a potion is made rather than giving him instructions. He enjoys fiddling with things, and if he can work it out on paper first before he starts playing with the dangerous toys, you won't be out of cauldrons in a weeks time."

Salazar frowned consideringly. "That...that is a novel way of approaching the problem. I shall give it some thought."

Jack clapped his hands, looking around the now clean room. "So, you up for that drink?"

Salazar smiled faintly. "You are a most unusual man, Jack." Jack smiled widely. "Alright then, we can go out to the local pub and you can tell me how you ended up an uncle to such a strange young boy."

"Maybe some of that story. I'd like to hear how you got into potions and why in all the stars you
decided to build a castle way out here."

The two men walked through the door leading to the hallway, trading stories.

~~~~~~~~~This is a Scene Break~~~~~~~~~

Harry's laugh echoed through the stone halls as he followed Helga up and around various staircases. His father and Rose were with him, and he was telling them his experimentations in potions.

"And a sonic does not react well with potion ingredients. Apparently I blew up a particularly stable potion. Three times. Salazar was not impressed. Then Uncle Jack caught me and I had to put it away," Harry said.

His dad raised an eyebrow. "When did you get your hands on a sonic device? I was certain after the incident on Jalixa I confiscated yours."

Harry rubbed the back of his head. "Um, well, I mean, you don't hide things that well dad, and besides, that was ages ago. What if I needed it?"

"I bet you asked the Tardis where it was," Rose piped up.

Harry glared at her. "Oi, don't go telling dad all that! Then I'm gonna get in more trouble when he lectures her and I won't be able to find my room forever!" Rose laughed at him.

The Doctor frowned. "Well, for now you can keep it, but keep it in your pocket. Magic and sonic technology don't really go hand in hand, as you discovered in potions."

"If you three would hurry up, I would be able to evaluate young Harry on his various abilities in theory and his understanding. If, however, you would like to remain dawdling and chatting, we can do that instead." The Doctor blinked at the tone of voice, an exasperation he had heard in many mothers at an errant child.

Rose laughed. "She told us, huh?" Rose whispered to Harry, who nodded sagely. Helga ushered them into a classroom right at the top of another flight of stairs, waving Rose and the Doctor to the back of the room. Harry sat in a chair at the front, moving another around to face him.

She stared at him a bit, then started. "So, Harry, what is magic?"

Harry blinked. "Magic? It's...it's...well, it's fundamental. It's part of the universe. Though not in the same way that one would think, not like gravity or inertia or quantum or temporal energy is. It's...it's like an undercurrent that reshapes parts of the universe. Maybe to remind people that things are always subject to spontaneous change?" Harry frowned, tapping his finger on his chin.

In the back, Rose stifled a laugh at the incredulous look on Helga’s face. Beside her the Doctor sighed a small, amused laugh. "I wonder if we’ll manage to get through this visit without something happening that no one is expecting," he muttered under his breath.

Rose turned wide eyes to him. "You really think Harry can stay out of trouble that long?"

"It’s too much to hope for, huh?"

"Yeah, probably," she replied in an undertone.

Up front, Helga tried to make sense of the answer she was given. "Well, I was looking for 'I don’t know' but I suppose that works too."
Harry tilted his head. “Well, magic is a kind of energy, just not one that acts by any of the normal universal principles.”

“Yes, but it isn’t something most people can explain. It is able to do some extraordinary things that don’t seem possible.”

“So it doesn’t have any rules?” Everything had rules, Harry knew. Electricity, quantum physics, the basic building blocks of the universe. Everything. But he hadn’t run into any specific rules of magic yet.

Helga furrowed a brow. "Well, I suppose one cannot create a food that has never been eaten by the witch or wizard," Helga postulated.

Harry sighed. "That is a limit of imagination, not a limit of magic. You can create matter from nothing, deconstruct it, cause emotional responses against the will of another person, turn one thing into another, there has to be a series of rules to keep such power in check. Otherwise the world would be unbalanced, in chaos."

"One is limited only by the strength of one’s magic and your imagination. The only rules are those of society, there to limit the population to a manageable level. Though on the level of discord you seem to be speaking of, most people do not contain enough power to sufficiently alter their surroundings."

"But that doesn't dismiss those who can. I mean, you, Rowena, Godric, Salazar, each of you are powerful. What stops one of you from destroying a small town if you end up angry, or someone else who is as powerful?"

"That is what schooling and social morals are for."

"But that doesn't limit the personal magic user from using that power if they so choose. Magic has no natural rules, you say? Nothing that isn’t personally limited by the strength of someone's magic or a lack of imagination."

"Well, to cast, one must know how to access power. Use it to cause the appropriate reaction."

Harry waved this away. "Imagination. I've never had schooling for magic before this but I've been able to create life-like recreations of various things in illusionary form since I was a child. If I thought about it, I could probably ask my magic to do what I wanted."

Helga sighed. "You, Harry, are an unusual case. Not everyone in the world, actually no one in the world, is quite like you, and your unprecedented access to your magic is unheard of. I will admit that Godric can do some feats of magic without a wand or words, but he is limited to a certain area, which I'm sure you could weasel out of him. For everyone else, we require a medium to communicate with our magic and direct it. In a pinch, and if we are really desperate, all four of us can do some amazing feats of wandless magic, but that is rare."

Harry tapped his bottom lip. "So you're saying that my ability to use magic limitlessly is actually an anomaly rather than the norm?"

"Yes, which is why the rules you see magic as needing isn't as pertinent with the majority of magic users at large."

"Because they can't use their magic in the same way?"

"Exactly. Magic is something primal, something a part of you. It appears as odd happenings in childhood as it forms into its mature state and, when it reaches a point of tipping, a child is ready to
be schooled in its uses. Too early and the magic may stop growing altogether. Too late and it is too set in its ways. Most older users who are taught later in life tend to have some talent with simple wandless tricks, but they are paltry and they rarely reach a high level of proficiency in using magic. Those who start too young with a focus limit their magic's potential and are unable to perform certain kinds of magic. Which is why we tend to teach children just before they start changing into adults, between nine and twelve years, until they hit full adulthood, between sixteen and nineteen years old.

Harry nodded in understanding. "So why are you teaching me? Aren't I too young?"

"Ordinarily, yes you would be, but I don't think anything we teach you could actually damage your magic, seeing how powerful and odd it is. And we won't teach you wand-based magic. Most of what we will teach you is practical and theory based magic. Rowena will probably talk to you about temporal spells, seeing as that is her current obsession, Godric will be teaching you defense and possibly some wandless spells, and Salazar is teaching you potions. I have theory and plant growth."

Harry considered this. "What about others? I know I'm a special case, but are there general limitations to the average person's ability to use magic?"

"Most people are limited by the strength of the spells. There are a range of skills almost all magic users can use, taught here when students aren't needed at home for the harvest. But spells of skill, those that affect the actual structure of the world, are beyond their ability. I believe, now that you ask, that magic itself knows it cannot be used limitlessly by everyone and restricts the amount of access it gives people. Spells of warding, healing, manipulation, and elemental magic are generally considered unlearnable by the general population. Some simpler warding and healing spells are general knowledge spells, but mostly it is charms and transfiguration that are most popular. And to do damage with them requires imagination."

Harry nodded. "So a limiting factor is imagination. Lacking an ability to think outside the standard parameters of a spell limits the user's ability to cast it for something other than what it already is."

"Exactly," Helga agreed. "If you cannot think creatively, you are limited in your options for magical uses. Such as a heating spell. Name five ways you would use a heating spell?"

Harry thought for a moment. "Well, it would be useful on clothing in cold weather, for causing mild burns or heating various inanimate objects to a point that could cause burns, for heating wood or something else flammable to cause a fire, for heating food, to create a localized area of warmth to allow plants to grow in colder areas, to melt ice into water or steam in order to cause a chain reaction in something else, to start a combustion reaction, to"

"Alright, alright, good. My point. That spell is originally taught to heat food. A particularly creative student might come up with clothing. I do particularly like the herbology application. I would have to see if that even works. But my point stands. Imagination allows one to do a lot more with a single spell than just the limitations of that spell."

Harry saw her point. It did make a lot more sense having thought about the example.

The next hour was filled with Harry and Helga exchanging different points of view on the uses of magic and limitations. Most of it was Harry trying to understand how people had limitations in the first place while Helga struggled with Harry’s lack of limitations.

For Rose and the Doctor, it was an interesting meeting, as if two worlds had to come to an understanding about the alphabet when one viewed it as set and unchangeable and the other didn’t understand how it never moved around when they wanted to make new words.
The day after his initial meeting, after the four had been shown to an empty wing with a series of rooms branching off from a main seating area, Harry had taken off to explore.

He was thoroughly enjoying his time in the empty castle, the only inhabitants being his family and the four professors. It gave him ample time to explore, when he wasn't being dragged off to one lesson or other. He wouldn't mind, really, except that the castle was really cool and whenever he was in potions with Salazar he had to stand listening to his uncle made flirty remarks at the potions master. Not that Salazar ever responded with words, but Harry had been around his uncle long enough to realize the signs of an ongoing relationship of some sort, and he had to resist the urge to groan.

His dad had let him keep his sonic, but for how much longer Harry didn’t know. He was prone to practical experimentation, which didn’t exactly suit potions and their delicate balances well. Now though, Salazar had him doing something different. Rather than follow another recipe of some sort or other, Harry was studying the properties of each ingredient and their various reactions. It was fascinating. He enjoyed the challenge presented and was far more interested in seeing the outcome of various things. Sure, he didn't always get things right, but the mistakes were as helpful as the successes, more helpful in fact. While he was watched over by a carefully optimistic Salazar, Harry was allowed free reign to play with this or that and watch the reactions.

Helga was a different story. Harry had never gardened in his life and the most experience he had with growing plants was a carnivorous flower he had run into once and it had tried to eat him. He had managed to get out of that scrape, but he had been wary of things with petals and Helga's plants hadn't helped any. Harry did have to admit that she was really good at it though, and he made sure that, while he was keeping a careful distance, he did pay close attention to what he was doing.

He liked escaping the greenhouses with all his fingers intact.

Rowena was brilliant, Harry discovered very quickly, but she was also probably the most irritating person Harry had ever had the happenstance to meet. She didn't trust Harry, or any of his family, and he didn't think she liked him much either.

From Rowena's side, she could see the brilliance that was this strange child, but that didn't excuse the fact that she knew nothing about him, him or his father, uncle and the other girl with the honey colored hair. Rowena hadn’t bothered to learn their names after their first encounter in the office. If she couldn't get answers from them, what was the point. So when it came to her turn to teach the strange child, she had already heard the glowing praise from Helga and had seen Salazar's satisfaction. She decided that the little boy needed to be brought down a notch. Young children couldn't get it into their heads that they were quite so smart so young.

So when Harry walked into her chambers, a large stone table greeted him under harsh lighting courtesy of Rowena's use of amplifying spells on the windows. He walked in cautiously.

"Hello," he said, hesitence in his voice.

"I may not have had much say in taking you as a pupil for the duration of your stay, young one, but be sure that I will expect nothing but the best, considering what I have heard from my colleagues. I specialize in experiment magics of all kinds, runes, and the advancement of the study of temporal enchantments."

Harry grinned. "Helga told me. She said I would particularly enjoy your lessons. Seeing as temporality is a specialty of mine, I can see why."
Rowena raised an imperious eyebrow. "Is that so? How can one so young understand something as vast as time?"

Harry scratched his head. "Well, you can say I have a special connection to it. A kind of kinship."

Rowena harrumphed. She crossed her arms, disbelief written on her face. "Is that so? I have heard that you don't even know how to tell time in a conventional sense. Hours, days, weeks, months and so on. How can one understand time without understanding the units used to measure it?"

Harry waved a hand. "Time isn't a series of units. That's what humans use to measure it so they can feel better about something they don't understand. Stuff like months and minutes aren't really intrinsic to time itself, but rather how a mind can understand a concept that, in reality, has no physical substance but which exists in an ebb and flow all around." He paused, tapping his chin speculatively. "Though from what I understand talking to Helga about magical theory, magic should be able to tap into that temporal river and access the fundamental particles. There shouldn't be anything besides the power of the imagination and the strength of one's magic stopping you."

Rowena froze for a moment. "You...you are speaking of an actual theory to altering time," she proclaimed. Harry nodded, eyeing the table speculatively. "That's impossible. One can only affect the forward progression of time. There is no manipulation."

Harry shook his head. "No, time doesn't work like that. You only see time as a linear progression of cause and effect because that's the only way your mind is designed to process it. There are a people who only view time in the present. They have no concept of past or future. Very strange race, very strange use of tenses. It's impossible to tell them that they are being manipulated to do something dangerous because they don't understand the concept of a future or a past. The only thing that exists is the now." Harry shook his head. "I never did manage to get them to tell me their philosophy. Too easily distracted." Harry sighed. "And there are beings who don't exist in time at all. They are above it, eternal but singular. They don't age or changed because they cannot process time and time cannot affect them. Also very strange people."

Rowena stared at the small boy. He was speaking of impossible things. Nothing in the magical world even came close to existing as the boy was describing yet there was no doubt that he spoke the truth. It was unbelievable. Such a person would never be able to function properly.

"Is there any way you can prove this theory, this alteration of time?"

Harry looked up at Rowena, eyes bright in excitement. "Oh, yes there is. There most certainly is. I just have to figure out how to make sure you can see it too." Harry reached out a hand, a gesture for Rowena to give him hers. Rowena hesitated. "Do you want to see or not? I don't know exactly how to do this, but it can't be that difficult. I know what I'm looking for, in any case, so that's not the problem."

Rowena waited just a moment longer, but her curiosity got the better of her. She reached out and took Harry's hand, wondering how she went from teaching the boy a lesson to being taught.

"What are you going to do?" she asked curiously.

Harry grinned at her. "I'm going to show you the time vortex," he said cheerily.

Rowena blinked. "You're joking."

"Nope. Hold on, I don't want to lose you. It takes a lot of concentration, so don't interrupt me." Harry closed his eyes, then he frowned. "Alright, I'm going to do something and it might be a bit
uncomfortable for you. just a second." Harry scrambled at his neck, revealing a heavy golden chain Rowena remembered from the office a few days before. She wanted to ask about it again, but as his hands unclasped it, Rowena felt herself suddenly submerged in a strange magic. She gasped in astonishment. "I'm sorry. It' a restricting cord. I will try to stay out of your emotions, I promise, but I'm still not that good at controlling my own power, so it'll feel a bit odd."

Rowena looked at Harry in alarm. "Emotions? You sense emotions?"

Harry nodded, a strained look on his face. "Yeah, but it wasn't a pleasant experience, having it done to me. It's what caused the imbalance in my magical core. But I need you to be touching my magic for me to do this, so you'll have to bear with me."

Rowena nodded and Harry closed his eyes. He reached out for that distant connection to the Tardis he knew by heart and felt her reaching back for him, concerned. He showed her his request, and the Tardis frowned at him. His unique connection with the Tardis turned into what might be called a conversation.

What are you doing? she projected.

Harry sighed. I'm trying to teach Rowena something about time, but I can't access the vortex on my own. I just need a tiny little bit, just enough to show her what I mean.

it's dangerous and ill advised. the Tardis replied, showing Harry his last experiment with Temporal energy. Harry sighed in exasperation.

I won't be manipulating it, I just want to make someone else understand that Time isn't linear. That it flows and is malleable.

Be careful my child. I do not want you to be gone.

I will. Thank you.

Through the magic-heavy air, Harry felt the Tardis slipping through a tiny speck of her consciousness, showing Harry the fragile cords the held the universe in place and which ones touched the time vortex. Harry smiled.

"Ready Rowena?" he asked.

Rowena's eyes were wide, not sure if she should be excited or scared, but she nodded. Harry grinned all the wider.

"Alright. I'm going to unravel a tiny portion of the temporal schema. Hold tight and don't touch anything."

Rowena nodded resolutely. Harry looked her over once more, before he reaching out a hand, fingers twisting in the air, and all of a sudden, instead of more stone flooring, Rowena was looking at a swirl of golden energy filling the room. It wasn't magic, she knew that. But what it was...the golden curls brushed everything, twining around and swirling through the room. Being let onto the physical plain was not a usual occurrence, and the vortex energy was as curious as a cat.

Rowena gazed around in fascination. "Is this...temporal energy?" she asked hesitantly.

Harry nodded, hand holding tight onto hers. She understood, somehow, that the only reason she could see what she saw was because Harry was transmitting some kind of magic over her and allowing her vision to pick up on the golden beams of swirling energy.
"Yeah, it's tiny threads from the vortex. Inside the vortex it twines just like this, around itself, overlapping and curling and swirling. On the physical plain, it tries to interact with things, but this small amount shouldn't really do anything. In large amounts it can transform the surroundings backwards or forwards, or when it comes in direct contact with a sentient being. Then it can act on their desires, or its own. It depends on how much energy there is."

"And you say this energy is everywhere?"

Harry nodded. "It usually doesn't have a physical presence on this plane, but by untying a small part of the temporal schema, small wisps can escape for a short while, though as soon as I close it again, without the vortex to keep them powered, they will fade back to their origin."

Rowena watched the small golden swirls dart around the room. It was absolutely astonishing, and she reaching out to touch one as it darted closer.

Harry caught her movement out of the corner of his eye and immediately tried to stop her. "Rowena, you can't touch it...."

Harry was too late on the warning, and, as Rowena glanced down at him, possibly to reassure him of her safety, her eyes widened in astonishment as she, suddenly, shrunk, her hand still touching the golden swirl. Harry watched with rapidly panicking emotions as one of the legendary founders grew smaller and, Harry noticed, younger, until she was a toddler wrapped in swathes of her dress. Her hand was still in his, though Harry had to bend down to keep it. He couldn't afford to let go right now.

He wondered how much trouble he would get into for this.

~~~~This is an Ending~~~~
In Which Mistakes Cause Happenings

Chapter Summary

So, that happened. Now what?

Chapter Notes

Thought you all deserved to be caught up with what I have written! So here you go!

~~~This is a Beginning~~~

He looked around, hoping his dad, Rose or uncle Jack were around, but unfortunately he was alone. Which was why he had gotten away with doing this in the first place, he realized. If he had been followed, he wouldn't have been allowed to try. He wondered why he had been unaccompanied, then realized he hadn't really let anyone know where he was going.

"It's okay Rowena, we'll find a way to fix this. I'm sure dad will know what to do." He went to pick up the now possible two year old, but noticed the energy still floating around the room. He had to close the schema. Hurriedly he tied up the loose bits he had freed and fumbled with his necklace before scooping the little girl up and running out the door. Rowena held on.

Harry didn't know if she remembered anything or if she was mentally two years old as well, but in any case, he was in big trouble. His dad would never let him forget it. Uncle Jack would let him know for years. And that was if he managed to correct the problem.

He didn't have far to run before he bumped into someone.

"Woah there Harry, what's going on? What's with the baby?"

Oh just his luck, it was uncle Jack. Harry looked up, panic in his eyes, and his uncle caught the look. "Dad. I need to find Dad. Please. It's an emergency."

"What's wrong?"
"I...erm..I was, I was showing something to Rowena when I, er, I, um..." Harry looked down at the de-aged Rowena.

Jack looked mildly confused until, as Harry danced on his toes, he caught on. Then he started laughed. "Oh, this is priceless! You managed to..." Jack couldn't finish.

Harry glared at him. "Will you help me or not?" Harry asked irritably.

Jack wiped his eyes. "It is never boring when you're around. Alright, give me the little on. You're not that much bigger than her now, don't want you dropping her too."

Harry frowned, but could see the logic in the argument. He reluctantly handed over little Rowena, and Jack took the child, who was dressed in what was probably an undershirt. The blue eyed child glared at Jack but allowed him to pick her up. "Be careful," Harry warned. "I don't know exactly what happened. Don't do anything else to her."

Jack nodded. "It's not like I have magic, and I'm far more used to carrying children than you are, little Harry. Alright, let's go find your dad. I'm sure he's going to love hearing about this one."

Harry groaned. "I'm going to be in so much trouble."

"Why? Wasn't it just a bit of accidental magic?" Harry shook his head. Jack's eyes widened. "What did you do?" Harry just slumped further towards the ground. Jack sighed. "Harry, when will you learn to stop messing with things you shouldn't be messing with?"

"I told her not to touch anything. I told her, and what did she do, she went and touched." Harry groaned. "I am in so much trouble."

"Trouble from your dad might be the least of your worries. There's Helga now." Harry looked up in shock, and saw that his uncle was right. He groaned. "It's okay. I'm sure she'll find it amusing."

"That's what I'm worried about. After this, Rowena's going to kill me."
It didn't take long for Helga to reach them and she looked at the trio in puzzlement. "Where did the child come from? We don't have any other children at Hogwarts right now, especially none as young as her."

Harry groaned and Jack laughed. "Technically you already know her. She just looks...a bit different right now." Jack nudged Harry, who refused to look anywhere but the ground.

"I don't understand."

"It seems that, during some kind of experiment, Harry here managed to turn Rowena into a child. About two years old, I would guess."

Helga's eyes widened. "Impossible. That kind of effect is physically impossible."

"Oh I'm sure Harry here has a reason for why it is, suddenly, possible."

Helga looked at Harry. "Yes, young Harry? Is there something you would like to say?"

Harry shook his head. "Not until I see dad. I want to make sure that she can be turned back."

Helga blinked in astonishment."I didn't even think of that. Alright, let's go find the Doctor. Last I saw he was talking with Godric near the main hall.

Harry was in full panic mode as he rushed to find his father. Helga was torn between amusement at her colleague and friend's predicament and worry. She didn't know what had happened and seeing young Harry in such a state didn't engender any confidence in the outcome.

Jack happily bounced the toddler on his hip. "Hello there little Rowena. You are adorable, yes you are!" He couldn't be sure if the toddler was just confused at all the commotion or had kept her adult faculties and was furious at him. Well, he would certainly find out when she was her normal, proper age and could yell at him. For now, he would enjoy the small child. It had been quite a while since he had held a little one, mostly cause Harry was keen on being independent and that meant no one could hold him.
But it was still amusing, he contemplated, watching the brilliant, independent, strong-willed child run around in a panic searching for his father.

"Dad! Dad! Where are you? Dad!" Harry knew that yelling would probably not get him where he needed to go but right now, he couldn't think of anything else to do. It was just his misfortune that Salazar, the indomitable potions master and keen eyed observer looked curiously out of a nearby doorway.

"Harry, what is going on? What happened?"

"Have you seen my dad?" Harry rushed, hoping to try and get through the encounter without having to explain his mistake again.

Salazar frowned. "This morning, but that was several hours ago. He might be with Godric, hopefully not anywhere near my rooms. What is the panic about?"

Harry groaned. "I need my dad!" and he rushed off again. Salazar looked behind him where Helga and Jack trailed the young boy.

"What's going on?"


"Is that who I think it is?"

"If you think it's Rowena than totally. Otherwise, no. No, not at all."

Salazar sighed. "What happened? I wasn't aware this could even be possible."

Helga nodded. "My thoughts too, but apparently Harry can do the impossible. And he doesn't know
"Do we know if she is still her age mentally?"

"No, unfortunately. She hasn't spoken and I wouldn't trust myself using any sort of mind art on such a young child. If she is mentally her physical age, it could do serious damage."

Salazar glanced down the hall where Harry had ran off yelling for his dad. "Want to follow the little troublemaker then?"

Jack grinned. "I wouldn't miss the look on the Doctor's face when he hears about this for anything in the universe."

The trio set off after Harry, conversing about the possible origins of this mistake.

Harry, meanwhile, was rushing towards the main entrance, hoping that his dad was, as Helga had mentioned, outside with Godric, otherwise he wouldn't know where else to look.

As he skidded out the door and down the stairs, he met a tall, human shaped figure with his face. An 'OOMPH' of exhaled air greeted his sudden arrival in a shared space and Harry looked up.

"DAD! Oh, I'm so glad I found you! I need your help!"

"Harry?" Harry looked around at the second voice. Godric stood not to far away, at the bottom of the stairs, next to Rose. Harry groaned. Just his luck, everyone would be witness to his humiliating mistake.

"Hi Godric, Rose. Dad, I need help."

The Doctor looked at his son, surprise and amusement covering his face. "Really now? What did you manage to get into this time?"
Harry gulped. "Um, well..."

"Doctor! I see he found you! Do you want to say hi to our wonderful little addition to the castle? Well, addition is a bit of a lie. She lives here, but, well, I'll let you see for yourself." Harry turned his head slowly around as Jack, Helga and Salazar appeared in the entranceway. Horror covered his face.

"Where did a child come from?" Godric asked in the sudden silence. "I wasn't aware of any children within Hogwarts, aside from Harry here."

Harry paled as his father's hand touched his shoulder.

"Oh, she's absolutely adorable!" Rose squealed, reaching out for the little girl. Jack let Rose hold her. "Such blue eyes! They look exactly like..." Rose trailed off, turning to look at Harry. "Oh, you didn't. You did...you actually!"

"Um, well...I, er...she didn't listen to me!"

The hand on his shoulder gently forced him to turn around, and his pale, scarred face was on level with his dad's carefully blank expression. "Would you care to tell us exactly what happened then Harry?"

Harry fidgeted. "Um, well, we were discussing temporal theories and how magic could access them, and, well, I wanted to show her it, but I told her not to touch anything, but she didn't listen!"

"That doesn't tell me what you did."

"Is that Rowena?" Godric gasped, approaching the child now settled in Rose's arms. "It looks exactly like a little Rowena!"

"You've finally caught up to the rest of us Godric. Now, if you would kindly shut up, Harry was telling us exactly what he did to transform Rowena into a child."
Godric grinned. "It's a little Rowena!" he exclaimed, poking her soft cheek gently. A tiny hand batted at the finger.

"Harry, I would like to hear what you did."

Harry tried to look anywhere but his dad, but it wasn't quite possible. Finally, after a few moments silence, he sighed. "I, well, I unwove a small portion of the matrix between the physical plane and the time vortex. Just a small one! And I closed it as soon as Rowena changed!" Harry hastily tacked on at the end as his dad's eyes widened in shock.

"You did what? How did you managed to unweave the boundary between the two plains? It's...it's not possible! There should be no way for the two planes to ever physically touch! You might have...Oh Harry. What have I told you about messing with temporal experiments?"

Harry dropped his head. "Not without prior permission and approval of a written plan, preferably not at all," Harry repeated. The Doctor raised an eyebrow at him, a silent question as to why he had ignored him. "I...she...I just wanted to show her..." Harry trailed off. The Doctor sighed.

"Well, we have a mess to clean up."

~~~~This is a Perspective Break~~~~~

Rowena wasn't entirely sure what had happened to her. One moment she was reaching out to touch the curiously beautiful golden swirl, Harry's warning momentarily forgotten, and the next the world had grown around her. Everything was big, confusing, and noisy. Harry was a giant and the golden swirls quickly disappeared. She wanted to cry (which was odd, she hadn't cried since she was a child) or yell or something to tell Harry that she was upset. The expression of panic on the boy's face halted her before she let out a wail.

Why was he so worried? What had happened?

Rowena was slowly losing grasp of herself, her adult self, as her mentality shifted to match the body she now inhabited. Her final thought before she lost self-awareness was 'I'm a toddler...Godric's never going to let this go.' then her adult mind faded to the background and was replaced by the urges that drove any two year old; food, sleep, and brightly colored objects.
The Doctor stared at his son, his impossible child who did things that shouldn't even be thought of much less accomplished. His child who not only unraveled a fragment of time but allowed the entity to touch a physical, sentient being. He groaned.

"Alright, show me where you did this. I might be able to salvage a small amount of the temporal energy without having to use the Tardis and restore Rowena to her rightful form."

"Do we have to? She's so adorable like this," Godric said, waving a finger in the direction of his colleague's face. Rowena batted at it, only encouraging the playful man rather than dissuading him.

"Rowena is going to hex him for a year when she's fixed if he keeps this up," Salazar muttered. Jack laughed. "I'm gonna enjoy that immensely."

"You two have an intense rivalry going on. What started it, if I may ask?"

Salazar smiled slightly “We’ve known each other for many many years. HE had always felt entitled to the same things I had, and usually when we were younger, it wouldn’t matter so much. But that changed when we got the idea to build the castle.” Salazar tapped a finger on his chin. “When we were building Hogwarts, we were each allowed to make modifications in specific parts to suit our needs. I have a growing snakelet, a basilisk, and needed somewhere to keep her safe. Godric felt that, since I had a dangerous magical creature he should as well, except he forgot how terrible he is with animals and, in his attempt to catch a chimera ended up seriously wounded. So he figured that if he couldn't get his own, he would take my precious Salina. He was lucky he only ended up petrified. Salina was still young and can't yet kill with her gaze. But it was a valuable lesson in personal property. I think I'm more amused than irritated with him, though he is irritating, don't ever doubt that." Salazar paused. "But I don’t think he ever forgot that incident. But he’s always been fun to antagonize."

Jack listened with amusement. "A basilisk? What's that?"

Salazar shot him a sideways glance of surprise, then sighed. "I keep forgetting you're non-magical. A basilisk is the offspring of a chicken's egg hatched under a toad. While I don't know who had that bright idea in the first place, they are extraordinary creatures. Only those who can speak to snakes are ever really safe, and even that safety is tenuous. I am safe because I raised her, as well as my ability to speak to snakes."
"So you can hiss at the little beasts and understand them?" Jack clarified. Salazar nodded. "Good. You can teach Harry then. He starts hissing sometimes at the garden snake, except I think the snake gets angry at him for messing up. Dunno. But it is amusing to watch a snake chase a kid around instead of the opposite."

Salazar stopped dead in his tracks by the stairs leading up to Rowena's rooms. "Harry...can talk to snakes?"

"Yep. And when he gets really upset, he'll start hissing at us and then dissolves into a single, steady 'ssssssss' sound. Unfortunately it ruins the whole upset thing." Jack nodded thoughtfully. "I try not to laugh though, but it is hard."

"He can talk to snakes, to inanimate objects, he can do strange things with time and he blows up potions. What kind of impossible child is he?"

"If I had a gold coin for every time I heard that, I would never need to do any honest work again." Jack stretched his arms out above him. "He was raised by the Doctor, has access to an immense amount of knowledge and the freedom to experiment almost as he pleases, and a very indulgent father. Even this screw up, when it gets fixed, will probably not amount to more than a few hundred pages worth of reading and a few pages of theory and equations for how he could have done it better or how he could have avoided the problem all together. It's less of a punishment and more of a learning experience."

Salazar processed this bit of information. He hadn't thought of it that way before, not really. A mistake was a mistake and it needed to be corrected. If it was a dangerous mistake, the person committing it had to make up for his or her mistake through some sort of punishment, but this seemed far more logical. Why have a student who continually fails a potion in class, sometimes in a dangerous way, be assigned detention constantly? Wouldn't it be better for that mistake to be made into a lesson of some sort? "Hm..."

"I know that face. That's the 'Oh, wow, that's a really good idea. Maybe I should try that' Face." Salazar glared at him, though it was without any heat. Jack laughed. "Good to know the Doctor affects people who aren't even near him like that."

Jack looked around when they came to a landing, having lost sight of the group, and Salazar pointed up the right staircase. He grinned.
Harry led his dad up the stairs towards Rowena's rooms, acutely aware of the glaring silence coming from his father. Farther back he could hear the chatter of Rose, Godric and Helga as they spoke about the miniaturized Rowena, and even farther back were uncle Jack and Salazar (no doubt flirting, Harry thought sourly). But the two leading the group were quiet. Harry walked up the steps pondering the ramifications of his experimentation and how much trouble he was going to get into. The Doctor wondered just how he was going to keep his unruly son from blowing up the universe. It didn't seem like it was going to be an easy task.

The door Harry had run out of with Rowena was still open and he walked in, letting his father go ahead of him. Rose, Jack, and the Hogwarts founders remained outside the room.

"So, where was this rift you managed to open up?" the Doctor asked.

Harry glanced around for the spot, then pointed. "There. Just about. I can still sort of feel it. I must not have completely closed it, I was in a hurry."

The Doctor sighed. "Alright, how exactly did you manage this?"

Harry shifted on his feet. "Well, I knew I couldn't really do it on my own, so I took my necklace off..." he stopped as his father's face flickered into mild shock before continuing. "I had to be able to allow Rowena into the field I needed to use and I had to contact the Tardis, both things I couldn't do with it on."

"You asked the Tardis. Of course. And because you're Harry, she lets you get away with just about anything you want to do. Brilliant." The Doctor ran his hands through his hair before pulling a face. "Alright, continue."

"The Tardis showed me where the connection was and how to untie the schema holding it together, but I had to use my magic to touch the threads. I didn't open it too far, and I told Rowena not to touch anything. The temporal energy was so small it couldn't affect anything non-sentient, so I didn't think it would be a problem, and she was being deliberately harsh. So I wanted to show her something interesting. But she didn't listen and reached out to touch one of the fragments of temporal energy. Then she...shrunk. That's the best word for it, in any case."

The Doctor sighed and looked at his child. Brilliant but boneheaded. Stubborn and contrite. Why anyone thought giving such a child access to a power like magic was a wonderful idea maybe hadn't thought the consequences through quite so well. But in any case, they didn't have time to decide how badly Harry had messed up just yet. They needed to put his mistake right, otherwise Rowena would
be growing up all over again, and who knows what effect that could have. He was sure the adult portion of her mind was still there, just hidden from her with a clever bit of magic that her own body produced to save her from herself. A young child's mind can't cope with the extreme power of an adult brain. They were too fragile, still making connections. Having a flood of connections would end up hurting the mental matrix.

"So, can you fix this?" Helga asked from the door.

The Doctor looked over. "Probably, yeah. I just need some kind of conduit. Since we can't let Harry meddle with the small rift again, I need some kind of temporal energy already on this plane to use as a catalyst for the vortex and to allow Rowena to return to her natural state. Unfortunately, I don't know where that might be."

The group was silent for a moment, then Jack raised his hand. The Doctor raised a pointed eyebrow, and Jack smiled cheerfully. "Just checking. I might have what you're looking for."

"Really. Where would you get a hold of physical temporal energy?"

"Remember the incident with time crystallizing when you brought Rose back?" The Doctor nodded. "Well, Rose was still holding onto a shard when you sealed the hole back up, and I might have taken it from her when you all dropped unconscious." Jack smiled, no hint of guilt in his voice.

"You couldn't have known what it would have done to you!" the Doctor exclaimed.

Jack shrugged. "Well, it wasn't like it was going to kill me, now was it?"

"It could have erased your own timeline!"

"But that didn't happen."

"Uh, guys? Guys? DOCTOR! JACK!" The two bickering men turned to look at Rose, who had interrupted. "Alright, now does someone want to tell me what exactly a time crystal is and why did I still have one?"
The Doctor shifted back on his heels. "A time crystal isn't something that happens naturally, except in very rare places. There used to be a cave on Gallifrey that had them, but it's long gone. They are captured pieces of time that have been preserved in a shell of psychic energy to protect the temporal stability of the fragment inside. Touching them is usually safe, though because of the circumstances by which they appeared, they were inherently unstable. I would take a guess that you were able to hold onto one after the cracks were healed because of your connection to Bad Wolf."

Rose nodded thoughtfully. "And you can use this crystal to do what exactly? How does it allow any kind of transfer of energy between Rowena, a sentient being, and the temporal vortex?"

"Because it was originally part of the vortex, the crystal holds properties that attract temporal energy. I can use it as a funnel of sorts to restore the proper temporal standing of Rowena without having to reopen the rift." Here the Doctor turned to look at Harry. "A rift that will never fully close." Harry looked back at his dad for a few moments, then looked at the ground, sighing. Of course he would cause this kind of situation.

"Did you follow any of that?" Godric whispered to Salazar and Helga. They both shook their heads.

"I have a feeling that Harry isn't the only extraordinary one in this group," Helga said softly.

"I concur. Jack is a most unusual person. He looks young, but his eyes, actions and voice tell me he is very very old." Salazar gazed at the man who was laughing and bantering with the Doctor and Rose.

"And Rose as well. I still can't quite figure out the Doctor. There is something odd about him, something that doesn't sit quite right," Helga murmured.

"That might be because he is surrounded by some kind of golden glow. It's the same glow that lingers on Rowena, so I would assume it is this temporal energy they speak of. Though why he is so thoroughly covered in it I cannot guess. It is an odd sensation though," Godric stated.

"Alright, that crystal might work, but unfortunately the Tardis isn't going to let us in, especially now right after this little adventure of yours, Harry. So we'll have to wait." The Doctor ran a hand through his hair. "And no, I don't know how long. She's still not letting the key work, so it might be a while."

Harry looked at the ground. Of course he would be the one to cause this trouble. This was going to be a brilliant day, he could just tell. He sighed.
"Doctor, will Rowena be okay?" Rose asked, bouncing the toddler gently.

The Doctor looked at the little girl. "I can hope so. Her adult mind is still there, I'm sure, but unless it is released, either by her return to her adult form or, in the worst case scenario as she grows up again, it will remain locked away. Her mental state will match her physical state to keep homeostasis between body and mind. Her magic will behave as expected for a toddler with an above average strength but lacking the wild impossibility that is Harry. So, probably a few accidental episodes here and there."

"So you're saying that Rowena will remain as she is until you can get into your Tardis to fix her?" Helga asked. "And she won't be harmed by this state?"

The Doctor nodded. "As far as I can understand of what Harry did, the effects are merely temporal in nature. He reversed her personal timeline, or rather he allowed it to be reversed by not minding his actions. But it didn't harm her in so much as it just changed her. Everything that makes Rowena who she is is still there, her timeline is still intact, it's just been...altered."

Salazar nodded thoughtfully. "So what you are saying is that she is still Rowena, just on a different point in her timeline. Her future is still there, the future that we know her from. Would there be any reason why we can remember her as an adult if she has been returned to an earlier point in her timeline? Shouldn't our knowledge of her vanish?"

The Doctor smiled. "No, but an excellent question. Since it was only Rowena's timeline that was altered, it couldn't affect those she knew. Everyone who knew her still remembers her as she met them. It is only her persona, physical and mental being that was changed. Her actions have not vanished, there wasn't enough temporal energy to do something like that." Here the Doctor sent a look at Harry, who carefully avoided looking at his father.

"Alright. Do you know how long this will take? I am enjoying the little Raven without her sharp beak but there are things that need to be done, and she is necessary," Godric said, ruffling Rowena's hair. Rowena batted at his hand again, then yawned.

Rose cooed at her. "Aw, sleepy little one. It's alright, go to sleep." She rocked the child as Rowena slowly nodded off, much to the amusement of Godric, Helga and Salazar. Rose hummed softly under her breath, a tune she used to hum to her niece when she had been a child.
The Doctor stared at Rose with the little one, smiling softly. Rose really was a wonderful person, would make a great mother. Harry adored her. He wondered though, if it was even possible...he shook his head. He could examine that thought later, after he had helped his wayward son fix this wonderfully colossal mistake.

"So, for now we just need to take care of her until I can get into the Tardis. Then we can work on getting her back to normal. Harry, I need to talk to you."

Harry gulped. He had been waiting for that exact tone of voice to pierce his ears. He hung his head and dutifully followed his father out the door and down the stairs. It had taken long enough.

"How much trouble is Harry in?" Helga asked Rose softly.

Rose smiled. "Oh, far less than he thinks, but don't let him know. It does him good to think that he screwed up big time, especially when the results of his particular mistake are as dramatic as this. Still, it's not nearly as exciting as the time he got stuck in a Time Shift and ended up flickering back and forth through the Tardis's timeline."

Jack looked over at Rose with wide eyes. "Hey, I never heard about that! What happened?"

Rose's grin grew. "Oh, this is a good one. Let me find a place for this little one to sleep and then I'll tell it to you. The trouble Harry got into then is legendary. He was stuck doing basic maths for months."

~~~~~~~~~~~~This is a Scene Break~~~~~~~~~~~~

Not only did Hogwarts now have two child-age residents, one of them was a founder. Rowena would be stuck as a child until the Tardis got over her sulk and let them back inside. How long that would be, the Doctor couldn't guess, and he wouldn't let Harry ask her either, not after the incident with the Temporal Energy that started this minor catastrophe. Harry was now in lessons with his dad, relearning the basics of temporal energy and how one could properly interact with it. Harry's high handed dealings with Time in his recent past had been turbulent enough that the Doctor wanted to make sure his son had a good grounding in all things Time.

Rowena, for her part, didn't seem to mind being two. Then again, being two also came with the perk of napping whenever she wanted, being fed whenever she demanded, and having an endless group of playmates to cater to her every whim.
Helga had attempted to take charge of her friend, but Rowena refused to leave Rose's arms for the first few days, not that Rose didn't try. She did, but Rowena wasn't budging. Godric privately wondered if it had to do with the golden halo that surrounded her and Rowena was instinctively holding onto it, since it seemed so familiar in an unfamiliar world.

One thing did hold true for child Rowena as it did for Adult Rowena. Godric's childish actions were just as irritating. In fact, Godric was one of the only ones excused for Rowena watching duty because she would scream incoherently at him whenever he got close. So Godric had taken to watching the Doctor and Harry's lessons in temporal energy. Most of what he heard he couldn't understand, but that wasn't why he was sitting in the library with the impossible man and his equally impossible son. They glowed so brightly, so strongly, that it had taken Godric a few minutes of adjustment after they had followed Helga into the office to even see clearly again. He had taken to filtering his vision while they were here, so as to not send himself crashing into an unseen wall.

Godric had a talent for seeing magic. No one could explain why, most certainly not Godric himself, but it gave him a unique advantage when it came to spell casting. He didn't need a wand for most things, and when he used any wand but the one he made himself, a wondrous mix of disasters would befell anyone in a fifty meter radius. Last time Godric had tried out one of his colleague's wands, the beginning foundations of the castle they were constructing was lifted up into the sky and sent crashing back to earth, sinking fifty feet into the ground and leaving a wake of earth and muck in their wake. No one had tried to give him another wand since.

Godric was also a spell crafter, of sorts. He could do what he wanted, within reason, with his magic, but he had yet to make it so other people could use it as well.

Sitting and watching Harry and the Doctor almost blinded Godric with the amount of energy, but he slowly let his magic filter out the bright wave of light they emitted. On the move, their energy would settle closer to their body, as if preparing for something. Now that they were stable, unmoving and sedentary, their energies sprang out, reaching, feeling, touching.

He wondered if they were even aware of what it was doing. Harry's energy tended towards a brilliant swirl of color, light, and motion that hurled about him at immense speeds. The Doctor's was golden, a glow that radiated out and touched everything gently, caressing, a bunch of brilliant golden curls that twined and twisted around their human.

Godric had been immediately fascinated when they had walked into the office behind Helga. He had been used to seeing vibrant colors swirling around various people. Rowena's was a brilliant silver shot through with black and blues. Salazar's simmered a soft pink and yellow, swirling around his frame. Helga was the color of the growing things she loved so much, many hues of green. Godric himself had found red and purple around his body when he stared at a clear, still lake.
But these strangers that had shown up were curious and strange. The child, the only magical among the four, glowed a hundred different colors and as bright as a sun. His father outshone the sun in gold intensity. Jack, Salazar's new friend, shimmered a soft silver twined with golden thread and Rose seemed to glow from within some unknowable hue that manifested outside her body as those same golden curls that framed the Doctor and now little Rowena.

Godric had finally gotten his chance to work with Harry. After two days of watching Harry sit through lecture after example after problem after discussion, Godric finally was able to get the tyke on his own (well, sort of. Rose in all her golden glow sat in the corner, flipping through a book). He was supposed to be working with Harry after Rowena, that afternoon, but due to circumstances, Harry was relegated to lecture time with his father instead.

Rowena herself was still child-sized and probably enjoying time with Jack and Salazar. For now though, he was glad Harry now stood in front of him.

"So, Harry," he started.

Harry interrupted him. "Salazar said you know wandless magic."

Godric smiled. "I do indeed. It's a talent of mine. In fact, I can't actually use any wand other than one I made for myself years and years ago. It's easier for me to use magic wandlessly than with a wand, though I don't know why."

Harry smiled. "Can you show me something?"

Godric considered it for a moment, then remembering the haphazard results that had occurred whenever Harry had managed to get his way before, blowing up several cauldrons and miniaturizing one of his colleagues, he decided against it for now. He could see Rose's appraising look from the back couch.

"No, not right now. First I want to work on your defense skills, sharpen your body and sharpen your mind. Maybe help you gain some control over that magic you have, without that strange necklace you wear."

Harry's hand flew to his neck. "You know what it's for?" he said, astonished.
Godric nodded. "I can tell that it ties your power inside your body, though I don't know how or why. It's a fascinating piece of jewelry in any case."

Harry smiled, letting the necklace go after a final squeeze. Then he looked up at Godric. "So, defense. What does that entail?"

Godric smiled. "Oh, this will be fun, young Harry."

~~~~This is a Scene Break~~~~

Salazar and Jack were walking the lake's perimeter, Rowena snuggled into Jack's arms, sleeping with the carelessness of the young and unconcerned. Jack smiled at the little girl.

So small like this, she didn't seem much like the imperious and willful young woman he had first seen. Here she was carefree, amused at the world, and innocent.

It had been far too long since he had held such a young one, it reminded him of his own children, long gone and dead in his timeline.

Salazar caught the edge of sadness in Jack's smile. "What's bothering you? Rowena will be back to normal soon enough, probably embarrassed and furious. No harm done. And when she's finally over her sulk, she'll probably have a lot of interesting ideas to work with."

Jack stopped abruptly, staring out over the lake, eyes distant and sad. Salazar had to double back a few steps to stand next to him, then was forced to sit on the grass as Jack reclined on the ground, Rowena asleep on his chest.

"Nah, it's not that. I know that, the Doctor's good like that. I was just...remembering."

"Remembering what?"

Jack smiled, bitter just a bit. "It's been a long time since I held a sleeping child."
"Harry's not that old," Salazar pointed out.

Jack shook his head. "No, I wasn't around when Harry was younger. I didn't meet him until he was just past three and holding him was a crime punishable by flying colored balls." Jack laughed. "And then as he got older and more willing to be held, he was far too clever for his own good. Then he never wanted to be held. It's a phase all children go through," Jack said offhandedly, but Salazar wasn't fooled. Lingering at the corner of his eyes, tears pooled.

He touched the man who looked so young but seemed so old with a gentle hand. Jack turned his head into the touch, careful to keep Rowena still. "Who did you lose?" Salazar asked softly.

Jack sighed. "I've lost so many people Sal, that I don't even think I remember all of their names."

Salazar felt he should be insulted by the nickname but couldn't bring himself to be. "Did you lose a child?"

A wry smile answered him, unexpected. "Oh, I've lost so many children I wonder why I still want them around. But they are irresistible, in their own way. Small humans, little hands, minds absorbing knowledge, a soul that grows and grows. Little people that eventually grow into adults who drive you nuts. Then they have children, and knowing that the little human you helped create made another little human, something fundamental in the universe continues and life moves, but you are never sure if you're the same person."

Salazar remained silent for a moment. Then "You don't look old enough to have had grandchildren," he remarked softly. But that was a lie, Salazar knew. His face looked young, but his eyes were so old.

Jack just shook his head slightly and didn't answer.

~~~~This is a Scene Break~~~~~

Harry looked at the sword Godric had handed him. He was sure it was at least the length of his arm and half more, heavier than most anything he carried on a regular basis, and blunted on the edge. Harry looked nervously over his shoulder at Rose, who was supervising him, but she appeared nonchalant, reading through her book. But Harry could see a small smile appearing at the corner of her mouth as Godric started instructing him on the use of the sword.
"Alright now Harry, the most important part of defense is knowing how to use your weapons, and I'm not meaning the sword in your hand. Any idiot can swing a sword around and do some damage, but one who can think can slay entire armies."

"I don't want to kill anyone," Harry said softly.

Godric smiled at him. "I know. But the thought still applies. Getting out of scrapes requires more than just a bit of luck and happenstance. You have to know where the weak points are, how to use your surroundings, and most importantly how to use what tools you have at hand. At the moment, you have a sword, and an opponent who has, as of this moment, refused to back down. He also has a sword." Godric brandished his own weapon. Harry thankfully saw that it too was dulled. "You have a couple options at the moment. What do you do?"

Harry looked around himself. He had quite a bit of room to scurry around in and more than enough space to back away from Godric, who was seeming less and less fun as each second passed. Harry didn't like weapons, hated them. But that didn't mean he couldn't learn how to use one. But he didn't have to play by Godric's rules.

He backed up a few steps, summoned a small portion of his magic (Godric's eyes widened) and flung a bright flare of light at the man while he ran and ducked behind a cabinet.

Harry could hear Godric using a few choice words to describe his actions and grinned. He was always good at surprises like that. It was a specialty of his.

However, he didn't hear the footsteps approaching his hiding place and only the placement of his sword in front of him saved him from getting knocked out. The clang of metal was deafening.

"That was mean spirited," Godric said mildly, eyes closed. "I'm going to be blind for an hour because of that."

Harry shivered. Godric had found him without needing to use his eyes (and he might have accidentally overpowered his magic in that attack, he thought wryly).

"Um, sorry Godric," Harry offered, his voice weak. Godric growled.
"Well, let's see how well you can hold a sword then. I had a wonderful master who enjoyed putting a cloth around my eyes and hitting me with a wooden pole to sharpen my reflexes. And you're too loud."

Harry jumped as Godric's sword swung again, and he ran to the other side of the room. He passed by Rose, whose eyes were wide in concern, and he hoped she would make sure Godric didn't crush him into Harry-paste.

"I've never held a sword!" Harry yelled at the man, who was walking sedately after him.

"First time for everything. I even blunted these ones, just for you."

"How considerate of you," Harry retorted.

Godric grinned. "I know, right? And Salazar says I have no common sense."

"He might be right, you know. Seeing as how you're swinging a sword at a child who's never held one before."

"I was younger than you when I got my first lesson. Ended up bruised and with a broken arm by the end of the day..."

Harry shivered as he dodged around a table, avoiding another of Godric's swings. "I would rather not, if it's all the same to you. I like being in one piece, really."

"I'm not going to hurt you Harry. Well, not much aside from maybe a bruise or two. I know what I'm doing. I have been holding a sword since I was four."

Harry groaned. He was clearly not getting out of this lesson. "Can we maybe start with the basics then?" he asked, running behind a chair.

"I was going to do that, until you decided to shoot a beam of pure light at me. Now, well, you can learn the hard way, yes? Sword horizontal at a slight angle upwards, you have a high block. Sword
to the left or right, deflection. Lung forward, stab, swing from head, shoulder or side, slice. It isn't too hard.

Harry scrambled back and he heard Rose get up from her position on the couch. He hoped she was getting some reinforcements, but no. She just moved out of the way of the fight, settling in the door frame.

~~~~This is a Scene Break~~~~

They had been in Hogwarts for almost two weeks by the Doctor's count, a week and a half with a miniaturized Rowena, and he had resorted to sitting in front of the Tardis for long hours, simply cajoling her into opening. It wasn't working yet, but he hadn't anything else to try.

Rose walked up behind him, laying a hand on his shoulder. "She'll open when she's ready to Doctor," she said, sitting down next to him.

The Doctor glanced over. "I know, but this normal time thing, moving forward so slowly, not even getting to miss the slow parts, I had gotten used to it sort of, what with Harry, but it is still perplexing and irritating."

Rose smiled. "Well, you had to have lived in a linear time line for an extended period of time at some point in your life," she reasoned.

The Doctor tipped his head back in thought. "Well, when I was on Gallifrey as a child, I lived in Lungbarrow for a good portion of my adolescence, until sent to the academy. Got into enough trouble there for messing with time. Eventually got off, ran to Earth, Stayed there for a few months, then took off again. It's been...well, it's been centuries since I've lived in anything resembling linear time for any extended period of time." The Doctor looked at Rose. "And you? How is this time treating you?"

Rose smiled. "I enjoy it. It's not running about and escaping from danger or anything, which is both exhilarating and terrifying, but in a good, you're still alive way, but this magical world that Harry comes from, it's a fascinating place. Things move without electronics, it's not just Harry being able to do fantastical things, there are such odd happenings. An adult was turned into a child without electricity. It's such an interesting society. I know Jack is enjoying himself." Rose grinned at the Doctor, who sighed.
"Jack can always find someone to indulge his flirtations. Though Salazar has a decent head on his shoulders. He's more than a match for our good captain." The Doctor stared at the still irresolute doors of his Tardis. "I wonder though, should I even take Harry back with me? When we leave, I mean. This world, he belongs in it. It's safer for him, not so much life threatening going on at a school. He can learn things here he can't learn on the Tardis."

Rose blinked. "Have you really been worrying...?" she questioned, then hung her head. "Of course you have. Though it's a stupid thing to worry about," she said, poking the Doctor hard. The Doctor swiveled to look at her, injury on his face.

"It's not stupid! I'm thinking about what is best for him."

"Are you really? Or are you being irrational and short sighted?"

"What?"

"He's your son, Doctor, your child. You have the responsibility to care for him, teach him, and raise him, not drop him off at the nearest school and wander away. And do you think Harry would, for one second, let you leave him?"

"I...Rose, he's been in more danger, in more scrapes, in more life threatening conditions with me than almost anyone else I've ever brought with me on the Tardis. He's too precious, too important, for anything to happen to him. If I lost him..." he trailed off.

Rose sighed, running a hand down the Doctor's back. "I understand. My brother's daughter, I felt that way. She was the light of my life, and seeing as how I either lived at Torchwood or with him, I always saw her. She was my niece, but in many ways, while she had her dad and her pop, I was a mother of sorts. I took her to the store when she had her first period, I helped her talk to a boy she liked, seeing as how my brother and his husband's advice was about as helpful as stumbling drunks giving directions. Though that might have been because she was thirteen and their daughter and the thought of her dating at all terrified them." She smiled at the memory. "I helped her with homework, her clothing choices, her first date and her first break-up. But she had to grow up at some point, I couldn't hold on to her forever."

The Doctor sat and listened to her words, a tight expression on his face. He sometimes forgot (or rather he just didn't want to remember) how old Rose had become. That she had raised a little girl alongside her brother and his husband, that she had watched a little child grow into an adult. It was a staggering revelation. "What was her name?"
Rose glanced at him. "Kelly. Kelly Michaeelle Tyler-Bryants, and she was a lovely little thing. Long black hair, tanned skin, brilliant electric blue eyes and a smile that lit up the world. She was my star, my little helper. I would take her to the offices and show her off. I'm sure everyone got tired of me expounding on all of everything that she did, but they never let it show." Rose smiled, but the Doctor noticed a sad edge to it.

"What happened to her?" THe Doctor knew Rose had outlived everyone she had ever known from her youth.

Rose looked at the ground, her hand clenching around the Doctor's, before she spoke. "Kelly became an experimental designer, working on prototypes of various vehicle designed. She was mostly in the engineering side, the math and physics, but she occasionally took a test drive in one." Rose paused for a moment. "They were testing out a hover car for higher altitudes and Kelly volunteered to test it out. They had practically every safety measure in place, but they couldn't predict that the car, when it reached about ten thousand feet, would short out. She plummeted into a mountain over India. It took them three days to find the wreckage."

The Doctor sat, stiff, listening to Rose's story. He knew, logically, that Rose had lost her family, lost them to time, disease. It was the curse of never growing old, never dying. But he hadn't quite thought about who she had lost. He hadn't wanted to, he had wanted to keep the illusion of Rose as that innocent girl he had known, though she had lost that innocence. She hadn't lost her wonder, though it had taken a run through a jeweled jungle to get it back. She was still curious and ever asking questions, but she didn't let him take charge as she used to. She would be there right beside him, or more often in front of him, making sure things didn't get too out of hand.

Now, hearing about Kelly, Rose's niece, who had died in a drastic accident, he couldn't help but remember Rose as the woman who had aged in experience and years, though she still looked like the young woman who had saved him so long ago.

"Did she have any children of her own?" he asked softly.

Rose shook her head. "Kelly was twenty-five when she died. Jeff and Tony, they never recovered. Mum and Dad were gone by then, they never saw her. I was there the night my baby brother died, Jeff dying the next night. After that, I didn't have anyone left." Rose turned his face to look at her. "Don't you start pitying my now Doctor. I've had seventy years to come to terms with the death of my family. I had my couple decades of self-pity, don't you start." Her brown eyes bored into his. They stayed that way for a few moments, then Rose nodded firmly. "Alright, now, I hope that silly idea of leaving Harry at Hogwarts has left your mind."
The Doctor nodded. "I wouldn't leave him, no matter how much I think it would be better. I was just...I think I was wondering what his life would have been like, growing up in a place filled with magic rather than in the Tardis." The Doctor looked up at the ceiling. "Though why you would advocate for him being in danger. I mean, if anything happened to Harry, if anything like what happened to Kelly happened to Harry..." he trailed off, hoping he hadn't crossed some line.

Rose sat back against the wall. "I used to wonder why we let her work in such a dangerous environment, a prototype testing and design facility, but then, after I thought about it, it was a place she loved working in. She applied there straight out of University, she was 20. Sailed through classes, brilliant girl. Got in and went straight into the design facilities, but she had a thing for thrills. She loved telling us about what she did there, and I got to go on a tour a few times. It was an amazing place. I hold onto the fact that she died doing something she loved doing."

The Doctor looked at Rose, really looked, and saw the woman who had loved, lost, and come to terms with. He felt undeserving of her. "Thank you Rose. Thank you."

Rose shook her head. "I didn't do anything. Not really. I shared a story. One about a girl I loved dearly and lost too early. But while she was in my life, I loved her wholeheartedly, more than I had loved anyone since I lost you. She was my world, then I lost her, and I went into a tailspin. But she taught me a valuable lesson, in life and death. It's why I've kept my phone for so long, even though it became obsolete in model type years and years before. I had pictures of her and Jeff and Tony on it, when they were young, photos I had nowhere else. I'll show you, some time."

The Doctor jumped, startled. "You...you will?"

"Of course," Rose laughed. "I wouldn't tell you about her without showing you pictures. It's been decades since I got to brag about my little girl. She might be long gone, but the things she did still impacted the world, my world especially." Rose grinned. "Being around Harry reminds me of her sometimes. She always got into things she shouldn't be getting into. One time she got into some of my files from Torchwood, not dangerous ones, mostly personnel files, but it ended up with about twenty people being assigned another person's name and information. I had to go in by hand and reorganize everything." Rose grinned.

The Doctor laughed, and felt lighter for it. Harry was always a worry in his mind, and these two weeks at Hogwarts reminded him that he would, eventually, have to give Harry up to the world he was born from, but not now. He could hold onto his little boy for a while longer. And he might even find a way to keep Harry around longer than that. It was all about the right strings being pulled. And Rose's stories would give him a distraction from a now future worry.

Eventually, as in three days after the Doctor's existential crisis, the Tardis finally opened it's doors.
Harry was in the potions lab, sans sonic screwdriver, putting together a mixture of ingredients in an attempt to create a sleeping potion based solely off of his study of various potions ingredients and their properties. It was becoming an issue of immense proportions, but Harry was determined.

He was so focused that when his father came barging in with an excited smile on his face, waving the Tardis key around, he accidentally dropped an entire bowl of crushed newts eyes rather than the two spoons and the potion blew up in his face. He had a rather remarkable reaction to it, turning purple.

The Doctor skidded to a stop, a bemused expression crossing his face, then he broke out into laughter and Harry glared angrily at him. The Doctor waved his hand in apology.

"What was so important you needed to rush into the room like a maniac dad?" Harry asked, trying to push his poofy green hair out of his face.

"The Tardis is open!" the Doctor shouted.

Harry blinked. "Really? It's been forever!"

"Are you sure Doctor?" Salazar asked, having avoided Harry's mistake by quick and practiced use of the shield charm and a decent distance from his accident prone student.

The Doctor looked at him indignantly. "Of course I'm sure! This is a momentous occasion! We can return Rowena to her proper age and then be off!"

Harry smiled, then suddenly felt rather sad. He would be leaving this place, with all its magic and splendor and interesting people. Would he ever come back? He asked as much of his father.

The Doctor paused for a moment, something sad and fearful flashing across his face. Then he said, "Someday Harry, we'll be back. Just, not when you think. We might make it back here, to this time, but who knows. I know you'll be going to Hogwarts in your future, but a different Hogwarts, not this one."

Harry stared at him, unsure what to say.
Salazar spoke up. "Well then, if we have a way to fix Rowena, we should probably get on that, yes?"

Harry cleared his head of his troubling thoughts before grinning. "Yes, of course. Though I hope she isn't too mad at me for what I did."

The Doctor smiled at him. "Oh I don't think she'll have minded spending a couple weeks as a toddler. It's rather freeing, I'm sure. No worries, not really. People taking care of you, watching out for you, feeding you. Rose has been all over the child-care business." Another flicker of sorrow, then it cleared. "Come on then, I need you to do the groundwork with this."

"Clean up your mistakes, I know," Harry repeated dutifully.

The Doctor nodded, "But aslo you are the only one I know who can channel the energy we need to correct the temporal error. You remember the lessons in Temporal energy and how it is actually applied?"

"Temporal energy is circular in nature. It would rather correct a linear mistake that alter it even further. The only reason I managed to effect it so peculiarly is because of how I accessed the energy. In a linear world, temporal energy, in small doses, usually will not effect a linear time line unless an outside force has structured its access." It sounded like a recitation.

Salazar smiled. Harry had obviously been made to repeat that particular bit of information a few times.

"Correctamundo! Now, I need Jack. He said he had the crystal sliver from the Temporal Schism. I need that crystal." The Doctor looked at Salazar. "You wouldn't, by chance, know where he is?" he asked.

Salazar tilted his head for a moment. "I believe he is on the grounds with Godric, most likely sparring. Godric has a passion for fighting and Jack is a most interesting fighter."

The Doctor sighed. "Of course. I hope they don't manage to injure each other too much."
Salazar sighed. "There is only so much one can do against the tyranny of the fighting men. Let them bruise each other black and blue and make sure they drag themselves to a healer afterwards."

Harry laughed. "Sounds like you've had to deal with it a number of times."

"You would not believe the number of times Godric has dragged himself back to the castle with cuts and bruises because he had to go challenge the knights at a nearby fortress and there was no way to talk him out of it. If Helga hadn't been around he would be in pieces by now."

Harry laughed.

The Doctor headed for the entrance as soon as they reached the main hallway and burst out into the courtyard before heading for the fields beyond, by the lake.

True to Salazar's prediction, Godric and Jack were fighting beside the lake, though they had swords in hand. Salazar sighed. "Of course they would have the weaponry out. What else would they be doing?"

Harry watched in fascination. After that first lesson with Godric, having been handed a sword that he could barely lift and running around the room with a determined Godric after him, Harry wasn't all too fond of the weapons. But it was interesting to see a duel fought by two people who knew what they were doing.

Jack fought with a newer style, possibly picked up on any number of the fighting worlds he had visited, or even Harry thought, on Earth in Japan, where, he heard, Samurai had lived. Samurai were such a strange and interesting culture. Harry heard that their blades were their souls. One day he wanted to see if that were true or not.

Godric was clearly the more experienced swordsman, despite Jack's longevity, but Jack wasn't a slacker. The fight waged on for a few more minutes until, with a final clash of swords, Jack was disarmed. He bowed in defeat, a grin on his face.

"It has been a while since I've been so thoroughly beaten," he said, admiration in his voice.

Godric grinned, wiping sweat off his brow. "It has also been a long time since I have been
sufficiently challenged. You should teach young Harry how to wield a blade. He has talent but little motivation."

Jack laughed. "He's an intellectual. Prefers thinking through a fight rather than swinging through it."

Godric sighed."I do know the type," he said, looking at Salazar, who merely raised an eyebrow.

"Jack!" the Doctor called. "Need you to find that crystal for me."

A moment of silence. "Wait, the Tardis is open?" he said, blinking in surprise. The Doctor nodded. "Well, alright then. Guess now is as good as any a time." Jack looked at Harry, purple pafe and green hair, then laughed. "Nic look Harry!" he called Harry scowled, crossing his arms.

"I'll go find Rowena. She's most likely with Rose and Helga," Godric said, heading for the castle ahead of them. He nodde at Harry, a grin on his face. "I like the makeover."

"Alright. Bring them to the tower where Rowena first changed when you find them. We'll meet you there."

Godric nodded, waving a hand behind him before heading up the stairs and through the massive doors. The Doctor turned to Harry, Jack and Salazar.

"Well, are we going to get it now?" Jack said.

"Of course. I'm just wondering how we're going to channel the power through it. But I suppose that's up to Harry here."

Harry gulped. "Alright then," he said. "I'll work it out."

"Off to the Tardis. Allonsy!"
"Allonsy?" Salazar asked perplexed. The Doctor looked behind him in mild surprise. "I have never heard the word before."

"It's, it's french," the Doctor explained.

Salazar nodded thoughtfully. "I suppose it could be, though it sounds much different from the French I know."

The Doctor shrugged. Harry and Jack laughed. "It's alright. Half the time I don't know if he's speaking English," Jack said to Salazar. "Him or Harry."

Harry turned around indignantly, but caught the teasing look on Jack's face and harrumphed.

The Tardis loomed up, bright and blue, and the Doctor cried out in joy, inserting the key and grinning when the doors swung open. "Hello Old Girl," he said fondly. "It's wonderful to be home again."

Harry followed him inside. Thankfully, as he stepped into the Tardis, the color faded from his face and hair. He breathed a sigh of relief. he would have hated been green and purple forever.

Salazar stopped just shy of the doors, wondering if he could enter such a sacred place, before Harry stuck his head outside. "Jack, you coming? You can bring Salazar too, you're just explaining it to him." Harry grinned.

Jack grabbed Salazar by the elbow and toted the founder inside the blue box.

Salazar stopped in mild shock. This box was far bigger on the inside. Or was it smaller on the outside? Did it matter which way it was perceived? From the outside, it was merely a blue box, large for a box but not overly. Inside was an entire world. What did one make of that? Was the world the real place and the box only the perception?

"Which one is the real one?" Salazar asked suddenly. Harry twirled around, looked at Salazar with a smile on his face.
"Real what? Tardis?" Salazar nodded. Harry's grin grew even wider. "Well, that depends on what you want to believe. For me, this is my home. The box, blue and amazing and fascinating and bigger on the inside or smaller on the outside. I've never known another home. I always see the Tardis for what she is, really, because I don't know any different I suppose. But if you want to know what is real, both are. The outside is as solid as the inside, but because of the way the Tardis is grown she is naturally dimensionally transcendental. She exists at all points of time and space simultaneously. Makes having conversation in words hard, which is why I speak with emotions and pictures. The outside is so much smaller because the Tardis doesn't exist in the same plane as that reality. She occupies a different dimension, so the projection of the blue box is, in effect, her appearance on the plain of reality we exist in. If you were to view the Tardis in her dimension from the outside, it would be rather huge."

Salazar took all of this in, letting the information soak into his brain and trying to process the meaning. "So," he said slowly. "It's as if the blue box we can see is still the Tardis, but only a part of the Tardis?"

Harry nodded. "In a sense. Kind of like how Hogwarts has sentience, you just can't see it. You can see the effects it has, like moving rooms or staircases, but you can't see the brain. The Tardis is a multi-dimensional being of immense power. No one has ever really fully understood a Tardis, from what I understand, they just learned how to use them. Because a Tardis is grown, there is already a sentience, almost always female, I am told."

Salazar processed this. "So a Tardis is more like a person than a plant or a box, yes?"

"Well, I suppose if you want to see it that way, it could be a type of view.

Salazar spun slowly around on the spot, staring at all the different and strange devices around him. This was a being that was alive, that existed separate from the function of its purpose. Her purpose, Salazar supposed, having listened to Harry tell it. It was a wondrous thing, being inside of something so unique. He wondered if Hogwarts would one day have the same feeling. He would feel privileged to have been part of something that was even a fraction of fascinating as this vessel was.

"So you like the decor?" Jack's voice came from behind him and Salazar didn't even mind the hand that spun him around to face the blue eyed man with the dashing smile.

"It's...she's breathtaking. Amazing, exhilarating. I feel as if I've stepping into another world."

Jack grinned. "The Tardis will do that to you. She is a piece of another world, a world long gone
from this plane of existence but one that had an immense impact on how it was run." Jack nodded over towards the Doctor.

Salazar frowned in confusion, then his eyes widened. "Is he...is he one of those gods non magicals speak of, the ones that live in the sky?"

Jack blinked, stunned, before he laughed. "Oh, no, nothing so grand. Though I was sure that by now the planets had been discovered, or at least noticed. I'm not very good at Early Earth History, failed it twice in school. Had to do remedial lessons to get into the agency." Jack grinned that wicked grin Salazar had taken to.

"I take it you mean the spherical bodies that spin around in the sky. Yes, the centaurs speak of them, though they have strange names for them. Rowena would know, I stay away from that foolishness." Salazar scowled in disapproval.

"Yes, well, there are millions of those, humans will discover many of them, and he comes from one, a completely different planet."

Salazar looked as if he wasn't really sure whether he should believe Jack or not, mostly because he wasn't sure that the planets that Jack spoke of actually existed, which made it hard to prove anything at all about his point really. Jack sighed and was about to explain more when the Doctor's voice rang out,

"JACK! WHAT POCKET ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? I AM NOT GOING THROUGH ALL OF YOUR CLOTHES!"

Salazar gently shoved Jack away and towards the opposite doorway. "Go find this crystal you are speaking of that will help Rowena, then you can try and explain planets to me."

Jack saluted before turning and heading off down the corridor, shouting back indistinctly.

Harry looked at his potions instructor, smiling. "You really do care for him, don't you?" he said softly.

Salazar looked at Harry, frowning for a moment, before he sighed. "Yes, I suppose I do. He makes it
hard not to. Ridiculously charming and with just a hint of desperation and desolation. It makes me want to take care of him, though he would never let me. But it does draw me to him. There's so much sadness around him, yet he looks so young." Salazar smiled at Harry. "Though I suppose you don't want to hear anymore of your uncle's romantic life?"

Harry waved a hand. "Most of that's for show. He flirts because it's his nature. When he comes from, that is the generally accepted behaviour for people. He doesn't care about gender, species or any other category, it's the beauty of a person that draws him, physical and mental. He is a person who can never not love, no matter how much it breaks his heart. I sometimes just want him to not flirt because then maybe I won't have to help pick up the pieces afterwards. He gives his whole heart to someone he will never be able to live with, and he knows it, but he doesn't care." Harry stared at the doorway his uncle had walked through. "I am glad he met you, for however a brief time it will be. Few really care about him the way he cares for them."

They sat in silence as Harry finished, and Salazar wondered just how long Jack had lived. What had happened to the man that had created this endlessly loving yet masochistic person? He wasn't going to ask, it wasn't his place unless Jack wanted to tell him, but he couldn't deny Harry's words.

"You all are something very different," Salazar said. Harry turned, owl eyes. "I mean, your and your family. You, impossible child, your father with his strange box that is alive and yet so fascinatingly beautifully purposeful, Rose with her young face and old eyes and strange connection to the Doctor, and Jack, the ageless man with a history convoluted. Nothing about you four is normal or even functional individually. Leave Rose, your father, Jack, alone, I see self destructive personalities all over their faces. People who desperately want to help but can't quite get over their own lives. And you, shaped by them, I wonder how you might have been without their influences." Salazar paused for a moment and Harry was about to speak up in defense of his family, when Salazar continued. "But together, together you four are an unstoppable force of nature, a raging inferno that can't be stopped, but one that burns the destructive to let the new grow through. It's absolutely astonishing."

Harry could do little more than blink as Salazar finished, and he didn't get a chance to reply before the Doctor came bounding out of the back halls with a yellow shard held tightly in one hand. Jack followed at a more leisurely pace, grinning.

"Alright, who's up for some time bending?"

Harry choked on air.

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Salazar followed the whirl of activity that was the Doctor and Harry out of the Tardis and down the
hall. There was a lot of running involved, he thought, especially since Rowena has waited nearly two weeks for this to happen. Why rush round?

"Running a specialty of the Doctor's, and Harry's inherited it as well. So you either keep up or catch up. They don't wait for you."

His thoughts must have been obvious if Jack was commenting on them. But nonetheless he ran after the two sprinters, not really wanting to miss what was going to happen.

Harry and the Doctor bounded the steps of the tower and skidded into the door, greeting Rose, Helga, Godric and the miniaturized Rowena with a huff of air and a smile.

"Are we ready Doctor?" Rose asked, nodding to the child in her arms.

The Doctor looked around to Harry, raising a questioning eyebrow. "Well Harry, you ready to fix your mistake?"

Harry nodded firmly and his father smiled at him, a beaming grin. "Alright, allonsy! let's get the good founder back to her rightful age!" Jack and Salazar hovered outside the door. "Okay, if everyone who isn't either affected by time or currently the mischief maker move outside the door, that would be brilliant." He waited while Helga and Godric moved outside. Rose stayed where she was, rocking little Rowena. The Doctor looked at her. "You as well Rose."

Rose shook her head. "No way. I am time-proof. It's unlikely any small amount you use to return Rowena will do anything to me."

The Doctor sighed, exasperated. "I can't risk the Bad Wolf deciding to pay a visit because of an open rift." Rose stared the Doctor straight in the eyes, unmoving. "Please Rose. I don't know what that entity does to you, but until we can understand it better, I don't want to put you in a position where you are more affected by pure time than you have to be."

There was a silent standoff, the Doctor and Rose staring the other down. Harry tried to make himself small, unwilling to be caught in whatever fight might possibly break out, then the tension snapped when Rose sighed, reluctantly giving into the Doctor's request.
"Alright, but I'm not going any further than the door," she warned him. The Doctor smiled. "And be careful with her, she's fragile." Rose handed Rowena off to the Doctor, who took her with gentle hands.

"I will. And the door is all I ask. The temporal energy should be concentrated solely around the crystal and Rowena, with Harry acting as a medium."

"Isn't that dangerous for Harry?" Helga asked from the hallway.

"If he wasn't protected by his inherent magic and connection with the Tardis, it would be tremendously. But by virtue of his nature, Harry is shielded from much of the effects of temporal energy in small doses." The Doctor shifted Rowena around until he could hold out the crystal, a small piece of fabric wrapped around the base. "Careful Harry. We don't want to activate the crystal and I don't want you touching it bare handed without preparation so close to a rift. Even if it is a small one."

Harry gingerly took the crystal, making sure to not touch the actual crystal. "Do I have to touch her, like I did before?" Harry asked.

The Doctor shook his head. "No, this time you will be manifesting the temporal energy directly into the room using the crystal as a catalyst. You aren't filtering it through your magic to make it visible."

Harry nodded, then he looked at the crystal in his hands. It was slender, about a foot in length, and inside was a...was that a dragon? “Dad, why is there a dragon inside this crystal? And it's still flying."

The Doctor looked over at it curiously. "I do believe that is a Sunset Mountain Dragon. Been extinct since, oh, 679 C.E.? I imagine that it was what was present at the point the rift manifested in that time. So when the fracture occurred, its image was captured and preserved within the crystal. Though I must say, they are a remarkable species, dragons. Very similar to Draconians, on a planet in the Frixal S78 system. Though they are far more even tempered than dragons."

Harry peered closer at the crystal, watching the majestic, bronze and crimson creature fly through unseen skies. "Will it still be there when I'm done?" Harry asked, concerned.

The Doctor shrugged. "I don't know. Though the dragon itself shouldn't have been harmed after the fracture was closed. Though I can't be sure. Maybe it was temporally captured and that is the dragon,
Harry looked vaguely uncomfortable with the idea of a living creature inside the object he would use as a catalyst, but he couldn't see any other choice.

The Doctor placed Rowena directly underneath the rift, the little girl blinking sleepily up at Harry. She had just woken up from a nap and had been rushed up to the tower with little compunction. She wasn't sure she liked this.

"Harry, you know what to do, yes?" the Doctor asked.

"I'm to channel my magic through the crystal, maintaining contact between the temporal catalyst and the rift. The release of temporal energy into the crystal should be directed into Rowena by physical contact."

The Doctor nodded in approval, then stepped back towards the door, not quite stepping outside but retreating far enough back to give Harry some space.

Harry looked down at Rowena. "I hope you won't be too upset at me for this when you return to normal," Harry said. "I really am sorry."

Then he concentrated, reaching for the exact location of the rift. It was right above Rowena's head. His dad really had a good sense of Time, being able to pinpoint the rift so clearly. He grinned, then touched the crystal with a bit of hesitance with bare hands. The crystal pulsed, literally, and he saw a wave of energy from it in all directions for a few feet. It passed through him with a ripple and Harry shuddered. But it didn't do anything, so he started filtering his magic through it, reaching forward until the tip touched the spot in the air where he had unraveled the schema between this plain and the time vortex.

The reaction was astonishing, and the crustal started glowing a brilliant golden color. Harry grinned. Well, this was going better than he expected.

Below him, Rowena watched the proceedings with wide eyes. It was so pretty, and she reached a hand up to touch it. Fortunately she was too far away from the light to do much about touching it too early. Harry really didn't need this going anymore wrong than it had already gone.
"What is he doing Doctor?" Godric asked. "It's like a...a swirling golden wind around him."

The Doctor looked over in surprise. "You can see the energy?" he said softly.

Godric nodded. "Yeah. I've always been able to, but this is an astonishing amount. More than I would expect."

"Hmm. Well, I'll ask you about that later, but essentially Harry is using the energy he is gathering from the rift and channeling it through the crystal. The crystal acts as a catalyst so it doesn't just float about doing things it shouldn't be doing. Harry can then direct the energy to where it needs to go. In this case, into Rowena, acting as a kind of fast forward for her life. It will bring her timeline and the current time into sync."

"I think I might have understood that. Sort of. So he is returning Rowena to normal?"

"Yes."

Harry waited for a few moments, then abruptly tilted the crystal downward, toward Rowena's head. Just as it was about to touch her, he let it go with a tiny push, and it connected with her upturned face.

The moment it connected, Rowena was bathed in a halo of golden light, obscuring her form. The light began to get brighter and brighter, and Harry was forced to back up to avoid being brought into it. He couldn't risk it.

It took a few moments, moments Harry worriedly bit his fingernails. He could only hope it would work.

A few moments later, the light cleared and Harry cast about for Rowena.

He abruptly turned around, eyes wide, staring at his father. "Um, dad. Bit of a problem."

"What, what happened?"
Harry fidgeted. "Well, I didn't quite remember that Rowena was getting bigger, which also meant that her body would be getting bigger, which meant that she would outgrow her clothes..." Harry trailed off. "And, well, she's a bit...underdressed."

The Doctor peered around Harry, but was yanked back by Rose. "Give her a bit of privacy," Rose scolded. "If one of you magic people could conjure a blanket, that would be lovely." Someone waved a wand and muttered something and a blanket appeared in Rose's hands. "Thank you. Now, will everyone not female leave? We'll bring Rowena down when she's more put together."

"But I need to make sure she's not suffering any ill effects!" the Doctor protested.

Rose shooed him out the door. "Go! I'm sure we can manage to make sure she's put together properly without you helping."

So, with a mild bit of protesting, the Doctor, Godric, Jack, Salazar, and Harry were shooed out of the tower and down to the hallway.

Rose and Helga covered Rowena with the blanket (it was bright red, probably courtesy of Godric). The woman was still unconscious, though Rose didn't expect anything else from her. She had just been funnelled through a temporal schism worths of energy to correct her timeline, it wasn't surprising she had decided that not being conscious was far better than eyes open.

"Do you know when she'll wake up?" Helga asked. Rose shook her head. Helga sighed. "I suppose we'll just have to wait then."

"I suppose so. Besides, she doesn't need to wake up surrounded by the Doctor and Harry and their nosy questions." Rose tilted her head thoughtfully. "Though maybe she shouldn't wake up on the floor either. Not very comfortable, is it?"

Helga smiled. "No, I suppose not." She pulled her wand out from her sleeve and waved it in an intricate pattern, and rose watched as a bed materialized. "It's her bed, from her room. Might be a tad bit more comfortable." Rose nodded in approval. Helga swished the length of wood again and Rowena slowly floated up and onto the bed. the blanket settled around her, tucking itself in. "She can move it back to her room when she's awake. For now, it isn't doing any harm where it is."
"How long have you known Rowena?" Rose asked curiously.

"Since she was a child. I'm older than her by about eight years. I took her in when her parents cast her out. They didn't approve of magic at all, didn't understand it. She was about seven and brilliant. Had quite a mouth on her. It's calmed over the years, but she can mouth off with the best of them when she's angry." Helga chuckled. "Almost chucked her to the curb myself, once or twice. Precocious child, but I could never really give up on her. She needed someone who wouldn't. So when I could, I would teach her what magic my parents taught me before they died. Salazar found us a bit later, a roving apprentice to a powerful wizard, and Godric was tagging along like a puppy."

"What's the story with those two? Raised together?"

Helga shrugged. "They never say. I think Godric was the son of a nobleman, but I can never get which one from him. He sounds like he's from the Island to the west, but he won't confirm it and he's smoothed out the accent over the years. He used to roll his ‘r’s terribly. Salazar, I believe, is an orphan. Never knew his parents, doesn't know where he came from, doesn't know much of anything about his past at all. He doesn't really mind either, but I know it bugs him."

Rose smiled. Such a disparate group. "How'd you all decide to build a castle? I mean, it is a rather extravagant project for those so young."

Helga smiled, looking off into the distance. "None of us really belonged anywhere, so I think we were all desperate to belong somewhere, and where better than a castle? Great lords and nobles live in them, and we could teach. I love teaching. Godric loves teaching when he isn't busy blowing things up, I know Salazar enjoys it when he has a good pupil, and Rowena will talk anyone's ear off if they have half a mind to sit still in her presence. So we decided why not make our home big enough for children as well, those who don't have homes, though we haven't got any orphans right now. Our last three left to go find some kind of employment when the Harvest started. Mostly we have kids from the villages who need to be taught how to use their gifts. It soothes the parents, knowing that their children are being taught, especially those who come from families without magic."

Rose nodded. "So you all made this place a home and a school. What do you plan on doing when you die?"

Helga shrugged. "We haven't really thought about it. Salazar and I are about the same age. Rowena is the youngest and we think Godric is a couple years older than her, though he doesn't say." Helga shot her a look. "Despite his loud mouth, Godric is the one most people underestimate. We don't know his past, almost nothing about his gifts, and he has some powerful magic as his command."
"You all are powerful. What makes him so different?"

Helga paused, gathering her thoughts. "Yes, we are all strong. Amazingly talented. Almost no known spell is beyond our reach. In fact, anything known today we have access to the knowledge to use and the ability to manipulate. But Godric is a step beyond that. He sees magic at it's fundamental base. Manipulates it strangely. He is the one that infused the castle with its blanket of protections."

"Don't underestimate the rest of us, Helga," Rowena's voice filtered out from under the blankets. "Godric is unusually strong, but lacks a fundamental focus that would be necessary to make him dangerous. He's also far more interested in actually helping people, no matter how much of a nuisance Salazar finds him.” Rowena sat up, pulling th blankets up around her to keep herself decently covered. “Are there clothes I could have?” she asked. “It’s a bit chilly.”

Helga waved her wand around, muttering something Rose thought was latin. A simple blue dress and a pair of black shoes appeared, laying themselves across Rowena’s bed at Helga’s direction. Rowena nodded her thanks, and Rose and Helga turned their backs to give Rowena some privacy. It was a few moments, then Rowena told them to turn around.

"What about the rest of you? You all excel in something. Godric is powerful and mysterious, I know a couple people who like to believe they're a bit like that." Rose grinned. “But I know Salazar is good with potions and Helga, you showed me your plants.”

Rowena smiled slightly. "Salazar is a gift with potions, able to create some of the most unusual concoctions ever known. He's also a master of transfiguration. Though don't count Godric out of that one. The two of them are collaborating on how to turn themselves into animals. Not quite sure how that is working out at the moment, but it should be interesting."

"Rowena's brilliant at enchantments. No one else as good as her anywhere known. Though I have heard tell of mystics in the far East who are shocking. And she's the one with the brain. When she can keep her temper and her curiosity in check.” Helga gave Rowena a fond look. Rowena scowled.

"Well, I'm sorry my curiosity got the better of me. Though I did manage to learn quite a lot from my experience."

"You remember it?" Rose asked, astonished.
Rowena nodded, biting her lip. "In a distant way, yes. I remember the actual transformation quite clearly, then, suddenly, everything gets a different perspective. Everything is so tinged with emotions, less thinking and more....that's pretty, you're mean, sleepy, hungry, I like this." Rowena looked at Rose. "Is that normal?"

Rose nodded. "The Doctor said your mind had returned to the state of a two year old, protecting itself from the harmful effects older memories and mental processes can have on a fragile young mind. I remember what children are like at that age. Everything is emotional, everything is driven by desire. Kelly was a precocious two year old, always getting into things, always smiling and having a wonderfully childlike excuse for why said things were out of order."

"You are a mother?" Helga asked in astonishment. "But you look barely old enough to have left home!"

"No, not a mother, and I'm far older than I appear. But my niece was an adorable two year old."

"Your niece?" Rowena asked, a hint of confusion in her voice.

"My brother's daughter. Him and his husband took in Kelly when she was a baby, her birth mother had given her up. She was too young to care for a child and she didn't have a husband or wife or a willing family to help her."

Helga nodded in understanding. "Your brother is a kind person, to do such a thing."

Rose smiled but didn't say anything more on the subject, turning to Rowena instead. "So, how's your mind, is everything settling in alright? Nothing out of place? Unusual?"

Rowena frowned in concentration, then shook her head. "Not at the moment, no. Though the surge of emotions is a strange one, I would guess that returning from such a young age it would be normal to have that surge." Rowena looked about the room. "Oh, I guess that being able to see the small tear in the middle of the room would be unusual."

Rose looked at her sharply. "Tear? Where exactly is this tear?"
Rowena pointed. "Over there, nearby the table where Harry first opened the space between the planes. Though it's so tiny that nothing is really escaping."

Rose narrowed her eyes. "I'll have to make sure the Doctor knows about it. It is dangerous to leave any sort of temporal schism open on this plane, no matter how small. You can't know the effects it may have on the surroundings." Rose looked at Rowena. "I would suggest you avoid it. We don't know what it may do to you, even though you've been restored to your proper timeline."

Rowena nodded. "I did learn a great deal about time though. I shan't underestimate someone just on age alone again. I fear I might have provoked Harry into his rash decision and then I didn't listen to him when he told me to not touch anything." Rowena sighed.

"Harry would probably have shown you anyway, had you been disparaging or encouraging. One would have been as a plea for you to see something interesting, the other would have been in excitement to show you something interesting. You can't win when it comes to the Doctor or Harry. They will do what they will and damn the reasons."

Helga grinned. "I do believe Salazar has managed to get Harry to actually follow directions. Took a bit of finesse, but it is amusing."

Rose laughed. "As long as it's interesting, you can keep either of them entertained for hours. Days. Weeks. It's a bit scary sometimes, how focused they get. But they get some amazing things done."

~~~This is a Scene Break~~~~

The boys were discussing the situation as well, the moment they all managed to get on the same level.

"So, you think Rowena will be okay Doctor?" Godric asked, worrying at his fingernails and tearing little pieces of hanging skin off.

The Doctor nodded. "Most likely. There is a small possibility of a permanent effect on her memory, but nothing overly serious. We didn't change anything, rather we returned her to her proper state. the temporal energy and her own magic should compensate for the alteration that had to be made to put her right."
"But there is a small chance of something going wrong?"

"Unlikely Godric, but yes. We'll know whenever Rose comes back down." The Doctor stared up the stairs, worry plain in his eyes.

Harry was keeping quiet, unwilling to draw any sort of attention to himself until he knew that whatever had happened had turned out for the best. The crystal in his hands was now empty of the dragon he had seen, and he hoped it had returned to its proper time, alive. The thought that he might have inadvertently killed such a magnificent creature was something he didn't want to contemplate.

The silence filled the space, then the Doctor spoke again. "Well, until we are allowed back up, it is unlikely that we will know what's happened. And Rose is unlikely to let me back into the room, no matter what I say to her. She's stubborn like that." The Doctor scowled slightly. "Stubborn girl."

Harry stifled a laugh.

"I hope she's alright. Rowena's the baby of the group, you know. Found her tagging along behind Helga. She wasn't more than ten, but she had a mouth on her. Helga was a saint, putting up with her. She got better as she got older, but I haven't met anyone as smart as her, not until you four showed up," Godric smiled. "She's sort of like my baby sister, who I love to irritate. I mean, I wouldn't hurt her, but she does have a brilliant temper when she gets upset. Her feathers get all ruffled. Almost as much fun as Salazar here." Godric nodded at Salazar, who was leaning against the far wall.

Salazar opened one eye to peer at him. "You are the singularly most annoying person I have ever had the pleasure of meeting, and that saying a lot. If you hadn't been such an awkward child with a stubborn streak I might have just left you where I found you, on that beach."

Godric grinned. "You couldn't have. You have a soft spot for gangly red heads with a penchant for trouble."

"Almost more trouble than you're worth," Salazar muttered.

"SO you all didn't grow up together?" Harry asked curiously.

Godric looked down at Harry, smiling. "No we didn't, though the three of us older ones raised
Rowena, sort of. When she let us. Though that isn't saying much, seeing as we aren't that much older than her."

"Really? I thought you all were about the same age," the Doctor mused.

"Helga and I are the same age, or thereabouts. I am unsure of when I was born. Godric as about four seasons younger than me and four older than Rowena. But in maturity, Godric falls right at the bottom." Salazar smirked at his friend.

Godric sighed, a long suffering sigh that indicated that he had indeed dealt with this kind of thing for quite a while. "At least I don't have a wooden pole for a spine. It takes a veritable catastrophe for you to change anything."

"He changed how he taught for me!" Harry protested.

"You are a natural disaster Harry. You wander around and upset everyone's expectations of the world. It would be a miracle if Salazar hadn't changed to teach you."

"At least he wasn't swinging a sword at me," Harry muttered.

"They were blunted," Godric protested.

Harry frowned. "I'm sure that makes all the difference. For now though, I'll keep my mind open as to who teaches best here. I still haven't lost that bruise from that lesson."

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Harry, the Doctor, Godric, Jack, and Salazar lingered at the foot of the stairs for well over half an hour before Rose came down, smiling. The Doctor immediately sprang towards her, grasping both her shoulders.

"Is Rowena alright?" he asked.
Rose rolled her eyes, pushing the Doctor's hands aside. "Rowena is fine. She has full mental capacity, no ill effects other than some woefully fuzzy memories of her time as a toddler and a penchant for messing with time magic. And an uncanny ability to see time. Well, a little bit of time, the temporal energy seeping through the crack in her room."

The Doctor breathed in deeply. "Alright, not that bad. I expected something like that to happen. People rarely escape an encounter with temporal energy and remain the same. We are lucky the most she has in an ability to see temporal energy." The Doctor looked over at Godric. "She isn't alone in that ability at least."

Rose's eyes widened and she too glanced in the red head's direction. "You can see temporal energy as well?"

Godric shrugged. "I think it's more like a person's aura, and temporal energy, as you say, falls under that particular category."

"Godric's ability to tap into that wavelength of energy is probably something he inherited from his parents, his maternal line, if I must guess. It is mostly a female thing, from what I've seen of humanity. Though since he doesn't talk much about his family, I couldn't say." The Doctor frowned slightly. "But it will help Rowena adjust, having someone around who knows what she is seeing and being able to help her."

"You aren't staying?" Salazar interjected, looking concerned.

The Doctor shook his head. "No. We can't. It's not really Harry's time to be at Hogwarts and we've already stayed far longer than I expected to. Thought that can be attributed to Harry's mistake, but it did give him ample opportunity to learn some valuable things. But we can't linger here any longer."

Salazar glanced at Jack, who nodded in resigned agreement. Salazar jerked his head to the side then walked off. Jack looked to the Doctor, who nodded, and then followed his current paramour away from the group.

Rose looked after them with worried eyes. "Will he be okay?"

"Jack or Salazar?" the Doctor asked.
"Both."

"I don't know. Jack...Jack might take it harder than Salazar, but Salazar is...we'll have to see."

Godric frowned. "I wasn't aware they were that serious," he said, consernation coloring his voice.

harry sighed. "Uncle Jack has a tendency to get over invested in people who interest him. It doesn't work out well for him when he has leave. I just hope he doesn't end up depressed. That never ends well."

"I never thought I would see Salazar actually find someone interesting enough to invest so much time in," Godric said thoughtfully. "He's usually so aloof."

"Jack has the ability to overcome the most hardened barriers someone has. He's just got that charm about him." Rose put an arm on Godric's shoulder. "They'll have us, when they are done." Godric nodded, but the concern on his face didn't go away.

~~~~This is a scene Break~~~~

Jack followed Salazar down the hallway and up a staircase, moving farther and farther away from the group waiting for Rowena to come down the stairs.

Salazar stopped suddenly, turned around to face jack abruptly, before grasping a handful of Jack's white button up shirt, pulling him in close, uncertainty in his eyes, Jack's surprise slipped into easy comfort, and he smiled, before Salazar finished what he started and kissed him.

It was a soft kiss, unlike the violent yank that had brought them closer. Not chaste, but far from scandalous. Sweet and gentle, and Jack wanted to sink into it, into this man he had come to care about and, ultimately, had to leave. He had hurt enough people in his life that loved him, he couldn't even think about staying with Salazar, no matter how much he wanted to. He shouldn’t.

After a few, uncountable, moments, Salazar pulled away, the hand that had gripped Jack's shirt sliding down to rest on his waist. Hesitant, unsure. "You, you're leaving, aren't you?"
Jack nodded, not sure what to say. Salazar backed up a step, and Jack let him. But he couldn't stop his traitorous hand from reaching out to grasp Salazar's own. "I'm sorry," he whispered. It sounded inadequate.

"I should have known, but I didn't...I don't think I wanted to think about it. You leaving. I mean, it's only been a couple weeks but..." Salazar paused, gathered his thoughts, breathed. "I don't want you to leave. I want you to stay. Here. With me."

Jack's eyes widened. "I...you wouldn't want that," he finally said.

"Why? Because you're older than me?" Jack jumped slightly. "Only those who have seen many years have the same look in their eyes, and you speak of grandchildren. You may not look the picture of teenage youth, but you don't look old enough to have grandchildren."

"You wouldn't like that," Jack said. "Me staying. No matter how much I want to, how much you want me to, in the end, you wouldn't want it."

"Why? Because you're broken? Because you're old? Because I'm young?" Jack shook his head. "Am I not good enough?" Salazar cried.

Jack stepped forward, wrapped his arms around the younger man. He sometimes forgot that Salazar, for all his wisdom and power, was still young, still so easily hurt. He had forgotten what young adults were like. The Doctor was older than him, Rose had outgrown those awkward young adult years long ago, and Harry was still a child. He had forgotten what it was like to be so passionate and fervent and desperate. "No, no, never think that Salazar. Sal. Never. You are, you are amazing. Smart, brilliant, strong, amazing, kind, patient. Everything about you is worth every ounce of time I could spend with you."

"Then why can't you stay, spend it with me?" he whispered, his voice trembling with tears. "I thought, when the Doctor was going to leave, that you might stay here, with me. Just for a little while longer, at least. The Doctor can come back for you, in whatever time. I thought you could stay here and we would have more time together." Jack felt Salazar's arms come around him, hesitantly, then harder. "I don't want you to go."

Jack buried his face in Salazar's hair. He was a bit taller than the other man, tall enough that he could envelope Salazar in his arms.
The last two and a half weeks had been a whirlwind of courting the very proper young man. Jack had barely managed to steal a few kisses here and there, but he treasured the companionship of the potions master. He had been alone for so long, since he had lost Ianto twenty years ago, and just having the companionship of someone who was interested, genuinely interested, in him was a comfort and a source of hope.

They had traded some stories over a drink Salaar had called Dragon’s Whiskey, a strong alcohol that had Jack coughing and Salazar laughing at him. But he down the second sip without a problem. The drinking game had them both on the floor of the tavern, hip to hip, laughing at the ceiling.

He had learned that Salazar was an orphan, found on a beach, sunburned and salt crusted when he was barely a year old by an old wizard. He was taken in and, when old enough, taught the arts of magic. He had always know the wizard wasn’t his kin. He had been told from his earliest memories that he was an unwanted child, so he would have to make his way in the world on his own. It was by the skin of his knuckles, his skills, and his determination that Salazar survived when the old wizard told him to pack his things when he was fifteen and head out.

In return, Jack had told Salazar about his first life, when he had been a child and he had lived in the Boeshane peninsula. About joining the agency when he was twenty and setting off on his own. About losing his brother, about his parents' horror and eventual deaths.

He hadn't shared his numerous loves and losses, his husbands and wives, his children. His immortality that never let him age. But he could. He might, if h stayed here. Salazar brought a kind of innocence back to him, something he hadn't felt in a long time. Ianto did the same, when he had been with him. A kin of honest love. Salazar hadn't loved anyone, not in a permanent kind of way. Could he really leave the young man he had come to treasure?

"Sal, I never age. I never look any older. I would look the same now as I would when you die, however far from now that may be."

Salazar sagged against him. "I don't care," he muttered fiercely. "I don't. I don't care if you look young forever, if I can only have you for a short while. If my life will only be a passing blink of yours. I just..." Salazar trailed off. "I just want you, for however long I can."

Jack breathed in deep, the scent of various herbs and smells that covered the potions master on a regular basis. "...I might be able to stay. Sometimes. If I can get the Doctor to fix my vortex manipulator, I might be able to stay here, for a time."
Salazar pulled back, eyes wide. "Really?"

Jack smiled a sad smile. "Yes. I would be able to. I would be here, however often you want me here. I won't ever die, so it wouldn't be impossible."

"You can't die?" Salazar said, amazement filling his voice. "How?"

"it was an accident. But it isn't as much of a gift as you imagine. I've watched almost everyone I've ever loved die in front of my eyes, unable to stop it. From one thing or another, my loves have been taken from me. But for you, Sal, I would stay."

Salazar rocked on his feet, unsure how to take that. Jack had watched almost everyone he loved die and he was still willing to stay and watch him age, wither, and die. Could he do that to him? He didn't know, but he did know he didn't want to give up the fascinating, charming man just yet. "You would stay with me, knowing that you'll have to watch me...?" he couldn't finish the sentence.

Jack smiled. "I would." He waved an arm through the air. "And if I can get the vortex manipulator fixed, I could also make sure I see Harry as well, not miss him growing up too much without me." He huffed a laugh. "Though honestly, if the Doctor timed it right, he could pick me up the minute after he left, but the minute after you die. For me, decades later while for them, no time at all."

Salazar's eyes went wide. It was an impossible thing to imagine. "But you would be so different. you might not even remember them."

Jack shook his head. "No, I would remember them, because you can't just forget the Doctor, not so easily. Or Harry, Rose. They just create such an image in your mind, such a fascination, that you can't get rid of them."

Salazar nodded. "So, what are you going to do?"

Jack smiled. "I'll see if I can't work something out."

~~~~~This is a Scene Change~~~~~
"What do you think he'll do? Is he coming with us?" Rose asked softly.

the Doctor shrugged. "I don't know, honestly. It isn't like he has to worry about running into himself in this time. He can stay for however long he wants. He knows how to get a hold of us."

Harry looked up, eyes wide. "Uncle Jack would stay?" he said, incredulous.

"He loves Salazar, Harry. That is a very good reason to stay here."

Godric blinked. "Loves? Really? But, they've only known each other for a couple weeks!"

"Love doesn't always take time to grow. And Jack is a very immediate person." Rose shrugged. "It isn't hard to fall in love with him. He has that kind of aura. If I hadn't already been half mad for this guy, I might have let him sweep me off my feet all those years ago."

the Doctor snorted. "I distinctly remember some feet sweeping from him."

Rose raised an eyebrow. "Well, I didn't see any romance from you at the time," she said pointedly.

"You were nineteen and naive. Call me old fashioned but how could I believe you were seriously in love with an alien with ears too big for his head and a guilt complex twice the size of Delta768?"

"Oi, I loved those ears, don't go insulting them," Rose said, shoving the Doctor gently. "Always thought they looked rather fetching on you." The Doctor grinned, kissing Rose quickly. She giggled. "Besides, how could I not fall for the dashing hero who took me to see the stars and saved worlds and walked with me under hundred foot frozen waves?"

Harry groaned. "I would tell you to get a room but you two never listen. Can you at least wait until I can go to my room?" he complained. Rose laughed and opened her mouth to retort when they spotted Jack and Salazar heading back.

She could tell from the posture that Jack had made his decision and she sighed.
The Doctor noticed as well, and he looked at Godric. "Could you take Harry and go check on Rowena please?"

"Hey, I want to stay!" Harry protested.

The Doctor gave him a look. "I need to talk to Jack without the emotional influence of you right now. I need to make sure he has made the choice he wants and you'll sway his mind just by being present. I want what is best for everyone, and Jack could do with someone who wants him."

Harry frowned but nodded. He turned to Godric. "Alright. I've already given Salazar my approval, so I might as well go and see if my error has been corrected while Jack convinces my dad he should stay here instead of coming with us." He tugged Godric up the stairs. "And you might just taunt Salazar, so you might as well come with me."

Godric couldn't argue and he let himself be taken up the stairs, wondering when it was he lost any sense of control he might have had. He wasn't even sure what was going on anymore.

"You're gonna stay, aren't you?" Rose asked softly.

Jack blinked, stunned, before he smiled. "Should have known you would know Rosie. Always knowing everything."

"This is what you wanna do Jack?" the Doctor asked. "You can change your mind, but this would be the best time to leave, if you aren't sure."

Jack clenched his hand tight. "Yes. I want to...I want to stay somewhere for a little while. I need to." He breathed deeply. "I need some time to let go of my past. Here is a good place to do it." He smiled over at Salazar.

Rose grinned slyly. "Are you sure it isn't for this handsome young man here?" she teased. Salazar flushed.

"Stop teasing him Rosie. I'm working on loosening that stiff spine he has. No need to give him a
"Are you going to come back?" the Doctor said quietly.

"I was hoping you could help me with that." He held up his wrist, the sleeve falling to reveal the leather band that held his Vortex manipulator. "Maybe fix this up so I can make it back to you."

"That's dangerous Jack. You know why I deactivated it."

Jack waved a hand. "Then make it so I can't go anywhere else but the Tardis at a certain point in time. Put some restrictions on it. I'm not going to leave you to raise Harry by yourself, I just..."

Rose laid a hand on his shoulder. "I know. You need some time away from it all. I heard you spent a good few weeks getting drunk after the incident. Have you had a rest since then? Somewhere without time travel, aliens, or responsibilities?" Jack shook his head mutely. "Then i think it's about time you took one, yeah?"

"When did you get so wise Rosie?" Jack said, huffing a laugh.

"About the same time I got over my phase of throwing darts at the Doctor's photo," she said matter of factly.

Jack sorted, coughed, then laughed. "Darts?" he managed to say.

"Darts. Sometimes on fire, sometimes with small explosives rigged to them. sometimes with a paper eating acid fixed to the point. But hey, I was rather destructive. But it took me about thirty years. Take your time."

Salazar started as she rounded on him, eyes blazing. He held his hands up in defense, unsure how this woman, smaller than him by a good deal and slighter than he could appear so intimidating. "I....yes?" he stuttered.

"You take care of him. If anything happens to him and I find out you were the source of the problem,
you won't like the consequences."

Salazar nodded, believing her fully.

"Oi, stop it!" Jack protested. Rose shrugged, unconcerned with Jack's irritating.

"I look out for my friends," she said simply.

"I might be able to fix the destination for your manipulator, set it within the Tardis. It would sally be impossible to fix it for a time within the Tardis, but I have a point of reference I can use."

Rose tapped her lip. "Harry?" she guessed.

"Correctamundo. Harry has a unique energy pattern. I can set it to his current pattern, tweak it just a bit so he won't show up right after we leave, a couple months later, and then it should do the trick." The Doctor looked at Jack, eyes serious. "This is a one way trip Jack. Once you take it, you can't go back. You must be certain when you press that button that you want to come back."

Jack nodded and he could feel Salazar vibrating beside him. the younger man was tense with energy. He laid a hand on Salazar's shoulder. "Think you can deal with me around for a little while?" he asked softly.


"How are you going to do that little bit of jiggery pokery Doctor?" Rose asked.

The Doctor looked up the staircase. "Harry, you wanna come down and lend a hand?" he asked.

Jack's head whipped around and Harry sheepishly descended, running his hand through his hair. "Sorry," he said, not really sounding apologetic.
"How much did you hear?" his father asked.

Harry shrugged. "I went up with Godric, then slipped out of the room. I wanted to know what was going on. I thought uncle Jack might be staying." Harry half grinned at his uncle.

"Harry..." Jack said softly.

Harry waved a hand, forestalling anything he might have said. "I guessed. I mean, you don't always put time into your flirting. Most of the time it's perfunctory, but I watched you two. You're always in the potions lab with me, so it wasn't hard to see."

"I won't be gone long," Jack said.

Harry grinned. "For me, no. For you, well, you might be here for a while. But I agree with Rose. You should have some time to yourself. Time with someone who cares for you in a way we can't." Harry gestured at his dad, Rose and himself.

Jack stepped over to Harry, then picked the boy up and hugged him tight. "Thank you Harry. Thank you," he whispered. Harry hugged him back. It was a few moments later before Harry's feet touched the ground. He straightened his clothes out, then looked at his dad.

"So, what do you need me for? I know some kind of energy tracer, but how can I help?"

The Doctor held out a hand for Jack's vortex manipulator. Jack handed it over. "I'm going to tune this into your energy wavelength, at your precise age. I need you to place your hand over it and channel your magic into your hand. Not into the manipulator, that would overpower the electronics, just your hand. I need to use the trace amounts to fix the signal."

Harry nodded, then placed his hand over the leather strap, frowning in concentration. His hand began to glow just a bit. The Doctor lifted the sonic screwdriver and started adjusting it rapidly, then releasing small bursts of sound and light. Harry felt his magic reacting and it sank into the base components of the manipulator. He sighed, letting his hand fall. His dad took the manipulator back, fiddling with it for a few more moments before handing it to Jack.

"Here, it's now attached to Harry's energy signature and programmed to leap about a month into his
Jack nodded. "Thanks Doctor, Harry, Rose." He looked at the faces of the people who had become his family. "Thank you."

There was a moment where the silence was palpable, then the Doctor jumped towards the stairs, waving his hands around.

"Alright, now that we're done with the emotional bit, let's go make sure Rowena's doing okay! Then off we go!" Harry followed his dad up the stairs.

Rose laughed, looking back at Jack and Salazar with a small, pleased smile. "I'll be waiting for your stories and adventures Jack," she said with a wink. Salazar flushed again as Jack chortled.

"We'll see Rosie."

~~~~This is an Ending~~~~
In Which there is Arthur, and a Kidnapping

Chapter Summary

Finally, Merlin is back. But, well, with Harry and the Doctor around, things can only get worse....

Chapter Notes

So...yeah. Real life invaded. And writer's block. This chapter sat at 5000 words for three months before I figured out where I was going with it.

I drew some inspiration from two Doctor Who novels I recently read, “Genocide” and “The Longest Day”, both in the 8th Doctor’s run. I recommend “genocide over “The Longest Day” if only because there aren't as many spelling errors. (Whoever was suppose to edit the second one failed at their job. Spectacularly).

Since there’s a ton of debate over Arthur, I just went with what I wanted to write with him. Yes, I've read Malory (the original, which was PAINFUL to get through in some places) as well as The actual supposed source, Geoffrey of Monmouth’s writings and a couple other middle english sources, along with plenty of fantasy books on either Merlin and/or Arthur. I just took pieces I liked and used them. Any inconsistencies with original myths are my own.

Anyway, you’ve waited long enough. Here’s the next chapter!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

~~~This is a Beginning~~~~

Harry was sitting in the garden when his dad found him, twirling a flower and staring at nothing, eyes unfocused. The Doctor eased down next to him, not saying a word. Harry knew he was there. The Doctor could wait him out.

There was silence for a few moments, then Harry turned and buried his face in the Doctor's jacket. There was a muffled sob, then Harry fell silent.

"It's alright Harry. Jack'll be back before you know it. Promise."

"I know, I know. It's just, he chose to stay there. For years. It might only be a little while here, for us, but he's leaving us for years." Harry looked up at his father. "Why would he do that?"

The Doctor sighed, hugged Harry to him. "Sometimes, people need to escape from something. Not you, never you Harry, don't worry. No, but Jack did something that he regrets and he's never really had time to just escape from it."
Harry frowned. "But he's living here. With us. He has for a while now. Isn't that a kind of escape?"

"In a way, but it doesn't help that I might be part of the reason for why Jack believes he had to do what he did. In a far corner of his mind, Jack probably still holds me somewhat responsible for not showing up to help. He might know it's irrational, but that doesn't mean he doesn't think it."

"I don't understand."

The Doctor smiled. "Alright, I might as well start at the beginning." The Doctor looked behind him, where Rose was hesitating at the door. "You can come in too, if you want."

Rose took the opportunity and walked over, sitting next to the Doctor and Harry, laying a hand on the Doctor's shoulder. Harry scooted over so he was sitting between the two. The Doctor laughed at Rose's astonished expression. "Hello Harry," she said, voice faint.

Harry grinned. "Hey Rose. Hope you don't mind."

"No. Not at all."

"Alright, now that we're all settled, story time. Sometime in the 1960's Earth time, the British government was contacted by a race of aliens they identified as the 456 because of the frequency they used to transmit the message. With a threat to the entire global populace at stake, they ordered Jack, currently working for Torchwood, to cave to their demands and bring them twelve children. The children were taken and never seen again." Harry's eyes went wide and Rose's hand covered her mouth.

"What for? Why did Jack do it?"

"If he hadn't someone else would have. He believed he had no other choice, and I'm sure by that time he had become somewhat jaded. If you live for too long, it happens. In any case, they didn't hear anything from the 456 after the children vanished, so they assumed the aliens had left and they were safe. Until they came again, in 2010. And this time, they demanded far more children, with similar consequences as before."

"How many?"

"From what Jack told me, a tenth of each country's total child population."

"Oh my god," Rose breathed, stunned.

"That's insane," Harry said, hands fisted in his shirt. "Doing that...it violates almost every galactic code the Shadow Proclamation."

"It seems that they didn't care. They were willing to follow up on the promise of mass extermination if the human governments didn't give in. Jack found out the hard way. His lover at the time paid the ultimate price in this discovery. Jack, to prevent the children from being given up, turned the frequency back on the 456, effectively killing them. But he had to send the frequency through a child."

"But, the amount of power that would require, the child, they wouldn't..."

The Doctor nodded grimly. "Indeed. The child didn't. But Jack didn't just use any child. He used his grandson. His daughter, well, I'm sure that didn't go over well. Jack left Earth on the next interstellar ship he could hop onto. I found him about three weeks after he had found a permanent seat at a bar. I'm sure he would have drunk himself to death if he could, but that doesn't work out well for him. So
he did the next best thing and tried to drink the memory away. Also not very effective. The bartender was grateful I took him, despite the fact that Jack could have paid for the entire bar. Good man."

Harry's eyes were stuck open, shocked. "So, uncle Jack, he, he had to kill his own grandson to protect the rest of the Earth's kids?" The Doctor nodded. "That, that sucks. I thought he had just had a really bad day when you brought him home."

"There was a reason I didn't want to tell you Harry. It isn't a pleasant thing. For Jack, now is his chance to take a break from it all, escape it, in essence."

Harry nodded, leaning back against the Doctor and Rose. "I think I understand." Harry grinned. "I bet Hogwarts will love him."

Rose shook her head. "If he knows what's good for him he won't cause too many problems. He may not be able to die but he doesn't have magic. And those founders are wily ones."

"Jack can take care of himself and you can gossip about it when he gets back." Harry and Rose looked at the Doctor. "Now, there's a few things that we need to go over Harry. Things that I now have access to on the Tardis."

Harry blinked, confused, then his face paled and he jumped to his feet and raced for the console room. Rose laughed.

"HARRY!"

~~~~~This is a Scene Break~~~

Harry was excited to see Merlin, though for a different reason from before. He had been taught some magical theory and even a few ways to manipulate his magic so it wasn't just blind will directing his energy. He was excited because he wanted to tell Merlin what he knew and everything else that had transpired at the Founders. Merlin had gone to school when the Founders were teaching, he might have known uncle Jack. He couldn't wait to ask him.

The Doctor knew how excited Harry was and, after a few days of making Harry sit and wait, mostly cramming enough temporal theory from books on the Tardis into Harry's brain that he wouldn't be trying to create anymore rifts in the near future, he gave in and programmed them to land near Camelot, or what was known as Camelot, and Merlin. Hopefully the Doctor got the dates right this time.

Rose accompanied Harry to the door, the Doctor right behind them, long jacket in hand. Harry had just cracked the door when he was greeted by a familiar, if older, face.

"Merlin!"

"Well hello there Harry. And not that far off, five years later. It seems you have fixed whatever you had incorrect before."

The Doctor poked his head out. "Ah, Emrys! Lovely seeing you. We made it then?"

"I dare say. Though you have a lovely young woman with you, but no Jack, I see. Though after remembering my Hogwarts days, I dare say I know why. He was ever the interesting party in potions." Merlin's eyes twinkled in amusement and Harry could guess what his uncle might have done. He rolled his eyes.

"Ah, so you do remember good old Jack. How was he doing?"
"Splendid, though, from what I understand, I arrived at Hogwarts within a year of you leaving, if the chaos you left behind is any indication. I wondered why I didn't remember before when I saw you, but time has some interesting effects." Merlin smiled at them all, then gestured. "You must meet my pupil, Prince Arthur. I believe you might get along famously, if you can temper his attitude."

Harry's eyes widened. "Prince Arthur?" he breathed. "Like the one in the legends?"

The Doctor laughed and Rose laid a hand on Harry's shoulder. "Those are stories later generations make up about him, but I bet he was still a great prince."

Harry grinned. "Sounds fantastic!" Then he raced off, bare feet slapping the ground.

Merlin chuckled. "Harry will do Arthur some good. The youngling will put him in his place, I am sure."

"Is Arthur really that much of a problem?" Rose asked.

Merlin shrugged. "I believe he was raised with some hitherto unseen notions as to his station. It has given him airs, though I don't doubt young Harry will be able to put him in his place, despite the five year age gap."

Rose grinned. "I'm sure. Now, is there anyplace we can bring the Doctor before he starts an in-depth analysis of the mortar via his tongue?" Rose asked, gesturing at the Doctor with her thumb. The Doctor was inspecting the walls, murmuring in a soft undertone and running his hands up and down it.

Merlin nodded. "I believe my accommodations will be large enough to suffice for the moment. If there is need, we can find an empty suite within the castle that should suit your needs."

Rose laughed. "Another castle. It seems we've fallen in love with them."

"Unfortunately this castle is not insulated against the cold, so it will be drafty at night. I haven't quite convinced the king to allow me to enchant the castle as such. He believes that one should tough it out. Though of course my chambers are kept quite warm." Blue eyes twinkled.


The Doctor wandered over, grinning. "Rose, did you know that this castle was built using stone from a quarry on the other side of the island! Amazing!"

"Do I want to know how you figured that out?" she asked.

The Doctor looked affronted. "There's nothing wrong with tasting something to test the composition. The tongue is far more sensitive than the fingers when it comes to detailed work on stone composites."

"Yes, I'm sure that's the reason why you must lick everything."

The Doctor opened his mouth to say something in his defense when Merlin stepped in. "Now now, let's get going. I'm sure Harry's managed to find Arthur and wherever Arthur and someone with strong opinions are is usually trouble. I'll show you to my quarters and then go sort out the disaster they have no doubt created."

~~~This is a Scene Break~~~~~
Harry had taken off without actually knowing anything about the castle he was now running through. Though castles couldn't be that different, could they? Hogwarts was a magical, sentient castle and he managed to find his way around there.

Though he supposed that might be because he was able to communicate with the castle. Here, well, he was wandering down empty, drafty corridors, searching for the elusive Prince Arthur.

Which was how he managed to run straight into someone, head bumping against their chest, without having seen them beforehand. With an exhale of air, he managed to keep his feet, which was better than the person he had run into, who fell to the ground, landing in what might be called a sprawling position.

Harry ran a hand through his hair sheepishly. "Er, sorry about that. Wasn't watching where I was going. Didn't see you." He looked over the person he had hit. Shortish blonde hair, blue eyes, a well muscled frame and finely crafted, if now rumpled, clothes on a boy he guessed was a bit older than him.

"You should pay more attention," was the haughty response.

Harry raised an eyebrow. And had an attitude. "Well, it takes two to crate an accident. Wasn't just me. You should have watched out as well."

"I don't need to watch out for people. That's their job."

"You won't get far in life with that attitude. Imagine if you walked around with a blindfold on your eyes for the rest of your life. Wouldn't see anything. How boring." Harry shrugged. "I'd rather see things."

"Anything important is shown to me. Why should I pay attention to anything else?"

"Because what's important differs by person. I knew someone who really liked pretty fabrics, but could care less about the food she ate. If someone didn't put it in front of her, she wouldn't eat at all. I would think that would be important. You can't always rely on someone to show you what's important. That's just stupid."

"Who are you calling stupid?" the boy roared, jumping to his feet, hand going to the sword at his waist.

Harry raised placating hands. "I was just pointing out that if you let other people see for you, you aren't doing a very good job of being a person."

"I'm the crown prince!"

"Arthur? You're Prince Arthur?" Harry looked the boy up and down again, now judging him more properly. "Well, you don't quite live up to the legends. I was hoping for some good old fashioned Earth style courtesy and maybe some sword swinging, but you're just rude."

The boy's eyes went wide. "Who are you to say such things to me! I'm the crown prince and...you, you aren't even wearing proper clothes! What is that, some fashion from the other side of the sea?"

Harry looked down at his attire. He had chosen to wear his favorite shiny green shirt and loose black pants that tied at the waist but didn't hamper his ability to move. "Well, they're comfortable. Why would I want to wear something that was uncomfortable? That just sounds silly." Harry gestured at the prince's clothing. "I mean, what you're wearing looks way too tight. How do you run in that?"
"Run in this? No, this is to show my status." The purple shirt was embroidered with delicate gold dragons rearing up on the shoulders. His trousers, 'breeches' Harry reminded himself, were black and tied at the waist and ankle and tight to his frame. His shoes were impractical soft soled, lacey things.

“That’s a silly way to show status. Anyone can wear fancy clothes.”

Arthur frowned. “These are specially designed for the royal family. Only our seamstress has the patterns for the Pendragon crest.”

Harry rolled his eyes. “Anyone who looked at that long enough could copy it without much problem. Especially with magic. Then what?”

Harry could tell the question had stumped him and grinned. Arthur glared. “How old are you anyway, talking like this? You aren’t noble but you know enough about magic. I mean, you look little but you can’t be that much younger than me.”

Harry shrugged. "I think I'm eight. Most likely."

"Really? Eight? But that...that’s four years younger than me!"

"So? At least I’m not a brat."

"Why do you insist on calling me that? You don’t have the status or the age."

Harry shrugged. "So what? Your status doesn't exempt you from being a brat."

"Just who are you? You never told me you name."

"Oh, I'm Harry, nice to meet you. My dad and Rose are here too, probably with Merlin. He's gonna teach me."

The prince blinked. "Merlin? Merlin's teaching you too?"

"Yep. Do you have magic? I didn't think Prince Arthur had magic"

"No, I don't have magic, he's just teaching me, well, I think he's trying to make me a better ruler. Though he's a weird teacher. Makes me do all these weird tasks that don't seem to do anything. It's frustrating. I'm supposed to be learning how to rule a country not counting the number of toads in the nearest pond and collecting toadstools."

Harry laughed. "Sounds like he's trying to teach you important lessons. Besides, what's so bad about toads?"

"They're boring!"

"You sound like a joy. Well, anyway, let's see. You can keep wearing that, but I bet it'll be more interesting to wear more comfortable clothes. And we can go down to the market. You have to have a market at a castle like this!"

"Well, yeah, but it's usually busy. I can't go down without an entourage."

"You don't walk like a prince. Put a hat on, some plain clothes and no one will know the difference. And I want to see the market."

"In bare feet?"
"So what? I don't like shoes."

"You're weird Harry. Are you like Merlin, with magic and all?"

Harry nodded. "Yep! And he's supposed to teach me too, so I guess I might be counting frogs with you soon enough."

"Wow, that would be weird. Well, I guess. I mean, if I don't look like the prince I guess it can't really be a problem. Come on, I can change in my chambers."

Arthur gestured for Harry to follow him and they walked down flagstone halls and up a few flights of stairs before Arthur opened wooden doors into a modest sized stone room and went for a chest. He rifled through it for a minute, talking to Harry in the meantime. "So, aren't you sorta young to be learning magic?"

"Well, normally, but I've got too much magic, so they want to make sure I don't do something dangerous with it. Some control is better than none."

Arthur nodded. "Yeah. It's the same with swords. If you can't use it properly, then you shouldn't have one. But I guess you can't just take magic away."

"No, it doesn't work like that. You have to learn how it works so you don't hurt anyone."

"Alright. Now, do these work then?" Arthur turned, holding up a white shirt with a dragon emblazoned on the corner.

"No. No signs of your rank. Completely plain."

Arthur sighed. "How did you get so bossy at such a young age?"

"Genius? What does that mean?"

"Oh, right. Well, it means someone who is really smart. Beyond the ordinary level of intelligence. Merlin is a genius, and you'll meet my dad soon, who is probably the most genius genius."

"He taught me everything I know."

Arthur nodded. "So, are you a genius?"

Harry's eyes went wide. "Oh, no, no. I mean, not that I know. Can't outsmart my dad unless I use magic, and that's only 'cause he doesn't have any. But he's the one who solves all the problems."

"Well, that isn't really a fair testing ground. If your dad's such a "genius genius" then you wouldn't know if you were a genius would you?" Arthur pulled out a tannish shirt from the bottom of his chest, holding it up for Harry's inspecting eye. "This work?"

"Perfect. And tro--breeches that are plain too. And plain shoes. Nothing fancy, Arthur. I bet none of your people have seen you without fancy clothing so they wouldn't know you without it."

Arthur sighed, knowing the truth in those words was probably another slight against his character. His dad would never be able to do this without being seen as the king. He wondered what that said about him.
“Don’t forget about a hat, Arthur. I bet people only know you for a prince cause of your hair. it’s rather shiny.”

Arthur groaned but did go and dig up an old hat. “You are rather annoying.”

“I’ve heard similar things.” Harry grinned. “

“Whatever you think about it, no eight year old I’ve ever met is as smart as you.”

“Just get dressed Arthur. I wanna go see the market.”

“It’s probably not nearly as interesting as you seem to think it is.”

“Just get dressed.”

Arthur struggled into old training clothes he wasn't aware he still had until his perusal of the bottom of his chest before he led Harry out of his rooms and down winding sets of stairs. Harry, the little magic user that had, in under a candlemark, called him a brat, ignored his station, and was getting him to go down to the castle market without an escort. If he didn’t know better, he would have said Harry used magic on him but Harry didn’t really know magic. Merlin was going to teach him. It was still odd. How did an eight year old manage to get him to do anything?

"Arthur? Arthur?" the prince heard Harry’s voice filtering through his thoughts. A hand was latched onto his shirt, stopping his forward momentum. “You’re about to run into the wall. Are you okay?”

Arthur blinked. Sure enough, less than a foot in front of him, was a wall, the archway he was aiming for a good foot to the left. “Oh, uh, thanks Harry. I wasn’t…” Arthur trailed off at Harry’s grin, both amused and scary. “Are you okay?”

“Perfect! So, are we heading down to the market or what?”

Arthur gave Harry another once over, before he threw the archway and down the last flight of steps to the exit. “It’s this way.”

~~~~~This is a Scene Break~~~~~

“Alright, so where would Arthur be?” Rose asked, having made use of the chamber pot in the corner of the room Merlin had shown them to.

Merlin furrowed his brow. “According to the ward I have on the castle, Arthur isn’t inside it anymore. Which is strange, because his personal guards are.”

“You can do that?” the Doctor said, standing up from his inspection of the ground. “Tell where everyone in the castle is?”

Merlin smiled. “As long as I’ve tied everyone’s basic aura into the ward. I use it mostly for the King, Prince Arthur, and their personal staff. It helps me figure out where they are and what’s going on. I have a special ward set for important visiting dignitaries and other magic users. Which reminds me, Harry isn’t in the castle either.”

Rose frowned. “Where could they be?”

“Oh, knowing Harry he’s managed to rope your pupil into grand adventures of some sort and we will hear the panicked screams in about half an hour.”

“You use odd words, though I gather that it shouldn’t be hard to find them soon enough.”
Rose sighed. “Harry is well known to cause chaos wherever he goes. I’m sure you saw the results of some of his haphazard creations while you were at Hogwarts. Namely Rowena’s chambers.”

Merlin’s eyes went wide, then he nodded absently. “Yes, I do remember that particular room. Rowena no longer occupied it by the time I was at Hogwarts and it was off limits to students under 17 or in her specific courses. I snuck in once, I was an impulsive child, and spent the better part of a year rapidly de-aging or aging. I believe Jack found some amusement in the situation that Professor Rowena did not find. I never did get the story though.”

Rose laughed. “Trust Harry to cause problems long after he’s left.” She looked at the Doctor. “We could probably blame that on you though, Doctor. Your penchant for causing mayhem is almost unparalleled.”

The Doctor looked affronted. “Almost? I’ll have you know that I named an entire galaxy Alison and nearly caused it to implode on the same day.”

“Yes, but I have yet to see you manage to start a Time Shift, disrupt the gravity field of an entire base on a dead planet, or break into and rewrite the security files from the highest form of government the universe as a whole will ever see into, what was it, badly written fan-stories from the galactic nebula’s intergalactic network hub?”

“Those are juvenile pranks I will not be associated with,” was the haughty response. “Harry’s blunders were those of someone who had limited knowledge and access to magic.”

Rose laughed, hands pressed to her mouth to stifle the noise. Merlin raised bushy eyebrows. “I see I shall have a most peculiar student. Though I should have known, remembering him as a young toddler.”

The Doctor furrowed his brow. "Well, until we run into Harry one way or the other, we're gonna have to search for him. On foot, it seems. So if he's not in the castle, I would bet he's run off to see whatever entertainment is around, or shopping. For a child, he really likes shopping. I don't know why, it really isn't that interesting. Just stuff, lots of stuff, laying on shelves and waiting for someone to spend currency on them." The Doctor frowned. "But he does enjoy it. So...market, where's the market?" His finger pointed at Merlin.

Merlin laughed. "This will be fun!" The wizard adjusted his clothing, settling a cloak on his back, before grabbing a stave sitting by the door. "It is..."

Muffled shouts of panic and anger filtered in through the window. "I take it that the market is that way?" Rose guessed, pointed out the window and towards the source of the noise.

Merlin frowned. "Indeed, which is concerning."

The Doctor waved his hands. "Harry's in the vicinity. I would be more worried if we didn't hear screaming."

"Strange way to see it."

"You get used to it after a while. Like father like son." Rose shrugged. "Lead the way?"

Merlin nodded and they swept out of the room, heading towards the shouting.

~~~~~This is a Scene Break~~~~~

Arthur led Harry out of the central courtyard, trying to keep his head low so as not to attract the
attention of the surrounding guards. That was last thing he wanted, an entourage. The idea of being able to do what he wanted on his own had always been a source of desire for him. He was either confined to the castle or accompanied by one or more knights when he left, so this escape was one that he was now relishing in.

And it seemed that Harry’s clothing idea was working. With his blonde hair hidden under a hat and clothes no prince would ever be seen in off the training field, Arthur was as invisible as the stable boy.

Harry...was not so. Rather, the small, black haired menace was wide eyed and talking a mile a minute about everything. The guards would look at him curiously, passers-by would point and whisper, and Harry was perfectly oblivious to it.

“I’ve been inside castles before, you know. I mean, Hogwarts is a castle to, and there was this castle on a cliff that was pretty awesome, and dad says he’s gonna take me to the Tower of London when it was still being used for a castle, but those are the only castles on Earth I’ve been too. Though in Japan there are these really magnificent temples and royal palaces that you could compare to castles, and in India they have some magnificent palaces! In AD7890 Australia’s whole desert is terraformed into an oasis and they build a kilometers high tower that reaches almost to the edge of breathable atmosphere and you can see the Local Inter-System Hub from there. It’s also supposed to be the platform for the best sky diving this side of the Galactic Universal Divide. I haven’t convinced dad yet that I should try it. He keeps saying I need to wait until I’m older and my body can handle it.”

Harry pouted at this thought. Arthur wondered what Australia was and how one could skydive. It sounded dangerous.

“What is sky diving Harry?” he asked, venturing to satiate his curiosity.

Harry grinned, delighted. “It’s the coolest thing ever! Aside from Anti-gravity games and teleporting tricks, that is. But skydiving is going to the highest point you can, you usually use something that can bring you several thousand meters into the sky, and then you jump out of it. You have something to slow you down so you don’t hit the ground too hard. When you release it, it fills with air so you glide to the ground, like a leaf.”

“I can see why your dad doesn’t want you to do it until you’re older. It sounds dangerous. Why would you want to jump out of a flying machine? Isn’t it really cool to be flying already?”

“Well, yeah, but when you fall from so high up, it’s fantastic.” Harry grinned, jumping on the balls of his feet as he walked.

Arthur shook his head. The whole idea sounded insane to him. He had seen people fall off the highest tower and die hitting the ground. It never looked pretty. Going any farther up and doing it on purpose sounded like insanity.

The entrance to the lower part of the castle grounds was just ahead, and Arthur walked out without anyone the wiser. Harry waved cheerily to the guards, who raised bemused eyebrows at the boy. Arthur shook his head. Harry was odd.

“Look ‘thur there’s the market!” Harry bounced, pointing at the stalls just ahead. They lined the sides of the streets, selling fabrics, spices, foods, and nik-naks.

“Yeah. It’s the biggest for leagues around. We’re known for having the best trade between the northern part of the kingdom and the southern.” Harry dashed off, wanting to rifle through whatever he could. Arthur wondered if he had money to pay for it, his clothing didn’t appear to have any place for a coin pouch, but was shocked when Harry dipped his hand into his pants and pulled out a
handful of small, round coins.

Then he furrowed his brow. “thur, need some help here.” Arthur frowned at the mispronunciation of his name again and was about to correct him when he stopped, realizing why Harry had said it wrong. With a smile, he headed over to what he realized was a sweets stand.

“What’s wrong Harry?”

Harry held out his palm, which was filled with an assortment of small, various shaped objects. “I don’t know which one’s your kind of currency. I mean, not these, these are from Frugalin 7V/Apple, these are pounds from late British currency, and I think this is from a colony on Mars.” Arthur watched as the little, round, icicle-colored balls were returned to a pocket, alongside some deep red triangles and hefty silver and gold coins. What were left were still an odd mixture of shapes.

“Well, I don’t know what this is,” Arthur said, pointing at the green snowflake things. “And this is definitely not money like I know it. Now this.” Harry took away the purple squares and crumpled white paper balls. What was left was an assortment of semi-normal looking coins. “I think this is gold, right?”

Harry picked up the aforementioned coin and peered at it closely before he licked it. “Yeah, gold. I think it’s from a meteor in the Kupier Belt, but it’s gold.”

“Judging by the size and weight, it should be able to buy you whatever you need here. The stall owner would know better how much it’s worth.”

Harry grinned, shoving the rest of the strange currency in his pocket. “Thanks ‘Thur.” Then he turned around and presented the gold coin to the woman. “Here. What can I get with this?”

When the coin dropped into her hand, the woman’s eyes went wide. “This...this is solid gold. At least a season’s worth of merchandise! I can’t accept this from you! It’s too much!”

Harry frowned. “Really? But, it’s money here, right? I mean, I can use it. I just want a couple of those sweet cakes and a few fruits. Is it not enough?”

Arthur laid a hand on his shoulder. “I think she means it’s too much, Harry. She doesn’t have enough money to pay you back.”

“Really? Well, in that case, you can keep whatever’s left. I just wanted some sweets,” Harry said, smiling.

The woman looked shocked, surprise in her dark blue eyes. “Really? Are you sure?”

Harry waved a hand. “It’s fine. The mines in the Kupier belt last a millenia. Did you know that by AD5000 gold is so common that there are entire buildings made of solid gold? They have to keep it cool there, otherwise the whole thing would melt, but it’s really shiny.”

Arthur blinked. “You’re joking. There is no such thing.”

“Not yet. At least, not in this quadrant of the galaxy.” Harry shrugged. Arthur decided that he was insane and anything he said was to be ignored. Magic, he decided, did strange things to someone’s mind.

Harry was given as many sweets as he wanted, and when he had taken the five or so he had originally chosen, the woman tried to give him more. Harry waved her off. “Nah, can’t eat more than this. My digestion can’t handle anymore honey than the small amount in these pastries. I’m using the
phytochemicals in the fruits to help my metabolism and digestion. It balances out the glucose intake. Unlike my father, I am not good with sweets. Love them, I just have to be careful with what I eat.”

“I didn’t understand half the words you just used,” Arthur said as they walked away from the sweets vendor.

Harry blinked, then sighed. “I sometimes forget when I am. We don’t end up in a time so underdeveloped as often as you would think.”

Arthur was trying to figure out if that was an insult or not when shouts and screams came from up ahead. Before he could even react, Harry had dashed off in that direction.

“HARRY! YOU DON’T EVEN KNOW WHAT’S UP THERE!” Arthur groped for his sword, but when his hand fumbled in empty air he cursed. He didn’t have a weapon and, as far as he knew, neither did Harry. Where were the gate guards? What was the screaming? Well, he wasn’t going to find out standing around like an idiot so he booked it after his new friend.

Despite the significant height difference he had on Harry, he was hard pressed to find the small boy in the crowd of increasingly curious and panicked people. Some were trying to flee while others were trying to get closer. It made finding a small child rather difficult.

That is, until he heard Harry’s voice ring out over the crowd, indignant but as forceful as his father could be.

“I’m fairly certain that this is the 10th century of Earth’s history and it’s currently classified as a level 2 planet. Maybe level 1. On which laser technology is nowhere to be found. Which begs the question as to where you managed to get your hands on it. Judging by your appearance, you’re a band of knights, though your armor is mesh nanotubes rather than steal and I think those horses are mechanical, lovely design, which indicates a rather high technology level. Somewhere in the 7 or 8 range. Which means you really don’t belong on this planet.” Arthur pushed his way through the last few people between him and Harry’s voice and came to a stuttering halt.

Harry, tiny little Harry, was standing in front of a group of six horsed knights all carrying what appeared to be swords, though they looked nothing like any sword he had ever seen. Their armor was a dark grey, much darker than anything he had encountered, and the horses were pitch black, with black eyes and manes. It was unsettling to look at them. “Harry,” he said, “what’s going on here?”

Harry spun to look at him. “Ah, Arthur, there you are. I was wondering where you had wandered off to. I was just trying to figure out who these rather intrusive and unfriendly people are. Human, humanoid, machine, something else? They are wonderfully silent.” Harry gestured at the riders. “Not much for conversation.”

Arthur boggled. “Wha...huh?”

“For a prince you’re rather slow. Look around. They did a number on your market place when they entered and they even scattered the entertainers. I was looking forward to the entertainers.”

Arthur blinked, then looked around himself. Stalls were cut cleanly in half, charred black and smoldering. People were huddling behind buildings and in doorways, wanting to see what was going on but not willing to get injured in the process. Only Harry and Arthur had dared remain so close to the intruders. “Where are the guards?” Arthur asked in an undertone.

Harry grimaced. “I’ve been afraid to contemplate that. If the main gate guards aren’t here, we can
only assume the worst has happened. I hope they’ve just been knocked unconscious.” Harry turned back to the knights. Were they even knights? Arthur didn’t know anymore. “What happened to the armed guards at the front gates? You had to have passed through them to get here, I don’t see any kind of anti-gravity technology included in your fancy kit, though you never know, those hooves could be packed with tons of it.” Harry scrutinized the horses feet. “Hmmm...”

“Arthur Pendragon, son of Uther Pendragon and Ygraine, sibling to Morgan le Fay, Morgana, pupil of Merlin Emrys Mryddin, Once and Future King of Albion, we have come for you.”

Harry looked between the knights and Arthur, eyebrow raised, before he sighed. “Unfortunately, you can’t have him. Sorry. He’s sorta important to history. Timelines to preserve and all. I mean, can’t just go snatching historical figures whenever you want. For one, my dad would get all sorts of angry. That isn’t fun to see.”

“Arthur, you are important. More than as the heir to the throne of Camelot. There is much of history riding on you. There are all sorts of people in the universe who would love to see you vanish right out of that history.” Harry’s eyes were serious. Arthur gulped. Just who was Harry?

“We have come for Arthur Pendragon. The Child of Time is not our purpose. Hand over Arthur Pendragon.”

“Oi, hold on. What do you mean, Child of Time?”

“You. You are the Child of Time. Are you not the child of the sentient being known as the Tardis?” Harry blinked, nonplussed. “We require Arthur Pendragon, Child of Time.”

“Well...Well, you can’t have him!” Harry spluttered, trying to gather the scattered composure he had previously carried so well.

“This is not your decision. You have no power to stop us. You carry no significant technological devices on you, we have scanned.”

Arthur watched this back and forth, uncertain. Something the weird knights had said threw Harry off his game. The boy was unbalanced and Arthur didn’t know what to do about it.

He didn’t have to worry too much longer. Another voice rang out above the hush of the crowd.

“Ah, well, hello there. Lovely seeing you. Android creations, wow. Bit anachronistic, aren’t you? Tad out of your time?” Arthur watched Harry’s panicked expression melt into one of confidence, relief, and relaxation. So that voice was Harry’s dad.

“Um, Harry’s dad, we’re over here.” Arthur spun to see a tall, spiky haired man in a long brown cape with sleeves and strange breeches stride over in red and white shoes. Behind him was a young woman with dark blond hair and...Merlin. Arthur gulped. Uh-oh.

“Ah, hello. You must be Arthur Pendragon! Thought we would find you wherever Harry was. Glad we were right. I’m the Doctor, also known as Harry’s dad. Either works. Now then, let’s sort out these androids.”

“Um, Doctor? They called Harry something weird.” The Doctor looked down at him, eyebrows raised. “They called him the Child of Time or something.” The Doctor went rigid, eyes flashing. “If
that helps?"

"It does," the Doctor murmured. "It most certainly does. Well then, at least I know the origin of these androids."

"You do?" the pretty woman asked.

"Oh yes. There aren’t many beings in the universe who actually know about Harry, about who he is. And among those, well, what he is isn’t well known either. But there is one race or other that would love to get their hands on him."

Arthur frowned. "But, they didn’t want him, they want me."

The Doctor paused at this, scrutinizing Arthur closely. He peered at him, looked him up and down, circled him once, tapping his chin. Harry rolled his eyes, mouthing ‘be patient’ at Arthur. Rose was smiling while Merlin looked perplexed. After a few moments, the Doctor turned to the knights.

"Him, you want him? I mean, yeah, he’s important. It would be near impossible for Britain to evolve the way it did without him, and magic would, well, we’ll leave that speculation for another time. But he’s not temporally relevant. Stays linear his whole life. Nothing Temporally schismatic about this human."

Arthur felt like he should be insulted but he couldn’t quite figure out why.

"Doctor, may I inquire as to what is going on?" Merlin stepped forward, staff planted firmly in front of him as he stood behind his charge.

Harry tilted his head. "Me too dad. How do they know me?"

"Well, I mean, could that wait until after the androids with laser swords leave?"

"I don’t think they plan on leaving without Arthur," Rose pointed out, still watching the six horsed knights. "In fact, if I’m not mistaken, they didn’t look too happy with you showing up." She frowned. "Or, you, I think," she turned, pointing at Merlin.

"We are not concerned with Bad Wolf or The Oncoming Storm or Merlin Emrys. We seek Arthur Pendragon. Give us the Next and Future King." The androids’ voices weren’t trying for humanoid qualities anymore.

The Doctor, however, was having none of it. He paced the ground between himself and the knights. "Alright, I get that, but what for? I mean, look at you all, you are definitely not Earth-made, well, not from this time, I would think. And you could only get those names from a handful of sources left alive, none of which have any significant time travel technology. So you’re stolen tech, which I get, make use of what you have. But without even doing a basic reprogramming of your memory circuits? Were you just pulled out of a scrap heap?"

Harry tugged on his dad’s jacket, looking behind him with an urgent look on his face. "Uh, dad, I think we’re about to have a problem of similar magnitude here in just a moment." The Doctor blinked down at his son. "Arthur’s dad is coming. I can see the penitents flying."

The Doctor groaned. "Oh, that’s not good. That’s very very not good. How did he manage to find out?"

"Did you really think that the prince could just vanish from the castle without someone noticing?" Rose asked.
“Well, before all this happened, I would say yes. Which is what I’m here for. But on top of the commotion, I’m sure he sent for Arthur and panicked when he couldn’t be found.” Merlin gestured to the general population surrounding them in mixtures of confusion and fear. Most had backed away now and were huddling by buildings and near walls. “And upon not finding Arthur or I within the castle, well, taking a regiment of guards towards the marketplace where the noise was coming from isn’t exactly unreasonable. Though maybe lacking a bit of foresight. He could have sent knights instead of coming himself.”

Rose sighed. “Now we have to play politics as well as all this mess.” Rose gathered her wits. “I’ll deal with the king, you handle the knightbots.” The Doctor made to protest, but Rose gave him a sharp look. “I have had over a century of experience running the largest pre-space international government-affiliated program on Earth with fewer international incident than you manage to get into in a week. I’m sure I can handle a worried king better than you can at the moment. So go deal with the knightbots and leave the politicking to me.”

The Doctor stood, gaping, while Rose turned and headed towards the approaching group. Harry laughed. “She sure told you dad,” he snorted.

Merlin grinned. “Remarkable woman,” he said.

Arthur wasn’t sure what to think, but that was quickly sorted when he felt a hard hand close around his shoulder. One of the knights had managed to get a grasp of him while no one was paying attention. It was a painful, crushing sort of grasp that Arthur was sure could turn his shoulder into mashed potatoes if it so wished. He stayed very still.

“Um...Harry’s dad...Doctor? Um, I think I might be in trouble...” Arthur stammered out, relieved to see the tall, skinny man turn towards him, wide brown eyes narrowing.

“Alright now, stop that. You cannot take Arthur Pendragon. He is a fulcrum of history. A point that, if it so much as wavers, changes the future of humanity. Let him go!”

For all of the Doctor’s words, the android knight thing wasn’t releasing him.

“We will take Arthur Pendragon with us. You are no longer required.” Swords began to raise, and the Doctor pulled out a cylindrical object with a glowing blue top. It looked like a small fire of some kind, but Arthur knew the Doctor didn’t have magic, Harry had said so.

“Oi, now, nothing funny otherwise, well,” he brandished the silver fire holder with one hand.

“That is...a sonic device. What do you intend to do with that?”

The Doctor shrugged. “Ah, well, I could do this.” He pressed the button on the side and the blue light glowed. The knights shook their swords after a few moments, then realised that they weren’t going to work before they abandoned them.

“You interfered with the command relay and disabled the interface protocols. You may have spare this town but Arthur Pendragon is still ours.”

“Oh, I don’t think so,” the Doctor started, but he didn’t get another word in edgewise and Arthur was lifted up in a strong grip and the world began to fall away from him. Rapidly. He felt his stomach drop to his feet.

“Arthur! Arthur! Don’t worry, we’ll come get you!” Harry was shouting at him and Arthur could just barely make out the words. His body was rigid and he was being held up by an enormous strength. How, he wasn’t sure. It wasn’t human strength holding him up, not with his feet dangling in
the air. He was flying as well, which he hadn’t believed possible. Sure, when Merlin had been
annoyed he had taken a trip up to the ceiling, but never higher than that. Now he was sure he was
higher than the highest castle turret and rising higher still.

He sincerely hoped his captors didn’t let him fall.

~~~This is a Scene Break~~~~

“I demand to know what is going on!”

The situation, Harry thought, couldn’t possibly get any worse. Arthur had been taken by androids
dressed up as knights, after being out of the castle on Harry’s insistence, and now King Uther was
down here, making a fuss and no doubt demanding to know why his son was out of the castle in the
first place.

Uther didn’t even know who Harry was. This was not going to make things pretty. At all.

“Sir, if you could just calm down, please,” Rose was trying to placate him, standing between the
king and the clearing Arthur had just been taken from.

“I want to know what happened! What happened to my son, why was he out here without a guard,
who are you people?” The king’s voice kept rising.

Merlin finally stepped forward, hands raised in a calming gesture. “Sire, these are friends of mine. I
invited them into the castle. The child is a magic user and will be looking to me for tutelage. The tall
man is his father and the girl is their friend. The Doctor will be able to explain what he can when we
return to the castle. Right now, this area is unsafe and needs to be cleaned up. Your guards can stay
and assist. Also, some should go check the front gate, to see what has befallen the gate guards.”

Uther blinked, looked around him, at the destruction that had taken place, then taking in each of the
newcomers with suspicious eyes. Harry stood next to his father, resolute.

Soon, the guards had been dispatched to assist in the clean up and Harry, the Doctor, and Rose were
heading up to the castle.

“Harry, what were you doing with Arthur outside the castle walls?” his dad asked him n a whisper as
they followed Merlin and Uther.

Harry fidgeted. “Um, well, I wanted to see the market and I didn’t really want to go with a whole
regiment so I convinced Arthur to wear clothes that didn’t make him stand out. I mean, no one
recognized him so it wasn’t a big deal. And Arthur agreed with it so, well,” Harry trailed off and his
dad sighed.

“Alright, alright. This will be fun,” the Doctor said in a tone that definitely didn’t say fun.

“What were those things? I mean, they called me something strange, and they weren’t human. What
did they want with Arthur?”

“I can’t answer all of that right now Harry, but I will. Soon.”

They walked in silence the rest of the way up to the castle.

Silence followed them all the way into the throne room, where Uther dismissed his guards and turned
to face the three strangers.
“Alright, I would like answers now. I would have sent riders after my son immediately if he hadn’t been...taken in such a strange manner. Merlin says you, Doctor, may have some answers. I would appreciate hearing them. And why my son was down in the market without an escort.” Uther was every inch the king at the moment, blazing eyes and regal posture. It made Harry slightly nervous, especially since it was essentially his fault Arthur had been where he was.

“Um, sire?” Harry said, stepping forward and gathering what courage he could. Normally he wouldn’t have any issues speaking to whichever ruler of whatever territory he was in, but Arthur had been his friend and this was his father. It put a different spin on things.

Uther blinked, looked down at the boy who had stepped forward. “Yes? And you are?”

“Harry, sire. Um, Merlin’s gonna be teaching me, when he can, after this is over, but I know why Arthur was down in the market.”

“Well, tell us, please,” Uther gestured around.

Harry sighed. “It was my fault. I wanted to see the market and I convinced Arthur that if he didn’t dress like a prince he wouldn’t look like one. He wore a hat and everything. Didn’t look like a prince, so we weren’t stopped heading through the gates.”

Uther was still for a moment. Then he couldn’t help the grin that stole over his features for a second. “So, you’re saying a boy younger than Arthur convinced him to not look like a prince? Aside from the preposterousness of the whole situation, that is interesting. And no one recognized him?”

Harry shook his head. “No one could see his hair, and he wasn’t dressed up, so he didn’t look like a prince.”

Uther nodded, though he didn’t look any less perplexed. “Well, that is partly Arthur’s fault. I understand, though why he listened to a boy several years his junior is curious. So we know why he was in the market. What happened down there? Merlin?”

Merlin shrugged, helpless. “It wasn’t magical in nature, I checked. I thought their flight was aided by magic but there were no signs of it. And there was some kind of force preventing me from using my magic to bring Arthur back to the castle.”

The Doctor sighed. “I was afraid you would say that.”

Merlin shrugged, helpless. “It wasn’t magical in nature, I checked. I thought their flight was aided by magic but there were no signs of it. And there was some kind of force preventing me from using my magic to bring Arthur back to the castle.”

The Doctor sighed. “I was afraid you would say that.”

Uther looked at him. “And who are you? Merlin informs me that you are the young boy’s father. You have raised a rambunctious young one. But you also appear to have knowledge of what occurred.”

The Doctor spread his hands out. “I’m the Doctor, and yes, I am Harry’s father. Those knights weren’t human, they were androids. Specifically Draconian in nature, most likely. They could also be Verixi, Kersphrish, or Yevalkytvn. Not sure exactly, all those races had sufficient technology and a grudge against humanity at one time or another. Though only Draconians and Kersphrish had contact with Gallifrey, but maybe I haven’t met them yet, so that’s where they got that information, and it could be completely possible that they come from my future timeline, in which case there is a lot I could influence now that I don’t know yet, and also...” the Doctor started rambling.

“Doctor, the main point?” Rose interjected quickly, hoping to hold off the tide of musings. The Doctor looked at her, startled, then nodded.

“Yes, yes, well, their origin isn’t really important at the moment, seeing as how they weren’t operating under any of their previous command signals. Really, considering who else was present,
taking Arthur was a pale shade of the possibilities.” The Doctor saw the king’s face transform into one of confused irritation. “Well, Arthur is important here, in this time. But Merlin was also there, and he is probably the most powerful magic user to have been born on Earth.” The Doctor sent a smile towards the aforementioned wizard, who just nodded, keeping his face bland. “And then Rose and myself were present, though taking either of us is just asking for trouble. But what gets me is why Harry wasn’t their target. Not that I’m not immensely grateful that Harry is safe and not kidnapped, but the value he holds in the time continuum is, well, there isn’t really a measure on it.”

Harry clenched his fists. He had heard his dad talk about what he was supposed to become, but it was rarely so blatant. “Dad…” he started.

“Why is that, Doctor?” Uther asked, “Why is Harry so much more important?” The king’s voice was tight in controlled anger.

Rose stepped forward, raising a diplomatic hand to forestall anything the Doctor might have said in reply that would have ended with more problems than they currently had. “Alright, let’s deal with what problems we have now. Arthur’s been kidnapped by androids that have been stolen and repurposed. We need to figure out where he is, who ordered the kidnapping, and how we can get him back. So let’s start there, yes?” Her voice was calm and cool.

Merlin also stepped forth. “I tracked the enchantment on Arthur towards the west for about a hundred leagues before I lost it. We can assume he has been brought further than my range extends. We can start that direction and I can try to pick up the enchantment again, though I doubt it. It was a ranged one, and now that it is too far from my magic, it can’t replenish itself. It will likely expire before sundown.” Merlin sighed. “I wish I had taken more precautions, but I didn’t expect him to stray that far from the castle’s stronghold without my presence.”

Uther nodded. “Thank you, Merlin. We at least have a direction. I shall organize a search party. We can send out the best knights…”

“Um, excuse me? Well, your knights are brilliant and all, but these are androids.”

“I don’t know what those are,” Uther finally admitted, sighing. “Are they magic, knights from a distant land? Why wouldn’t my knights be effective against them?”

“No, they aren’t magic. That might make things easier, to be honest. They are robots...fake humans. they are made up of moving metal parts. they are stronger and faster than humans, they have weapons that can defeat a human knight with a single swing.” The Doctor waved his hands around. “Human knights wouldn’t stand a chance.”

“So what do you propose we do?” Uther asked, wondering why he was still listening to the raving man in front of him. The blonde woman was tolerable, smart even. Harry, the boy, while strange, at least knew how to act in the presence of a king. This man, he held no respect, awe, or humbleness, even standing right in front of the king. He was sorely tempted to have his guards throw the man out. But then he would never get his son back. He could tell that much.

“Um, dad? I think I might have something that may help.” Harry had been waiting for an opportunity to present it to his dad. He had found the object the moment he stepped into the throne room. His hands had been fidgeting in his pockets when a small, strangely colored spherical object tumbled out of a fold in his waistband. He bet to pick it up, curious at the odd golden/orange sheen it let off. But then his father launched into detailed explanations and Harry hadn’t found the right moment to intercede. Or at least stop the tirade.

The Doctor, Rose, Merlin and Uther all looked at Harry. “What is it Harry?” the Doctor asked.
Harry held out his hand. “I found it in my clothes. It isn’t money, none that I have on me, I know all of those. But I don’t know where it came from. If I had had it earlier, it would have fallen out before. I was standing the closest to those androids, so I figured it may have come from them. It hasn’t done anything yet, so I’m not sure what it is.” Harry stepped forward, handing over the small seed.

The Doctor looked at it, examining it closely, turning it over in his hand, smelling it. “I know this. I’ve seen something like this before. Where have I seen it before, where have I seen it before, come on brain, work...” The Doctor paced the room, muttering to himself. Rose sent a wry glance at Harry, who shrugged.

Merlin moved closer to Harry. “Is this normal?” he asked in an undertone.

“WHen dad can’t figure something out, he paces, a lot. Having to cycle through centuries worth of memories doesn’t make remembering specific details easy.”

Merlin blinked. “I...see,” he said, sounding like he didn’t.

Rose grinned. “You’ll get used to it. Just give him a bit. He’ll remember. If he hasn’t already, it must have been quite a while ago. It doesn’t usually take this long to remember something.”

The Doctor was, in fact, trying to recall just where he had seen the small object he now held. Not in this regeneration, and he didn’t think it was in big ears time either, so it must have been before then? That was...disconcerting. He hadn’t expected to search that far back. But he almost had it. It was...it was....

“Ah-ha! This is, oh, this is not good. Definitely not good. I hadn’t expected this at all.”

Uther restrained the urge to throw the enigmatic man out himself. “What is it? Will it help us find my son?” Arthur. Arthur had been taken hours ago. Panic was beginning to set in.

“Maybe. But this isn’t good at all.” The Doctor stared at the sphere with trepidation. “Very not good.”

“Doctor,” Rose interrupted. “What, exactly, is very not good?”

“This! This seed!”

“That’s a seed?” Harry asked, puzzled. “But...it’s sorta glow-y and shiny.”

“Yes, well, its a seed from a Time Tree, which explains, I think, why the android knights are here. Though that doesn’t help me narrow down how it got here precisely.”

“What is a Time Tree?” Uther asked, a note of disbelief in his voice.

“Oh, well, they originated on the planet Hirath, not sure what time. The temporal instability there made it impossible to get any sort of proper reading. Thanos System. Didn’t have a lot of run-ins in that particular system, they were much to hit-the-non-believers-with-laser-guns type for me, but they do have a history on Earth.” The Doctor peered down at the seed. “it’s harmless in this state, no metal-rich soil for it to grow in, but if it came from those androids, then they must be near a Time Tree, which doesn’t bode well for anyone.”

Merlin tried to process the information. It seemed incredible, but he also had figured out that one didn’t doubt the Doctor. He and his blue box and impossible son were just the start of the mystery, and not the important part. “I must ask, what does this time tree do that makes it so dangerous?” he said.
The Doctor beamed at him. “Well, on their own they can’t really do much-”

“But I thought you said they were on a temporally unstable planet?” Harry interjected.

“They weren’t causing the instability. That was a space-time prob sent by a race unimaginatively named the Kruks. Two of them, actually, and they crashed on Hirath and started leaking temporal pollution, destabilizing the planet. Might have been what caused the trees in the first place...hmmm, that’s an interesting thought...” the Doctor trailed off, frowning.

“No time for that Doctor, the point?” Merlin prodded.

“Ah, yes, the point. Well, a time tree is a life-for that, when you pull its berries, you can be transported back anywhere from a few minutes to thousands of years. It’s not very reliable. Aa race called Tractites used it. They sent a reconnaissance first, but he ended up in the 20th century, while his comrades ended up thousands of years in Earth’s past. They were trying to...oh, well, there’s an idea.” The Doctor stopped, eyes widening.

Uther leaned forward. “Will it help me find my son?”

“It just might. The Tractites, when I originally faced them, oh, some centuries ago, they had fle their homeworld. the 1st Human Empire had invaded their planet for resources and enslaved the people, then killed almost all of them. A small group fled, found a time tree, and went into Earth’s past to erase humans from history. They failed, but this might be another one of their reconnaissances. Though that doesn’t explain the androids...”

Uther had grown tired of this musing. “I am sending out a group of knights to find my son. You can join them Doctor, as long as you are not a hinderance.” Uther looked at Rose. “I would suggest you stay here, but I can see from your face that this will not be. I must request, then, you allow Merlin to place a protective spell on you?” Rose smiled at Uther, then nodded her head, acquiescing to the request. “Thank you. Merlin, you will come with us as well?”

“Yes, sire.”

“I’m coming too!” Harry piped up.

his dad shot him a look. “Harry...”

“I agree with your father, young Harry. It is dangerous for a child...”

“Arthur is my friend, and it’s my fault he was down in the market in the first place. And if you don’t let me come with you, I’m just going to follow you.”

Rose laughed. “Oh, yes, I can see it now.”

The Doctor turned betrayed eyes to Rose. “You aren’t supposed to side with him’ he whined.

Rose humphed. “You obviously don’t know your own son, Doctor. The moment we were out of the gate, Harry would be right there, horse saddled and everything. We wouldn’t make it ten miles without him catching up and then it would be pointless to send him back. Might as well let him come from the start. Then you’ll know where he is.”

The Doctor groaned. “Fine, fine, but Harry, no wandering off. At all. Understand?”

Harry nodded.
Uther watched this with amusing, trading a smile with Merlin. “Alright, Merlin will show you to the stables. We ride in a candle’s mark.”

“You are coming as well, sire?” Merlin asked.

Uther nodded. “Of course. He is my son.”

“I would recommend against it, but I can see that won’t be happening. I shall lay a speel on you as well. I would offer the same for Harry, but it wouldn’t have any effect, I’m afraid. It would wear off too quickly.” He tilted his head, tapping his chin in thought. “Though I believe that will be your first lesson, young one.”

Harry grinned, ecstatic. Magic lessons and a rescue mission. This day was turning out interesting.

~~~~~~This is an Ending~~~~~~

Chapter End Notes

And there you go! To everyone who has reviewed, thank you! If I haven’t gotten back to you yet, I will, probably within minutes of posting this. If I can’t reply back to you, Thank you so much for your support! It means so much to me! It guilts me into writing when I have writer’s block, so I at least stare at the page trying to figure out what to write next. >,
In Which a Rescue Happens

Chapter Summary

Arthur needs rescuing. Harry, the Doctor, Rose, and Merlin are off to do the job. With some magical amusements along the way.

Chapter Notes

I….AM….ALIVE!!!!

Alright, I probably had a reasonable excuse for not having this chapter up in July, but it’s November now and my excuses are about as flimsy as tissue paper soaked in hydrochloric acid.

So I shall leave the author’s note here, apologize profusely, and just get on with the chapter.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

~~~This is a Beginning~~~~

Uther organized the rescue party in record time. It had taken a number of his personal guards to convince him that he should stay behind and keep the city safe. They couldn’t afford to lose both the heir to the throne and the king on the same day. Uther grumbled his way through half-hearted threats at the Doctor to bring his son back alive before he whirled around and headed towards the castle.

Merlin looked at his King’s retreating back with sympathy. "Uther is very protective of Arthur, for all the freedoms the boy receives. His wife's death hit him hard and he wasn't quite prepared to raise a child. Igraine was the more grounded of the two. Arthur has always been a bit of an uncooperative child. I can only hope that he has kept a level head on his shoulders." Merlin looked at the Doctor, eyes drawn and concerned. "Do you know for sure why these beings took Arthur?"

The Doctor shook his head. "There are a few possibilities, none of which are very comforting. The Time Tree seed means that any number of beings could have come here from your future, and Earth has its share of enemies. Many know the history of the planet better than most who live on it. It wouldn’t be hard to pinpoint Arthur as a turning point in Earth's history and a galvanizing force who united much of a disparate Europe under one banner and set a precedent for future rulers. By removing him from the equation, the future of Earth could look very different."

"You have high opinions of such a young, headstrong boy," Merlin commented.

Rose grinned. "You should see what role you play in the legends, Merlin," she said.

Merlin's eyes widened. "Please don't tell me, I shudder to know my fate."
"But, you're the most powerful magic user! How could you not want to know?" Harry asked.

"One day, you too shall know why I do not want to know the future of my life. There is a kind of power in that knowledge I do not wish upon anyone. How you can travel so freely through time, I do not know. It is a strange thing, knowing the future of a place you are visiting, knowing that every person you meet is dead in a time you just left, or not yet born. There is a queer uncomfortable feeling, knowing you have knowledge of everyone's future here. I don't know how you deal with it.

There was silence filled with the rustle of tack and horses moving about.

Harry stood off to the side as the groomsmen and horse handlers got everything ready, pondering what Merlin had said. He had never known another kind of life. It was the lot of people to live and die, making their impact where they could, ruling, serving, fighting, helping. He lived travelling between events, hopping from one person's rule over a large kingdom to the largest war in the universe to the funeral of a prominent writer his dad loved. He saw these events so they could be witnessed and not forgotten, so they could be cherished or reviled. He didn't know how to live in one place. He didn't remember much of his life before his dad adopted him.

He tugged on Rose's shirt as she passed by him to pick up another pack. "Rose? What's it like, to live in one timeline? I can't really ask dad cause he's almost always lived in the Tardis, but you grew up in London in the late years of C.E. 1900, right? And then again in the alternate universe. You lived there for a really long time."

Rose stared down at Harry, the Doctor's son. His wide green eyes were imploring her for an answer to something she hadn't really thought to quantify. She had only traveled with the Doctor for maybe three years. A bit longer possibly. And nothing like what Harry did. Harry didn't know anything but the Tardis. He had grown up in the fantastical environment she had stumbled upon when she was 19. He took for granted what she had delighted in discovering.

She cast her mind back to the Tardis as it had been when she had first walked aboard it. Amazing in its impossibility. Fantastic in its depths. Wonderful in its design. Stepping out the door into something new each time. How she felt whenever she woke up knowing that there would be a new adventure outside that blue door.

Alright, maybe not the best comparison. She took a deep breath. "Well, I slept in the same bed every day, woke up and ate breakfast in the same kitchen, took a shower in the same bathroom, and hugged my mom every morning as a child. There was the same couch in the living room for years and even in Pete's world, I kept a lot of the same furniture my mom had after she died."

Harry nodded, frowning. "Well, I have the same room cause the Tardis likes knowing I'm comfortable, and there are only a couple different kitchens and the library is mostly the same."

"The Tardis is your home, Harry. I suppose the main difference is that your front door opens to much different places than mine. Mine opened onto the same walkway every day. I had the sun where as you have the Tardis to wake you. A home is a home, Harry, no matter where or when it is. You just have a much more fantastical home than most people do." She smiled as Harry nodded. "Alright. I'm going to help finish loading up the horses. Let me know if you have any questions. We'll have plenty of time on the ride."

Harry grinned. "Thanks Rose!"

"You're welcome Harry. Now, come help me with these. We should get on the road before noon hits so we can get some distance before night falls."
Harry trotted after Rose, helping her with the remaining packs before approaching the horses.

"Wow, they're so big up close," Harry whispered.

Rose giggled. "Have you never seen a horse?"

"Well, not a proper Earth horse, no. There are a few species that are horse-like, but they're the rulers of a large empire so not really the same thing. Pictures and vids don't do them justice."

"So this will be your first time riding one," Rose commented. "I'll tell you now, they are very very bumpy rides if you've never done it before."

Harry grinned. "Fun!" Rose shook her head. "Dad! I get to ride a horse!" Harry called over to the Doctor.

His dad looked at him. "Well, let's make sure you don't fall off too many times, yeah?" his dad yelled back. Harry nodded, before gripping what part of the saddle he could reach and hauling himself up.

Well, sort of. He got stuck partially up and hung awkwardly in place, his horse was, fortunately, a very patient animal who merely flicked an ear back and neighed. It helped that Harry was a rather light package.

Rose giggled at Harry's predicament. He was so tiny that his lopsided attempt at getting into the saddle barely budged the saddle and he hung there for a moment, an awkward insect clinging to the animal. Then she took pity on him and boosted him up into saddle, adjusting straps to make sure they fit and wouldn't come loose when they started moving. Harry looked around, eyes wide.

"Everything's so much smaller up here!" he said beaming. Rose smiled. "I mean, I know it's just perspective, but still. It's amazing!"

"Are you sure he should be riding by himself? If he's never been on a horse before we can't be sure he'll be able to keep up," one of the knights pointed out.

Harry turned to look at him. "Sir...whatever. I am perfectly capable of learning whatever I must to ride on my own. I am small enough that we can also use my horse to carry extra weight without burdening another horse. If it takes longer than we expect, we should need it. Also, I need to practice my magic. Doing so in another's saddle would be uncomfortable to both of us. I shall manage."

The knight looked him up and down, scrutinizing him. "Well, you've got the right attitude. Just don't expect anyone to patch you up when you fall off her. At least, none of the knights. My men are better served as guards than child-keepers."

"How old do you think I am, Sir Knight?" Harry asked, his voice tight, unsure whether he was being made fun of or not.

"Old enough to have a mouth my mother would be appalled at," he answered with a grin. "I like you boy. Keep an eye on us knights and you should pick up a thing or two about sitting a horse. It's more than sitting in a saddle."

"I've read about it," Harry admitted. "Never ridden a horse in real life but I know the theory. My name's Harry, by the way."

The knight laughed. "It'll be an experience. And your name's been bandied down the ranks."

"What's your name, sir knight?" Harry inquired.
"I am Paskal of Camelot. Grew up on a horse. Just remember, your aren't heavy enough to have as much control as is ideal. Use the reigns, though Marigold is a placid, well-trained horse used to children. Got her name from her first owner, a young girl in a noble family. Marigold will pay more attention to the surroundings than you will at first, so listen to her, and she'll follow the group's lead as well, so you shouldn't have too much trouble keeping up with us. Most of it is going to be balance. Keep your back straight." Paskal looked around. "We have a bit of time before we need to set off. Let's get you used to the saddle and Marigold here."

Harry blinked, then grinned, nodding. "Sure. What do you want me to do?"

Paskal pointed at a fence at the far side of the field they had been making ready in. "See that? Walk Marigold over there, stop, turn her around, and come back. It'll give me a good eye for what you have an instinct for."

Harry looked at the fence. "Okay." He gathered the reins and tapped Marigold's sides with his heels. His horse flicked an ear back at him, amused, but docily started in the direction Harry had started to direct her toward. It was harder than he thought, tugging gently at the reigns to let her know where they were heading.

"Harry, don't pull the reins too much. They hurt her mouth if you do. Gentle pull and light pressure from your foot on her side. There you go. Now, stop her. Pull the reins back together, gently. Not hard. Yes. Turn her all the way around. Sit up straight, we don't want you falling out of the saddle just yet. Alright, trot. Click you tongue, tap your heels a couple time on her side, yes, there you go....woops." Paskal started laughing.

Harry had followed his instructions well, but the moment he had eased Marigold into a trot that first upward movement of the saddle sent him slipping sideways out of the saddle and onto the ground. He glared up at the knight who was helping him. "Oh, be quiet. It's my first time."

"Sorry little one. It's hard not to chuckle. Everyone falls out of the saddle, it's more a matter of when than if. Glad we found out now, though, and not heading out the gate. Alright, trot. Click you tongue, tap your heels a couple time on her side, yes, there you go....woops." Paskal started laughing.

"Alright, back in the saddle. Try that trot again. There you go. Find the rhythm. Ride with the horse."

Harry grinned at him. "Not bad. Paskal's pretty awesome. Though falling off hurts more than I thought it would. Horses are taller than I thought they would be." Harry looked at the ground, a good four or five feet away.
"Well, at least I don't have to worry about you falling off too often while we ride. It seems like our good knight put you through a good run." The Doctor looked at his son closely. "Don't worry, we'll get Arthur back in one piece."

Harry sighed. "And here I thought I was hiding my worry." He looked at his dad with a wry grin. "It's just, he wouldn't have been there at all if I hadn't persuaded him to come down with me. I just feel a bit at fault. I know they would have gotten to him in any case, but it would have been harder and Merlin or you could have stopped him first." Harry shrugged.

The Doctor reached out to clasp Harry's shoulder. "Just remember, he'll be fine. Merlin can trace him and we'll do everything we can to make sure he doesn't get hurt. And Arthur's a strong kid. He'll keep a solid head on his shoulder."

~~~~~This is a Scene Break~~~~~

The boy in question was currently enjoying the feeling of soft ground under his feet. After his strange and terrifying flight, he never wanted to experience it again.

The strange knights who had taken him never spoke again. When they landed, Arthur got a look at their surroundings. An abandoned castle. Not that old, but undoubtedly empty of inhabitants. Well, except for the knights who had locked him into a room on the fourth floor. A room whose only windows were narrow and impossible to climb out of. He couldn't even fit his head into it. He sighed. Well, so much for escaping that way, though he wondered what he would have done if he had been able to get out. It wasn't like there was anything in the room to help him scale the side of the castle.

He leaned his head against the stone wall next to the tiny window, hoping the Merlin would find him soon. He didn't know why he had been taken, where he was, who had taken him, but he didn't know if he wanted to find out. He didn't think they had taken him just for their amusement. And that scared him. He had been raised surrounded by plots, hearing about planned assassinations, treachery, all manner of different things that would be expected in a large kingdom. He now felt like he was at the center of one of these and might never see the light of day except through the slits in the wall.

The door swung open, slamming into the wall, and Arthur jumped, turning around. Then he blinked, rubbed his eyes, looked again.

The thing standing in the doorway was not human. Not remotely human. It looked more like a horse, some manner of horse, though not that either. It was black completely black, with long arms that bent strangely. It’s eyes, four of them, stared at Arthur, and Arthur stepped backward quickly, trying to
find someway to make himself smaller. Though the thing was huge, taller than most of his horses by half.

“Arthur Pendragon. I expected you to be twelve feet tall and glowing from the way the legends paint you.” The being’s voice was deep and with a strange accent. It didn’t move into the room.

“How...how do you know who I am?” Arthur asked. There were probably more important questions but that was all Arthur could think about. How did this thing know who he was?

“All of history knows who you are. Your name heralds the coming of the Empire, it built the foundations upon which the human race created itself. It united a disparate race into the empire that formed the basis of a universal power. You are the beginning of it all, and without you, the human race may never reach its potential.” The thing, being, whatever, spoke without inflection, though Arthur wasn’t sure if that’s just how they spoke.

“But...but I’m just a kid. I’ve never done anything that you said. Nothing! How can I? I don’t know what that means anyway.”

The being tilted its head. “That may be, but that doesn’t mean you can be forgiven for the crimes your existence perpetuates.”

“What do you mean? What are you?” Arthur yelled as the being started to close the door. It looked back at him, blinking its eyes slowly.

“I am part of a race that no longer exists. Your future progeny saw to that.” Then the door shut firmly behind him, and he heard the sound of the lock being slid into place. He wasn’t going anywhere in the near future.

He slid down the wall, looked up at the stone ceiling. Just what did that mean, he was a herald of an empire? He bet Harry would know. But Harry wasn’t here, and he was as alone as one could get.

~~~~~This is a Scene Break~~~~~~

They had slowed down into a walk to rest the horses when Harry managed to get Merlin to start teaching him. Well, sort of.
“Alright. I would normally say start by finding your magic, but since you already found it, the next part would be consciously willing it to do something. Yes, I remember your little lights from before, but I’m sure that most of the magic you do is based on your moods rather than any kind of control. Magic is finicky child, you need control.” Merlin looked around, then grabbed a leaf of a low hanging branch as they passed. “Start with this. It will give you a physical object to focus on. I want you to make this leaf hover just above your horse’s mane.”

Harry took the leaf, eyes narrowing. “Really, just...make it float?”

Merlin raised an eyebrow. “Is that too difficult? I can choose something less complicated.”

Harry quickly shook his head. “No, no, just, it sounds so easy…”

Merlin covered a smile. “Well, try it first, then tell me.”

Harry took the leaf and reached for his magic. It wasn’t hard, and the energy came to him with nary a hesitation. The leaf was soon hovering in the air. Then Harry passed it and whirled his head around to look for it. He frowned, beckoned, and the leaf floated over to him. He pointed, firmly, where he wanted the leaf to go, and it seemed to slink back to its appointed spot.

After a few more tries to get it right, the leaf was floating just above Marigold’s mane and Harry was grinning. “That was fun.”

Merlin had watched the whole affair with an amused smile on his face. Harry was certainly not the most conventional of magic users. “Now that you’ve figured out how to direct your magic, we’re going to try and use a light charm. It creates a small orb of light. One would normally use a wand or a staff to do this, but I imagine that you may never really need a wand. In any case, this spell uses latin as its base and is a spoke spell, though eventually you may be able to not say the word at all. The word is ‘Lux’, meaning…”

“Light, or shine, or a number of synonymous words. Are you really telling me that most spells are just direct words from Latin?”

“No, many use Celtic tongues or Greek, some take their root from French and I have heard tell that spells in the Eastern parts of the world use languages that are native there. Many times, the words are a focus. For longer rituals or complex spells, the words provide a grounding force for the magic. It is
the meanings of the words that are important. I am sure you could say “Light” and have a light, but there is power in older tongues. English is still a newer tongue. It doesn’t have as much impact on magic is Latin or Celtic.”

Harry frowned, thinking this over. “So, the words are important in so much as their symbolic meaning to the person. With words like light, float, come, leave, stay and the like, they’re pretty easy to just visualize since they have similar meanings to everyone. But with other words, like morph or transform, or rituals, they have to be word-specific because people have different ideas of what they mean and to direct the energies properly without words would require a great deal of focus most people don’t have. I don’t get the languages thing though. Why should it matter? There are millions of languages across the universe, why does it have to be older Earth languages? If you really wanted to go old languages, you have to go back before humans had multi-syllabics and used a mixture of primitive sounds and gestures to communicate. Or the whistling languages, which are rather melodic. I should try it with those when I learn how. But really, Latin? Celtic? Greek? They’re all fairly new on this planet....” Harry sighed, waving a hand around. “Must be some strange tradition. I’ll do some research on it later.”

Merlin had listened to the boy’s dissection with mild amazement which turned into confusion. He looked at Rose, who rode nearby.

Rose laughed. “He’s the Doctor’s son. It’s only expected. Between the two of them, I’m sure they could have an intense, multi-day discussion as to why magic users use latin and still not come to an agreement on the source, then they would go travel to the source and argue with them. I’ve watched it happen once with the Doctor. I’m sure his son isn’t that much different.”

Merlin shook his head. “I don’t think I’m going to teach Harry many things, if he can deduce so much from a small lesson.”

“Don’t sell yourself short, Merlin. Harry here still needs to know a lot. Just because he’s smarter than most his age doesn’t mean he doesn’t need to learn things. Take it a few steps at a time. Harry loves learning. I’ve watched him devour books in a day just to find some small fact.” Rose smiled at the man. “He’s also still eight and likely to do whatever you tell him to.”

“Thank you, Rose. I shall abide by your words.” Merlin turned to look at Harry, wondering if the lad had heard the conversation.

He hadn’t judging by the frown of concentration on his face. The leaf was still hovering where Harry had set it before and the boy himself appeared to not be aware of the world around him. Merlin cleared his throat. “Harry.” The boy remained motionless. “Harry, are you paying attention? Harry? HARRY!”
Harry had drifted off into his own world for a few moments, and only the shout of his name roused him out of his thoughts. “Huh? Oh, Merlin. Where were we?”

Rose laughed.

Up ahead with the knights leading the party, the Doctor was engaged in a spirited discussion about the merit of finding one’s way by using the stars and how humans came to look so avidly up at the night sky in the first place.

Most of the knights had decided to studiously ignore the Doctor by falling back or heading forward, leaving only a couple new knights to listen to his wandering thoughts on the bright lights in the night sky.

“You know, you humans have been looking up at the stars for millennia! Finding patterns, giving them meaning, drawing pictures and charts and mystical concepts about them since you could pick up a charcoal stick. Half your planet’s religions come from the stars and their are others are derived from those. It’s really quite fascinating. To be honest, a good number of the stars you see in the sky have already burnt out, hundred of years ago, but light can only travel a certain distance in accordance with the laws of generally accepted physics, though there are a number of ways around that. For instance…” the Doctor paused, looked around, then sighed. “I suppose this doesn’t mean very much to you, does it?” he asked the two young knights still riding near him.

One shook his head. “I’m not too sure what you’re talking about anymore, sir.”

“We said we can use the stars to make our way home in case Lord Merlin were lost to us, and you started on about religions and laws and I was lost,” the second young knight said.

The Doctor sighed again. “Well, it can’t be helped. I’ll just teach you about stars then.”

The two knights exchanged wide eyed looks, but were saved from having to find out what that meant when Rose pulled her horse up next to theirs. “I hope he hasn’t been too much of a problem.”

The first knight, dark haired and eyed, blushed and shook his head. “No Lady, not at all. He was telling us about the stars.”
Rose raised an eyebrow, looked at the Doctor. “Really now.”

“They started it,” the Doctor said.

“You sound younger than your son, Doctor. Now, ride with me a while. I was watching Harry and I think you might enjoy the lessons as well.”

The Doctor perked up at that, then dropped back to listen in on Merlin’s tutelage. The two young knights heaved a sigh of relief.

“Alright Harry. Light shouldn’t be a hard thing to conjure. It is a physical manifestation of your magic, so rather than enacting a change on another thing, you are forcing it to act upon itself. The strength of the spell is inherent in your control over your magic.” Merlin raised his hand. “Like so. Lux.” A small orb or white light popped into existence, hovering over his hand. “You can place the light anywhere. It is your magic, in essence, so it listens directly to you. It’s one of the simplest but most best spells for young mages to practice. Speaking the words is best at first, especially for one with as much power as you have. It acts as a focus for the raw magic.”

Harry nodded, then lifted a hand. “Lux,” he said firmly, pooling his magic in his palm and impressing the idea of light into it.

The resulting flash of white light blinded him, Merlin, and Rose. The Doctor had figured something like this would happen the moment he heard “physical manifestation of your magic” and had looked away when Harry started to concentrate.

“Well, I think the problem here is too much magic, Merlin, wouldn’t you say?” the Doctor said, grinning as he turned back to look at his son, Rose, and Merlin. Then pulled his horse up short. “You alright Harry?”

Harry glared up from the ground, having fallen out of his saddle after the flash of light blinded him. “Shut up dad….whichever one you are….” Harry glared between a few different spots. “It was a mistake.”

The knights had stopped as well, hiding snickers or not bothering. Harry groaned, climbed to his feet and dusted himself off.
“Well, I suppose we’ll have to try another approach,” Merlin mused. “Back in the saddle, Harry. We don’t really have that much time to lose.”

Harry found a log to stand on to remount, glaring at his father. “If you knew that would happen, why didn’t you tell me?” he grumbled, pulling himself into the saddle.

The Doctor grinned. “Well, I figured you would have more fun this way.”

“Yes, I love falling out of the saddle and blinding myself.”

Merlin looked at the Doctor. “How did you know?”

“Well, you said that creating light was a physical representation of ones magical energy. In most people, their magical energy is either too controlled to produce any more light than they want, or too undeveloped to create much more than a flicker or a small glow. With training, one tempers it. Harry here, with his absolutely absurd pool of magical energy and absolutely no control, would undoubtedly have a scale of magnitude larger reaction.”

Rose laughed, still trying to get the spots out of her vision. “You could have warned us anyway,” she said, chuckling.

“Where’s the fun in that?”

Merlin sighed. “Well, I supposed light spells are out of the question for now. I suppose we will concentrate on cultivating control. With that amount of energy and a lack of control, I can see you being a nightmare for any teacher you may have in the future.”

Harry slumped in his saddle. He supposed all the fun spells were now off his ‘to learn’ list.

The group made good headway until the light started disappearing. Merlin offered to light the way for them but Rose made the call.

“Alright, while I’m sure Merlin could provide enough light to get us safely through the trees, I am not sleeping in the saddle. I would also like Harry to get some sleep as well. The knights, while I’m
sure all of them would protest, could do with some rest. We’ll stop in the next clearing and decide how we’re going to go about this from there.”

No more than ten minutes later they found a clearing, a well used one in the stacks of wood off to one side and an obvious fire pit were anything to go by. They dismounted and the knights started to unsaddle the horses and brush them down. Rose walked down the line and checked for bugs, ticks, and stones.

“Where’d you learn how to do that?” the Doctor asked, peering over her shoulder.

“Oh, here and there. I took a few years leave and ran away from cities. Lived in the mountains of Mongolia for a while. Some of the herdsmen taught me about animals. I managed the basics of it all well enough, but most of their kids could ride circles around me, so I stuck to taking care of them.” Rose pinched and pulled a tick out of one of the horse’s coats. “Animals don’t much care who you are so long as you treat them right, so it was nice to get away from the curious looks of my coworkers.”

“That’s where you learned how to ride as well?”

“Mostly. I knew how already, but there is an art to it that I picked up.” Rose glanced at the Doctor, looked over his shoulder, frowned. “Should Harry really be following the knights into the forest?”

The Doctor looked over to his son. “Harry, stay in the clearing for now, alright? We’ve got one missing child, let’s not make it two.”

Harry turned wide green eyes on his dad. “Come on dad!”

“It’s already getting too dark to see. The knights can take care of themselves. It’s wolves or bears I’m worried about, or any other number of creature.” The Doctor raised his eyebrows and Harry slumped, sighed, and headed back towards the circle where Sir Paskal was lighting tinder and setting some wood to blaze.

“Alright, the knights and I will take shifts on watch while you all get some sleep after dinner. There’s some rations in the packs. Any of you know how to cook? Cause if not, you’re getting knights fare and all we’re good for is burning water or burning bread.”
Rose sighed. “I guess I’ll be doing the cooking. Let me see what you have.” She climbed to her feet and followed the knight to his packs. “Better then the Doctor giving it a go and blowing up the pot. Harry’s probably not much better then him.”

Harry stuck his tongue out at Rose’s back before helping his dad set up the sleeping rolls. It wasn’t too cold out and the sky was clear (Merlin said he sensed no rain coming in) so they weren’t putting up any covering. Which was nice. Harry liked to stare up at the stars.

“Dad?” Harry looked over his shoulder.

The Doctor turned, looking at his son from over his glasses. “Yes Harry?”

“I was wondering, who did you take me from? When I was a baby? I don’t really remember much. We’ve been going over magic all afternoon and I wondered if my birth parents had the same problems as I did, or what happened to make me that way.”

The Doctor turned around completely, a soft smile on his face. “Well, I suppose now’s a good time as any to tell you about them. Not much else to do until tomorrow. You’re old enough to ask the question, you must be old enough to hear the answer.” Rose walked over, a pot in hand. Inside were carrots, onions, potatoes, a couple apples, a round of cheese, a flagon of wine and a small box. “Ah, is that dinner?”

“Eventually. Apparently it’s Friday and they don’t eat meat on Fridays. Looked appalled that I even asked.” Rose rolled her eyes. “So it’ll be vegetable soup whenever I get done with it. Though they have a supply of spices so at least there’s that.” She looked between Harry and the Doctor, noted the curiosity in Harry’s face. “Something interesting being discussed?”

“Oh, Harry was asking about the people I took him from, his parents. He’s decided to ask, I can answer.”

“I remember him telling me his parents were killed,” Rose said, pulling a knife from within the pot.

Harry nodded. “Yeah, dad told me that much after I woke up from a nightmare once. I was little, so I don’t quite remember, but I don’t suppose it’s something you completely forget either.”

“Ah I see. Well, don’t let me interrupt you. You mind if I listen? If not, I can go somewhere else to prep.”
Harry waved a hand. “Nah, you’re fine. It’s more of an interest than something personally important.” He looked at his father.

The Doctor smiled. “Well, I suppose I should tell you that their names were James and Lily, and they loved you very much. So much so that your mother’s death helped fuel some magic that protected you from the man that killed her. His name is Voldemort…”

Harry snorted. “Wow, really? Mangled French?”

The Doctor shrugged. “It’s less important that he had a predilection for ruining other languages and more important that he was a terrorist, of sorts. From what I learned, he was a student or a follower of another evil wizard who helped fuel the second world war on Earth in the mid 1900’s. He was an orphan, raised in difficult circumstances, and hungry for power. When he got it, he used it to terrorize a good portion of the United Kingdom right before you were born. He was afraid of dying, and he did whatever he could to stay alive, seeking immortality. A prophecy…”

This time it was Rose interrupting. “A prophecy? Those are real too?”

The Doctor shrugged. “I feel like they’re a possibility of the future as glimpsed by those sensitive to time energy. Not a set in solid future, and not very clear. But to those that hear them, especially from Harry’s birth era, they were seen as absolute truth, so more often than not they became self-fulfilling. Rather than act as a warning for danger, they were acted upon as if fact. Which led to the situation Harry’s parents found themselves in. James and Lily were part of an organization that fought against Voldemort. He attacked them, acting on what he knew of the prophecy, and killed James and Lily, marking Harry.” He gestured to Harry’s forehead.

Harry flipped his hair up, going cross-eyed as he tried to see the faint lightning bolt scar he knew was there. “Ah, so that’s where this is from. Some magic he used.”

“Indeed. Though I haven’t managed to figure out what he did, I did scan you not long after you came onto the Tardis. There’s something else there, concealed within that scar. I blocked it off so it didn’t have access to your mind, but we’ll have to deal with it soon.”

Rose blinked. “So, Harry’s parents were like freedom fighters?”

The Doctor grinned. “Yeah, something like that. After they were killed, the headmaster of their
school and the leader of their organization took Harry to his office. They had some kind of contingency for Harry, but it fell apart. You were supposed to live with relatives, but they were killed in a motor accident in London. Everyone else was devastated by the fighting and the loss of loved ones and couldn’t care for you. Dumbledore, that’s his name, the headmaster, contacted me. I met him once before, before I met you Rose, and he struck me as a very fascinating individual. Since electronics don’t work very well with magic, or conventional ones don’t, ones native to your time, Rose, I gave him what amounted to a beacon. Press it, I can latch onto the signal.”

Harry listened with rapt attention. “So, the headmaster just handed me over to someone he didn’t know? I mean, I’m not complaining, you’re my dad, but what if you weren’t you? What if it was someone else?”

Rose nodded. “He’s far more trusting than one would think. I mean, I watched you changes bodies and didn’t trust you. He never even saw that and still gave you a child.”

“Gave might not be the best word, but I never regretting taking Harry. But you’ll come to find that those who practice magic tend to take a lot of things at face value. I think he believes I’m a very powerful wizard who doesn’t care for destruction and can alter reality at a snap of my fingers.”

Harry snorted. “The universe would be doomed if you had magic, dad. You do enough damage with just technology.”

“I can just see it now. Entire planets turned into banana farms, any weapon now a banana. It would be…” Rose shook her head. “There aren’t words for it.”

Merlin, finished setting up his bedroll, came over to join them. “So what are we talking about?”

Harry grinned. “How my dad got me. Apparently magic people in Earth’s future are entirely too trustworthy. The headmaster, I’m guessing of Hogwarts or another magic school of the era, gave me to my dad without even knowing who he was.”

Merlin blinked, frowned. “Really now? That was most irresponsible of him. Where were your parents?”

Harry shrugged. “They were killed by an evil wizard terrorist person. I’m sure I’ll learn more at some point, but I’m not even allowed to visit near my birth time stream. Too close to events or something. I’ve never been to the late 20th century or early 21st of Earth’s history, except to Torchwood and
then I’m not even allowed to leave the base. I wonder how Arthur could deal with being surrounded all the time. I’m just lucky the Tardis is huge and I can escape to wherever I want, so long as I haven’t upset her recently.”

The Doctor grinned. “I’m sure that you’ll have plenty of time to spend wandering around the late 20th century soon enough.”

Rose raised an eyebrow, dropping the rest of the vegetables she had cut up into the pot and sitting it over the fire, waiting for it to boil. “What do you mean?”

Harry waved a hand absently. “I’m supposed to go to Hogwarts or some such when I’m eleven, have to stick to the timestream and all that. Don’t see why, seeing as how I’ve heard better things about Diagon57 in the late 50th century.”

“You’re going to be going to Hogwarts, Harry. I’m sure we can discuss this in depth later. And I’ll take all complaints then too. Though I will say that we can stop off on Diagon57 sometime soon. Not a bad place to introduce you to magical culture and it’ll be the first time I’ll be able to actually get onto the planet,” the Doctor grumbled the last part.

“You mean you can’t even get onto the planet?” Rose exclaimed, stirring in some of the herbs.

“Well, not really. They’ve got some kind of force field that recognizes whether you or someone on your ship has magic in their blood. Family of a magical is welcomed, though they have to come with the magical or be given special permission prior to coming. Apparently I’m not magical enough. Never been able to set so much as a sneaker on the planet before. Or done much more than glimpse it from high orbit.” He shot a look at Merlin that seemed to be at once amused and disgruntled. “You magicals and your strangely placed paranoia. It’s not often that I can’t get somewhere. With Harry on board it shouldn’t be a problem though. He’s so full of magic he can’t perform a light spell without blinding everyone in the vicinity.”

Harry glared at him. “Thanks dad. I love to be reminded of my failures.” Harry shifted. “Will I be able to do anything besides simple movement spells? I mean, I know how to move things, I’ve been doing it longer than I can remember.”

“Yes, I know. I saw your amazing display before. But while I’m sure you could do just about anything you put your mind to, can you do it when you don’t really need to? Can you do something because you want to, or because someone asks you? Magic is a wondrous and amazing thing, but while it is a part of you, it isn’t as easy as using your eyes, or ears. It is another kind of sense, but is more like walking or cooking. Some are better than others, but in the end, everyone has to learn the
basics, learn to walk before they run. There are many branches of magic as well, such as potions, warding, enchantments, runes, rituals. These require something more than just an abundance of magic.” Merlin smiled at Harry. “There is plenty for you to learn, you just have to make time for it.”

Harry grinned. “Well, at least I know there’s a ton more out there then just what I heard from Rowena and Sal and Helga and Godric. Never afraid of study, me.”

“So, Merlin, I was under the impression that you have a tracking spell of sorts on Arthur. How does that work?”

Merlin straightened. “It is an enchantment, to be more precise. It is similar to a pointing spell, though it works at much farther ranges than a simple pointing or tracking charm and lasts for a good deal longer. Mine last about a week before they start to fade, which is twice as long as the conventional one lasts.” He frowned and worried the hem of his robes. “Though it has a range on it, I was sure that Arthur would never be that far from me. It is quite a long ways away, especially since I lost track of him mere hours after he was taken. He definitely was taken this direction, though I am hoping we find him in the next five days. The enchantment will wear off by then. If I get within range of Arthur before the enchantment wears off, I will be able to follow it to his location. Assuming no one has removed the charm.”

“Ah, yes. Well, I am sure that whoever took Arthur has neither the means nor the capability to do such a thing. In fact, I’m fairly certain they don’t believe in magic.” The Doctor pulled out the sphere Harry had found. “This seed is evidence that they aren’t from this timeline. Most probably the future, and maybe a goodly ways off. If so, it could be any number of races that wish the human race never reached space. Hampering their past would only help in that respect and Arthur is very important to the foundation of the future.”

Merlin frowned, tapping his fingers under his chin. “So, you say these….androids, you called them, are from a future timeline in which humans reach space. Space being?”

Harry pointed upwards. “Among the stars, the planets. Humans achieve spaceflight in the mid 20th century, but it takes nearly two centuries for them to reach interstellar flight. That’s when the trouble starts. Humans have never been overly considerate of other peoples. With the desire for resources and conquest leading the charge, many planets and cultures were devastated by human interference, especially those unable to fight back. While numerous positives also occurred side by side, it is hard to discount the destruction much of the early parts of human space travel were littered with.”

Rose frowned. “Surely it can’t be that bad.”
“It was, is, will be, Rose,” the Doctor verified. “Humans in many ways are extraordinarily unique amongst sentient species. Fragile creatures without obvious means of fighting, not particularly intelligent as a species, no inherent advantage. Yet still, they became an empire, one of the largest in the universe, in just a few millenia. Many species are curious, violent, driven, ambitious, creative, that is not unique. But humanity took it to its absolute limits, broke them, and began inventing new ways of expressing things. In the process, they touched thousands of cultures and species. Humans have a way of...not being forgotten, whether for good or ill.”

“Then whatever took young Arthur wasn’t human, nor is it from this timeline?” Merlin interjected.

Harry nodded. “Most probably. Also, they’re someone who got ahold of androids who know who Rose, myself, and my dad are. Though I am willing to accept that they were dug up in a scrap pile orbiting around some forgotten moon, it is interesting that they didn’t erase their memory. They might not know, or have the means of doing so.” Harry turned to look at his father. “Know of anyone who has a grudge against humans but isn’t technologically advanced enough to reprogram androids? And probably doesn’t look human, if they didn’t come for Arthur themselves.”

The Doctor frowned. “Unfortunately, the list of beings who look human is very short. Many species have similar characteristics, one head, two arms, two legs, two eyes, a nose, a mouth, etc, but those tend to be evolutionary biases. And most of the time, those configurations are purely superficial when judging for similarity. Those that can appear human through technological means are usually also advanced enough to build androids, much less reprogram them. And since many of the species devastated by humanity were technologically incapable of fighting back, many wouldn’t know much about androids, aside from stray knowledge gleaned from vids or books or holos or any other form of entertainment. They were probably discovered by accident and brought incase whomever it was found themselves in a situation they couldn’t attend themselves.”

Merlin nodded, frowning at the fire. There was silence as Rose finished dinner, everyone contemplating who or what could have taken Arthur, before Rose called out that dinner was ready.

She was surrounded almost instantly by hungry knights, a couple magicals, and a grinning Time Lord. Her eyebrows went up. “Alright, everyone form a queue, it’ll be quicker. One behind the other. I have the bowls. Here you go, and you,” she brusquely ordered everyone into a semblance of order and began passing out food. When the last bowl had been handed out and she scooped the remaining bits into her own bowl, everyone was savoring their meal.

“If you weren’t so attached to the skinny bloke, I’d hire you to be the castle’s cook,” Paskal said, scooping up more soup. “Or at least ask the king to hire you. This is the best food I’ve had in a while. Knights don’t eat so well on missions usually. Not a single one of us is any good at cooking.”

Rose smiled. “I’ll take that as a compliment then. I’ve had a while to practice.”
Paskal looked at her. “You don’t look old enough to be out from under your mother’s feet for more than a couple seasons.”

“Well, appearances are deceiving.” She bustled, picking up the items used to cook. “Harry, or Merlin, can one of you get this pot clean? I don’t think I can do it justice in the stream and we’ll need it again before this trip’s over.”

Harry raised his hand, then looked at Merlin. “Can I?”

“On any other occasion, I would agree, but as we need this pot for a while more, I’m not sure that your overabundance of magic and lack of control would do it any good.” Harry sighed, dropping his arm. “Don’t be too discouraged. There are more than a few dirty belt buckles around here for you to clean. We’ll practice tomorrow.”

That perked him up, and they spent a bit longer discussing various useful spells that Harry might learn. Then, at the insistence of the Doctor, Harry went to bed. It didn’t take him long to fall asleep, the excitement of the day having worn on him, and he was soon snoring away under a blanket near the fire.

Rose yawned, stretched her arms. “Bed for me too. Try not to annoy the knights, Doctor. I’ll see you in the morning.” Then she stretched out near Harry, curled up, pillowed her head on her arm, and slipped into sleep.

Merlin looked at the Doctor. “What does she mean?”

The Doctor waved a hand away. “Oh, I don’t necessarily need as much sleep. 7 hours every, oh, 168 standard Earth hours and I’m good. When Harry was young, I used to sleep a couple hours a night with him, but that’s faded as he got older. Didn’t need me as much.”

Merlin smiled. “I see that troubles you some.” The Doctor peered at him over his knees. “You are very easy to read, for those who know what to look for.”

“Well, I wasn’t even sure what I was doing when I took Harry with me. It was a moment of anger, frustration, exhaustion, and curiosity. Then, I get back to the Tardis, and this tiny human needs all of these things. Food, shelter, hugs, toys, someone to hold him, sing to him, read him books, teach him. All sorts of things. It’s been many many centuries since I was a parent, and Gallifreyan children are
very different from human children.”

Merlin paused to mull that over. “I take it you’ve had children before then? Children of your own species.”

“Long long ago. My species is very long lived and I can only distantly recall their feet pattering on the floor. And even then it isn’t really real. Much of my history is tangled up in causality and temporal misconceptions and irregularities. My children….they were mine before I was me, if that makes sense.”

Merlin smiled. “In a way, Doctor, there is nothing about you that makes sense, yet everything is centered in your very being. It makes you a strange one.”

They fell into an amiable silence. The knights who weren’t on guard duty fell into a light slumber and those that were stood at the edges of the clearing, alert but relaxed.

“Doctor, about your son. His magic is almost incomprehensible. It isn’t that hard to imagine there being no limit for him at all. Any limit that might exist within the magical world would be mere words to him.

His ability to internalize magical conceptions is beyond anything I might have dared imagine. We use words to create and visualize spells. Harry may one day be beyond the need for them. We have a focus for our magic, a staff or a wand. This may be redundant for the boy.”

“You don’t use one,” the Doctor pointed out. Merlin nodded.

“I don’t need one for many of the simpler spells that I am teaching Harry. I am powerful enough in my own right to forgo the necessity of a wand. But not everyone is capable of this. My teachers were, especially Godric, but they were also anomalous in their magic capabilities.”

“Are you saying that Harry has nothing to learn?” the Doctor asked, tilting his head.

“No, indeed not. There is much he can be taught. But there will also be much that he will be able to do on instinct, with the same ease in which we breath or form words or speak. Some skills will be harder for him to master as well, but they will never be out of his reach. In short, Doctor, nothing will be impossible for him. Which in itself may be a problem that he will have to face.”
The Doctor didn’t say anything for a few moments. He stared at his son, taking in the black hair falling over his face and small hands relaxed in sleep. “I see. I will keep this in mind as he gets older.”

Merlin nodded. He wanted to ask what importance Harry held that was so grand that it could alter the future, what a young boy could possibly have resting on his shoulders, but stayed quiet. The Doctor had laid down beside his child, hand resting on Harry’s head, eyes closed. Merlin wasn’t sure if he was sleeping, but decided that the conversation was over. He too turned in for the night.

The next morning started with an exuberant Harry munching on some bread and trying to get everyone on their feet. Really, it was still early and much earlier than anyone else thought the day would start (with the exception of the Doctor, who had probably been awake for the majority of the night as it was). Still, everyone climbed to their feet in the predawn light and packed up the rest of their supplies that had found nooks and crannies to hide in. The horses were fed and watered, everything was loaded up, and they headed off in the direction Merlin indicated.

Harry, remembering Merlin’s promise to teach him how to clean things the night before, had collected a series of small, dirty object upon which to practice. As he showed them to the amused wizard, Merlin couldn’t restrain a chuckle.

"What is it? Are they the wrong sort of thing to practice on? I thought you wanted to make sure I wouldn’t break anything I wanted to use. Should I have gone for something bigger?"

"No, no, it's not that, young Harry. I was just amused at your eagerness. Many a teacher would go to battle for the honor of teaching on so eager to learn."

"Oh. Well, learning is really all you can do until you know enough to do something with it. So the best thing is to learn as much as you can so no matter what the situation you will always have something you know how to do."

Merlin raised an eyebrow. "I see. That is a practical way to put it."

"Also, knowing things is exciting."

"And there is the scholar I thought I saw in you."
Harry grinned.

And so the morning began. With cleaning spells. Or rather, with stones losing layers as Harry tried to perfect the cleaning spell. He got into another argument over language with Merlin, remarking that really, "Clean" was a perfectly good word to use to direct the magic and that using "pergo" or any other Latin word was silly. Then he went and used "clean", shaved off another layer of rock, then stared moodily at his stones. It didn't seem to matter what language he spoke the words in, he overcharged it with his magic. He had to figure out how to stem the flood.

Harry pondered over the stones, slowly trying to stop the flood of magic. He pinched it, bent it, manipulated it, but it didn't seem to matter. A veritable wave of power flowed out every time he spoke any words of power.

"I can't figure it out. What am I doing wrong? I'm doing the spell, I'm cleaning the rocks, but I'm practically stripping them to do it. It's like my magic is digging into the stone to scoop out the filth. If I did this to anything with flesh I would be stripping off their skin." Harry sounded sullly.

Merlin smiled. "Harry child, the amount of magic you have is immense. You will have to learn how to control the flow. I am afraid I can't help you learn that, it is something I have no experience with and have never met another with a similar problem. What have you tried?"

Harry frowned. "Well, I've tried to narrow the flow of magic when I say the spell, manipulate it until there isn't as much as there was before, but it never seems to work."

"Well, why don't you try modulating how loud you say a spell? I know that sometimes, when magic users are young, yelling a spell will help those who have been having difficulty. Maybe the opposite with work with you."

Harry considered this, pulled out another rock, and tried whispering the spell.

With little change. A millimeter of the small stone was stripped away and it flaked to the ground.

Harry sighed and Merlin tried to hide a grin.

Then the wizard turned, eyes alert.
"Up ahead to the left. I can feel the enchantment. It's faint, nearly on the edge of my awareness, but I can feel it. Which also means that Arthur is alive."

All the knights reigned it, pulling around until they circled Merlin. Harry tried to meld into the circle.

"Are you sure, Lord Merlin?"

"The young prince is alive?"

"Oh thank god!"

"Yes, Arthur is alive. The mere fact that I can sense it is proof. I had to tie the enchantment into Arthur's life force. It keeps the spell active for as long as my magic is present, so he must be alive."

"How far is he?" Paskal asked, eyes sharp. "How long do you think it will take us to get there?"

"No more than another day. My range for the spell is 40 leagues thereabout, so I expect we shall find where he is being held tomorrow. Let's hurry though. Now that we have proof of his survival, I would rather not dally any longer."

The knights nodded, pulled around, and started to canter. Merlin, Rose, the Doctor, and Harry followed the ones in the lead, and a couple more knights brought up the rear. It was a fast pace for much of the morning and into the afternoon.

As they rested the horses at a stream, Harry moved around to speak to his dad.

"Dad, do you know who exactly we're dealing with? Back at the castle, you seemed to know, but you didn't say anything about the Tractites last night."

The Doctor grimaced. "Well, if it is a Tractite, then they have quite a good reason for being angry. I do wonder where one of them would have found androids and I was trying to bounce ideas around to see if anything else shook loose. Not much did. Androids are plentiful in the 24th century, and the
metal of any scrap heap would be ideal for a time tree to take root. I just, I hope that whomever it is, we can deal with them peacefully.”

Harry nodded. “I take it that the last encounter with them didn’t go so peacefully then?”

“That would be both an understatement and far from the truth. It depends on the encounter.”

Harry tilted his head. “It’s a long story Harry.”

“Tell me while we ride.”

The climbed back into their horses and formed up into pillars. Harry rode beside the Doctor, Merlin beside Rose, and the knights surrounding them.

“Essentially, the Tractites were a peaceful race. They didn’t have space flight, but they welcomed visitors. They had no weapons, but a mineral rich planet. It was with absurd ease that the Human Empire took over their planet, despite the Tractites agreeing to let them mine the planet. But humans, invariably, want more than they can get, and destroyed Tractis, its people, and enslaved the survivors as miners. A small group escaped and made it Hirath and they travelled back into the history of Earth. The future started to change as they changed the foundations upon which humanity was built. Humans were wiped off the planet before they could evolve and new Tractis was born, full of peaceful, nature loving Tractites. But it couldn’t stay that way. It was a complete form of revenge, erasing the species that did you wrong, but they went too far. They were stopped before they could begin the change and the future went back to what it was. And Tractis was destroyed by humanity.”

Harry was silent, eyes wide. He didn’t speak for a long while, staring at Marigold’s mane. Then, “How could humans be so malevolent to drive a peaceful species to genocide?”

The Doctor sighed. “That is one of the curiosities of humanity. Their impact of every species they come into contact with is enormous. Even the Time Lords were very careful to not interfere or even interact with humans too much. I was clear evidence of humanity’s failings. Exiled from my planet and still I consorted with humans, and in the end, when I no longer had a planet, I fled to Earth.” The Doctor smiled. “Humans are capable of extremes at both end of the scales, Harry, remember that.”

Harry nodded.
Rose was talking to Merlin. “So, what are you teaching the prince if he doesn’t have magic?”

“I was trying to teach him prudence and logic. Though it seems that my lessons were outwitted by an eight year old.” Merlin aimed a wry smile at Harry’s back. “Much of what I was trying to do was impart upon the next king lessons that would shape him into a strong leader. Morality, impartiality, that all his subjects are worthy of recognition. Don’t get me wrong, Uther is a good king, but he is never sure how to treat those of his people who are magic users, or the magical creatures. He is never openly hostile, but he turns a blind eye to hostility. I am trying to teach Arthur that everyone is equal and all should be treated as such. Much of my lessons are morality or philosophical, areas that those who rule will find necessary.”

Rose nodded. "I see. Is his father unable to pass on those lessons?"

Merlin frowned. "In a sense. Uther is a king obsessed with the past. Even his son can't pull his thoughts from his long dead wife. He found it necessary to call for assistance, and I thought I could do my part by for my own people by teaching the next king in our ways, in so much as one without magic can learn about magic."

"I understand."

"Arthur is very dear to me. I spend much of my time with him, when I am not advising Uther."

"We'll make sure he comes back safe and alive."

"I can only hope."

The knights picked up the pace and conversation was no longer possible. The rest of the afternoon was spent at a canter as they tried to make the most of their horses. When they finally stopped, the sun was dipping below the horizon and the horses were exhausted.

So was Harry, if the way he slid off his horse just to crumple to the ground was any indication. He made no effort to get to his feet, instead crawling towards the center of the clearing. Finally, with an exasperated sigh, the Doctor picked him up and carried him.

"Harry, think you can sit?"
"No, no more sitting. I can't feel my butt anymore. I can't feel my thighs anymore. I feel like I'm bouncing and the world keeps moving and I'm not even on a horse anymore." Harry groaned. "I'm not, am I?"

The Doctor chuckled. "No, you're not. But that was a lot of hard riding for a young child."

Paskal, taking pity on Harry, tossed a small pot at the Doctor, who caught it. "That balm will help with the sore muscles. It's not gonna be completely gone by morning, but it'll make riding tomorrow more bearable."

"I have to get back on a horse tomorrow?" Harry exclaimed, eyes wide.

"If you want to be there when we get Arthur, you're going to have to. And it'll be more hard riding."

Everyone laughed as Harry moaned, curling up in a little ball. "Merlin, are there any magic spells that make it better?"

"Indeed young one, but I would not recommend it. They draw on your magical energy to work and I fear that you may overpower it and the energy backlash would do more harm than good."

"Why is this happening to me?" Harry said dramatically. Everyone laughed.

Despite his dramatic platitudes, Harry was out before Rose had made dinner. The Doctor smiled at his son. "I'll take him off to the side and rub this balm in. Hopefully it'll help him out in the morning. Though I sympathize with him. I'll be sore as well by the end of the day. It's been quite a while since I rode so much so hard."

The Doctor scooped up his snoring son and brought him off to the side before undressing him and rubbing in the balm. Rose made a simple dinner of stew before passing it around. Everyone at in Silence. The Doctor tucked Harry under a blanket before rejoining them at the fire.

"Lord Merlin, how far are we from the prince?" one of the knights asked.

Merlin frowned in concentration. "Less than 15 leagues. We made excellent time today. Though if I remember my history right, we are nearing the castle of an old King who ruled these lands many years ago. It is probably Arthur is being kept within that castle. It is the only large building I have
"Good, we have a goal. We'll start early tomorrow morning. Now, I don't know about you all, but I need sleep. I will see you gentlemen in the morning." Rose stood up, stretched, then walked over to where Harry was, pulling a blanket out of a pack as she went then curling up on the ground.

Soon, the rest of the company either went to sleep or went to stand watch. The Doctor stared into the flickering flames. The night was pleasant, they were on an adventure, and his son was gaining a new appreciation for various modes of transportation.

So long as he could figure out a peaceful way to get Arthur away from what he was sure was a rogue Tractite, this would be a fun adventure.

He sat there for most of the evening, ignoring the contemplative looks he received from the knights as they traded watch shifts, and only moved again when someone bumped his shoulder.

"Dad, the fire died out long ago. What are you staring at?" Harry had walked over, yawning and rubbing his eyes.

"Harry!" the Doctor exclaimed. "You're up. How do you feel? Your legs any better?"

Harry rubbed his backside. "Not bad. Could be worse. I'm sure it will be by the end of the day, but then we should have Arthur, so at least there's that."

~~~This is a Scene Break~~~~~

Arthur was bored. He had nothing but stone walls, a small window, and the occasional bowl of something that must be gruel pushed through the door by one of the strange knights that had taken him. He remembered Harry's dad calling them something else at the time, but he couldn't recall the term at the moment.

He wondered what he was doing here. It had been over a day since that...that black horse thing had spoken to him. Not a word had been said anywhere near his door since that day. The knights weren't speaking. There wasn't anyone else in the area. He was alone.

And that was worrying. What was even more worrying was that he hadn't seen any of his father's knights, Merlin, or Harry's strange dad. It was nearing the third day of his capture and he hadn't even heard from his father's people.
The door slid open. Arthur scrambled to his feet. The large black being who had spoken to him briefly had returned.

"Arthur Pendragon, son of Uther Pendragon and Ygraine Pendragon. Brother to Morgana, the Dark Witch of le Fey, your crimes have been judged and the only punishment for your transgressions is imprisonment for life."

"What have I done? I have done nothing to anyone, especially not to your people! I don't know who or what you are? How do you know who I am? Who is Morgana?"

the being stared at him, its eyes unblinking. "It is not what you have done, it is what you will do. Your future must not come to pass. Only then may my people live in peace. That is what I believe."

Arthur stared. "Who are you? What are you?"

"I am a Tractite, from Tractis. Your people invaded my world and destroyed my people, my way of life, everyone I ever held dear. My entire planet was overrun by humans. Only a meager few of us managed to escape. I was sent back second, to see if we could change the future. I arrived in this time, with no technology. I found the androids and they matched the time frame of humanities current progress. I knew of your life. You were the best possibility for my people's future. Eliminating you from the time stream would stop the progress of humanity for a while, maybe long enough for my people to escape unharmed from the guns of humans."

Arthur stared, eyes wide. While he wasn't sure of what everything the...tractite? was saying, he understood enough.

"Humans killed your people? Why? Were you a harm to them?"

"No. We were peaceful."

"Then why would my....descendants kill your people?"

"They wanted the resources of our lands and were unable to accept the small portions we let them have. They decided to take it by force."
Arthur frowned. "But that makes no sense. I don't understand what you mean by planet. I assume that is where the kingdom you hail from is, with the name Tractis. So humans invaded your lands for no other reason than for resources? Did they not try to trade for them? It is customary."

"They wanted all of it. Our planet was rich with a kind of metal they needed. They desired more than my government was willing to allow them to extract at one time. Since they had more powerful weapons, they took it by force."

"Why is this my fault? It was terrible, but I had nothing to do with it. I can speak with my father, he might be able to help your people."

The Tractite laughed. "Your father cannot help us. You are 1400 years too early to help us. You can help us by never becoming king, by never uniting the lands and by never setting the path for a future with a united nation. Your example inspires countless leaders. Your name is spoken of by humans as the pinnacle of human heroism."

Arthur frowned, started to speak, but the door slammed shut.

He was left with his thoughts.

What did it mean? Could Tractites be from a different place, like Harry and his incomprehensible word babble? Could they be speaking of a thing that hasn't yet come to pass? But that was absurd. Such travel was impossible!

But not if it was from a time where it wasn't.

Arthur peered out the window. If what the Tractite had said was true, he might have longer than he wanted to ponder on what it could possibly mean.

The rest of his life, in fact.

~~~~This is a Scene Break~~~~
"We are nearing Arthur. I can feel the enchantment much stronger. Take the right bend up ahead, we should be seeing the castle. Or whatever is left of it."

Merlin wasn’t wrong. As they turned a sharp corner, the trees thinned and a large castle came into view.

It was old, though not quite old enough to start to crumble. Everyone pulled their horses to a halt, then stared at it.

"Is this the right place, Lord Merlin?" Paskal asked. "I don’t remember who it belonged to, but it’s been here for a long time. I was brought here once as a squire for a training exercise. Though that practice fell out of popularity within a few years.” He looked at one of the newer knights. “Probably before you were a squire, Galin, right?"

The young knight nodded. “Yes. I think I heard about it, but when I was a squire, it had been deemed too frivolous as a training exercise.”

"Training exercise aside, Arthur is in there."

The Doctor moved his horse forward. “It would be wise if we left the horses out here. If it is who I think it is, they would only be a hinderance. If it isn’t then it doesn’t matter. They will be more useful rested.” He dismounted.

Harry and Rose followed suit, and, after a nod from Merlin and Paskal, everyone else dismounted as well. They tied the horses to a nearby pond before forming up.

“How are we going to do this?” Harry asked. “I mean, it’s a castle. It has fortifications. Just walking up would be a bit dangerous. Especially if the androids are here. And there isn’t any reason to think they wouldn’t be.”

“Indeed young one, but this castle is also old. It has many secret passages into and out of its walls.” Paskal tapped his chin. “We can use one of them to gain entry into the castle and find Arthur.”

“What if we run into whoever took him? I mean, not the androids but whoever took them.”
The Doctor grimaced. “I’ll deal with them.”

Paskal took one look at the Doctor’s face, then nodded. “Alright, I remember an entrance in the south wall that’s pretty well covered from observers. I think it used to be a servants entrance. We’ll go in through there. It’ll be easier to breach the wall from there than to try a frontal assault. We don’t know what may be waiting for us. Form up, two behind Lord Merlin, the Doctor, Harry and Rose, the rest of you in front with me. I’ll take lead. Be on your guard.”

“Wait just a minute, Sir Paskal. I was asked by the King to make sure Lady Rose and young Harry have protection spells.”

Rose sighed, rolled her eyes. “I had hoped you had forgotten about that. I don’t really need them, but whatever.”

Merlin just smiled, taking out his wand and tapping her on the head. She felt a warm shroud cover her, and she shivered.

“Rose?” the Doctor asked.

“It was...pleasant. Warm even. I wasn’t expecting that.” Rose grinned. “Very nice Merlin.”

“They’ll protect you from blade or blow, arrow or fist. I don’t sense any other magical beings aside from Harry here, so magical protection isn’t really required.” Merlin turned to Harry. “Now for you, young one.”

Harry frowned. “I can’t do it myself, can I?”

“I’m sorry, but no. I don’t know what your magic might do to the spell and we can’t risk it blowing up on us right now. If I had had the time on the road, I would have taught it to you, but alas we did not. I shall have to teach you when we return to Camelot.”

Harry pouted, but let Merlin tap his head and heard the whispered words. So, impervious shields and a bit of disillusionment. Sounds like a lot to experiment with later.
After the spells had been cast (and the Doctor had refused them adamantly), they snuck in through the side entrance. It was quiet. Eerily quiet.

“Galin, you take Kellory, Martin, and Franks and search the North and East sides of the castle. Check every room. Everyone else, with me.”

The four knights split off, leaving Paskal, a knight called Greyson, another named Braily, and Merlin with the Doctor, Harry, and Rose.

The walked through the halls silently but with purpose. They checked every room, every closed door, and soon found the stairs upwards.

Paskal drew his sword and the Doctor pushed Harry between himself and Rose.

They didn’t meet anyone or anything on their way up, and the floor was clear on their end.

“He is still upwards, Sir Paskal,” Merlin murmured. “The closer I am to him, the more precise the enchantment is.”

Paskal nodded. “We still don’t know if anyone else is here. We must be careful.”

Rose pulled on the Doctor's arm. “We can go up the stairs and find Arthur. Leave the searching for enemies to the knights.”

Paskal looked mildly erked at Rose’s words. “Lady...”

“I can take care of myself, as can the Doctor. We need to find Arthur. If he's a couple floors up then it would be better if we could get him out of here before you all go rushing it with swords and yells.”

“I'm going too,” Harry said, face set.
The Doctor looked at him, nodded. “Alright then. Come on. Leave the sword rushing to the knights. Merlin?”

“Yes, that sounds feasible. Getting the prince out is our first priority.”

Paskal looked like he wanted to protest, but settled for glaring at the four retreating backs. “Be careful guys,” he called back. The Doctor raised a hand in acknowledgment.

Harry tried for the stairs, but his father pulled him back. “Despite your determination to rescue your friend, it's still dangerous. I would prefer you not rush headlong first.”

“Hello pot, I'm kettle,” Harry retorted.

The Doctor raised an eyebrow. “You've been picking up Earth English colloquialisms.”

“Well, they are interesting. And less circular than Gallifreyan ones.”

“Still, you are not going up the stairs first. One child kidnapped is more than enough.”

Harry pouted and, while the Doctor was distracted, Rose slipped past him and up the stairs. The Doctor stared, started to say something, caught Rose's determined eyes, and decided against it. He sighed. Merlin followed her, then Harry, and his dad brought up the rear.

“When was it that I was following you all?” he said, a slight whine to his voice.

All that answered was a slight chuckle.

“Next floor, I believe,” Merlin whispered as they reached the third floor. Rose marched up the next flight. “Yes, this floor. Follow me.”

Merlin took the lead, and Harry bounded after him. The Doctor and Rose followed.
“Sorry Doctor, but you can't keep trying to protect me,” Rose whispered.

“I know. I know. It just, takes some getting used to, that's all.”

“Get used to it fast Doctor.”

Merlin stopped beside a closed door. “Here. He's in here.” He slid the bolt on the door open and pushed. The door swung open with a slight squealing of hinges.

Arthur sat in a far corner. The room itself wasn't very decent smelling, an odor of sorts wafting up from a small hole in the floor in the far corner. A couple empty bowls were sitting beside the door.

The prince looked over at them, and for a moment, shock flitted across his face. “Merlin? Harry? You're here?”

Harry grinned. “Hey Arthur. I'd give you a hug but I'd rather you take a bath first.”

Arthur grinned. “You're here! You're really here!”

“Don't be too loud, young prince. We still don't know where your captors are.”

“I'm not checked on regularly. They know I can't escape so they only bother to open the door to push food and cloth in.”

“Do you know what they look like?” the Doctor asked.

Arthur nodded. “There are the knights, but they don't talk to me. And then there's this Tractle thing. Tractin, Tractit, Tractis, something. I've only spoken to it a couple times. I...I don't know what it is. I've never seen the like of such a being before.”

The Doctor sighed. “I was afraid of that. Well, let's get you out of here before I go deal with him. He's not going to be happy, but I would rather get you lot away from him. He doesn't know anything about Harry and he's already tried to get you once Arthur, so let's not give him another chance, huh?”
Arthur stared with wide eyes. "Wow, I can't believe it. I thought I was gonna be stuck here forever."

"Did you have that little faith in your father?" Harry asked, hands on hips.

Arthur shrugged. "I wasn't sure anyone would find me. I didn't even know where I was or how far they took me. It seemed they flew forever."

"You don't have enough trust in your mentor Arthur. He has a tracking enchantment on you. Within a certain distance, he can always find you." Harry pointed at Merlin.

Arthur stared at him with wide yes. "You do? Really? If I hadn't been kidnapped, that might be weird, but I'm rather thankful for it now."

Merlin smiled. "I was unaware that you didn't know. I asked your father, or rather, he asked me, to place it on you. It's been there since you were small."

Arthur groaned. "So he always knows where I am."

"No, I always know where you are. He only knows if he asks me. Which isn't very often. As long as you are safe, he is content that you are within sight of your guard."

Arthur grimaced. "Yeah, I will probably deserve the lecture I'll get when I get back."

"Maybe not. Young Harry here explained what happened and why you were there."

Arthur looked at Harry. "Really? You didn't have to."

Harry scuffed a foot. "It was sort of my fault you were there. And you're my friend. Why would I withhold important information from your father, who also happens to be a king?"

"Well, I mean, I...I don't know. When you put it that way." Arthur frowned, looked up at the
assembled rescue group, then his eyes widened, fixed on a point a few feet above the Doctor's head. "Um...Harry's dad, the...thing Tractil thing is here."

Everyone spun around to look.

Harry's eyes widened. "Tractite. From Tractis. You were right dad."

"Who are you? What are you doing here? The Once and Future King is mine." The voice was deep, resonate. "Merlin Emrys, your charge is yours no longer. I claim him as is my right."

"Your right? Your right? What right do you have to kidnap a human from a planet who has not yet done you harm?" The Doctor exclaimed, voice high and sharp.

The Tractite stared down at him. "Who are you? You are not human, why do you defend these creatures? They pillage and destroy all they come across. I will prevent the destruction of my home. My people."

"How do you hope to accomplish that by taking a child? Arthur isn't much more that a future possibility. Why him?"

The Tractite stared down at the Doctor. "The stories told of King Arthur of Camelot are legends that hold together a nation. He creates the kings that unite the world. His name is carried into the stars by humans. Without him, there is a possibility that Earth may never be the same. I must take that chance."

The Doctor sighed. "I know what your people went through, and it was terrible. I know your people tried this before. Using the seeds of the Time Tree, they went back into Earth's history. They failed then as well. Your people murdered humans to fix the future."

The Tractite blinked, stepping backwards. "You lie. A Tractite would never murder. My people are nonviolent. Why do you think the humans took over our planet so easily?"

"What did you plan on doing with Arthur then?"
The Tractite hesitated, shifting on his feet.

Rose stepped forward. "You were going to keep him in this room forever? Maybe move him to a different part of Earth? Let him waste away until he died of natural causes?"

"It...said I was sentenced to imprisonment for life," Arthur said. "Though if what he said was true, how wrong is he?"

Harry laid a hand on Arthur's forearm. "Humanity's future isn't the pretty picture you would love to imagine. Humans are as greedy as they are kind, but sometimes one outweighs the other. When humans found other planets that had minerals they needed, if they couldn't get them to trade for it, they overpowered them. If they couldn't overpower, they often dealt with them in various devious and sneaky ways. But there are as many stories of humanities failings as there are of human triumphs. Moments when humanity was good and kind."

"But...they wiped out his entire planet! I don't really know what that is, but if it is anything like a country, then that is absolutely terrible! Who could condone such actions!" Arthur exclaimed.

Rose stepped forward, took Arthur's hands into hers. "Arthur, you cannot blame yourself for someone else's faults. Ever. They are the faults of others. You are not alive when they make them, you cannot possibly stop them from happening. You can only make things better for those people you meet. Those you rule over. Those you befriend. Do you understand?"

Arthur nodded, though his face was a mask of confusion. He looked at the Doctor, at Merlin. "What...what do we do about the Tractite? I mean, I was never hurt or in danger. I was fed and kept warm. While the actions were reprehensible, I can understand the motivations, sort of."

Merlin smiled. "Arthur, what do you want to do?"

The Tractite snarled. "Why should a human decide my fate? My entire species was destroyed by humans. Why should I listen to one? Ever? I have my androids."

The Doctor sighed. "Your androids are few in number and I can easily reprogram them. Would you harm another person, even if that person is human?" The Doctor stared at the Tractite. "What is your name?"
There was silence for a few moments. "I am called Kirigal."

"Well, Kirigal, there are several options. You are essentially non-violent. There are plenty of places I can bring you. There are hubs of species that live together in peace where you would be welcomed. Plenty of places for you to travel to."

"My home is gone. I have no desire to travel anywhere else but here. If I must die, I would like to die here."

"Now now, no one said anything about dying." The Doctor waved his hands in agitation.

"From what I understand, I kidnapped the prince of the royal family, a crime punishable by death on this world. I cannot return home, never. I cannot step foot on Tractis as it is now, it would be unbearable. So I choose to die here."

"Wait, wait, hold on..."

"Kirigal, was it?" Arthur interrupted the Doctor. "I understand why you did what you did. If I may, can I offer you some protection at Camelot? At the very least, until we can figure out where you would like to go?"

Kirigal starred at Arthur. His eyes were wide, unblinking. Though that might be due to his species.

"Arthur, are you sure?" Merlin asked. "We know only that he hates humans. Would it be wise?"

"Merlin, humans destroyed his people. The least we can do is offer some kind of recompence. Even if it is in the past."

The Doctor raised his eyebrows at Arthur. "Indeed. You may just live up to your legends."

Harry grinned. "Maybe it isn’t so bad to meet your heroes."

Rose snickered. "Yeah, but I heard about that time you met Shakespeare. That was hysterical."
The Doctor looked at Rose. “He...he told you about that?” he asked.

Rose gave him a pointed look. “I made him tell me everything about what you did between the time I left you and then saw you again. And you were an idiot. But we’ll discuss that after we get out of the old castle. This room stinks.”

Merlin looked at Arthur, then at Kirigal. “I will stand behind the prince on this. Though it is ultimately your choice, I would ask you come with us. We can offer some hospitality at least.”

Kirigal had been silent. “I...I am unsure. But I shall come with you as far as Camelot. Maybe...maybe I shall have my answers by then.”

Arthur nodded. “Alright, let’s head out. I would like to get home and have a bath as soon as possible.”

Everyone nodded in agreement with him.

Then the sounds of fighting reached down the corridor.

“Sir Paskal! Where is Merlin? I cannot even scratch these things! They are not normal! Galin and Greyson are injured and I don’t know how much longer we can hold out!”

The Doctor was out the door before the third sentence was finished. Harry and Merlin were on his heels.

Kirigal clasped his oddly bent arms together. “I had not intended for people to get hurt. I had not.”

Rose laid a hand on his arm. “Then why did you take fighting androids? You were unable to reprogram them to not injure, were you not?”

Kirigal shook his head. “They were not anachronistic to this time. I thought they might blend in better so I could take Prince Arthur.”
“Did you know they devestated the markets of Camelot. I do not know if anyone was injured but I am sure there were.”

Kirigal made a strange noise, and Arthur soon realised he was crying. He really was ultimately peaceful.

“Do you think Harry’s dad and Merlin can do anything about them?”

“If anyone can, they can.” Rose looked around. “Bloody hell, Harry’s gone with them. He slipped out before I could notice.”

Harry was currently racing along behind his dad and Merlin. He wasn’t sure what he could do, but he wasn’t being left behind. He would deal with the consequences later.

As they skidded down the stairs and around a corner, they found the knights facing three of the giant androids. They were taller than they had first realized, since they had been ahorse in Camelot. They towered over Camelot’s knight by almost a foot.

“Everyone, DOWN!” the Doctor roared. He pulled his sonic screwdriver out of his pocket and pointed it at the first knight. It buzzed, and the android’s head twitched, then exploded. Shards of metal flew everywhere.

After that, the knights went down as the Doctor pointed his sonic screwdriver at the second one.

“Time Lord. Why are you here?”

“We’re here for Arthur. Also, aren’t you a little out of your time? Androids don’t belong on Earth in this century. I think I need to rectify the problem.” He gestured at the no longer functioning robot.

“We are only following orders.”

“Yeah, well, I’m about to reprogram those orders. And your memories.” He flipped something on
the side of the screwdriver, then it buzzed. The androids stiffened, then slumped. As much as robots could slump.

“What did you do Doctor?”

“Well, their artificial matrices had already been fussed at, so I just unfussed them. Now they’re inert. The way they were before Kirigal picked them up. Let’s go find the rest of the knight, shall we?”

Merlin nodded.

Paskal, one of the three knights who had been trying to fend the androids off, stood up, startled.

“What is that device? What did it do? Nothing we did even dented their armor.”

Harry smiled. “They aren’t really human. My dad just...turned them off. By reinstating the original programing, the androids software was overwritten and they became inert. Whatever Kirigal did to them originally never happened.”

“He killed them?”

“Well, I suppose it may appear to be like that.”

Paskal nodded. “Alright then. Though I would love one of those little weapons.”

“It’s not a weapon. It’s a screwdriver!”

“I do not know what that is.”

“It’s a tool that turns screws!”

“I still do not understand.”
“Argh!” The Doctor threw his arms into the air. Harry snickered.

They found the rest of the knights the floor below them. Two of them were gravely injured and Merlin frowned.

“These are serious injuries. I have not seen their like before among non-magical weaponry.”

“They’re laser blasts. High intensity light and heat beams that destroy flesh.”

“I see. Harry, I shall need your magic to help me. The power you possess will allow me to heal them well enough so that they will survive the trip to Camelot.”

“Can’t you just...fix them completely?”

“I could, but healing is not my specialty. It is precision work that can be detrimental if done improperly. I shall only stabilize and partially heal their wounds so the castle physician can heal them fully.”

Harry nodded, holding out a hand to Merlin. “Like when I was younger, yes?”

“Indeed young one. I shall access your magic through touch, like I did when you were very young.” Merlin took Harry’s hand, always surprised at the energy flooding just under the surface.

He pressed their joined hands to an uninjured part of Sir Galin’s body, and Merlin spoke softly.

Harry felt the magic well up in him and stream out through their clasped hands. Galin was momentarily surrounded by light, and Harry watched as the holes in Galin’s shoulder, leg, and hip started to knit together. It was spectacular. He let more magic flow out, and was so caught up in the spell that he missed Merlin’s shocked gasp and the struggle to remove his hand from the man’s body.

It was only when Galin was no longer injured when Harry lifted his hands. He looked at Merlin. “That was amazing!”
Merlin shook his head, astounded. “No Harry, that was your magic. It acted on my wishes and healed him. Completely. Galin may rest for a while, but he is in perfect health.”

Harry smiled. “Let’s go save Sir Greyson then!”

“Harry…are you sure you’re alright? That was immense magic.”

“I feel a little tired, but Sir Greyson might die. I can’t let that happen! You just lead the way. I’ll help provide the energy.”

Merlin looked at Harry with reluctance, but eventually took the boy’s hand again. And again, Sir Greyson’s wounds healed over.

But it was obvious that Harry wasn’t ready for the sudden pull on his magic.

As soon as Sir Greyson was healed, Harry wobbled to his feet, smiled at his father, muttered. “I wonder what waffle plants taste like” then toppled over.

Merlin was at his side immediately, wand out. “It’s alright. He’s fine. His system just wasn’t sure how to deal with the massive drain of magic. It was unfocused so it pulled a lot more than that spell should have. While it didn’t actually dent his reserves, it did strain his body. He’ll be out for a while.”

Rose and Arthur chose this time to appear.

"Hey guys, Kirigal has agreed to accompany us to Camelot. Everyone alright here?" She looked around, spotted Harry. "Harry! Is he alright?"

"Just drained, Lady Rose. Nothing to worry about."

Arthur rushed over, laying a hand on Harry's arm. "What happened to him?"

"He overextended himself. He used too much magic at once and his body is still too young to handle
overexertion. He fainted." Merlin looked up at the Doctor. "Do you want to carry him? It would be best. We still need to make it back to Camelot. That will take a couple days and I fear Harry might be unconscious for a number of them."

The Doctor stepped forward and lifted Harry into his arms, letting the boy's head rest on his shoulder. "I'll take him on my horse with me. Since we aren't in such a rush anymore, it shouldn't be a problem." The Doctor looked at Harry, eyes soft. "He always has a knack for doing things to the extreme. I guess magic would be one of them."

The knights climbed to their feet, only minor injuries between the lot of them. As Kirigal came down the corridor, they all turned, eyes wide and most hands reaching for swords.

"Calm my friends," Merlin said. "This is Kirigal. He has seen the error of his ways and will come with us to Camelot. Since no one is dead, Kirigal shall decide what he wants to do with his life. There are enough extenuating circumstances that his actions, while reprehensible, can also be understood. I would ask that your opinions remain silent until we can speak more freely about this."

Paskal relaxed, looked at the Tractite. "Well, at least we don't need another horse. He should be able to keep up just fine and with the young magical unconscious Arthur will be able to ride Marigold."

The Doctor grinned.

Merlin's thoughts on Harry's rest were correct. It wasn't until the last day they were on the road back to Camelot that he finally woke up. His dad was grinning down at him.

"Ugh, what happened?"

"Well, from what I've understood, you pushed too much magic through your system at one time."

"That doesn't make sense. I always have magic in my system."

Merlin cleared is throat. "Well, I would ask you to imagine your body as a cleaning rag. You, in essence, rung yourself dry despite being in the bucket of water. Your body was unused to handling so much power at once. You used more magic than the spell I cast required and sent your system into shock. You weren't suffering from magical exhaustion so much as magical overload. You will have to be very careful in how you regulate your power in the future. One of the things I intend to
work with you on is your control and finesse. Those will be far more important to your future as a magical than any spell you may learn."

Harry nodded. "So, how long was I unconscious for?"

"Two whole days! You left me alone with knights and your dad and Rose and Merlin and Kirigal, who isn't much of a conversationalist. And I had no one to play with!" This came from a whiny Arthur directly behind Harry and his dad.

Harry grinned. He spun around until he could peer over his dad's shoulder. "Well, I would think you would be starved for company, seeing as you had none for three days."

Arthur pouted. "You assume I like the company of knights who spent the whole first day reminding me that as a prince, I will be responsible for the future of my people and gallivanting off without my guards is dangerous and ill advised and Merlin kept saying how he would be putting a better spell on me that lets him know whenever I leave the castle just so he can be sure that I don't leave without protection until I can prove myself capable. It didn't matte that it was super strong alien knights that took me." Arthur had, it seemed, wanted to get that rant out for quite a few days.

The knights all exchanged grins.

Arthur pouted.

Kirigal was talking softly with Rose, who had been his companion for most of the trip. She said she was trying to convince him that he should come with the Doctor and he could be dropped off on a planetary hub with hundreds of species and make a new life for himself. Kirigal was being reticent about the concept.

Rose figured she would have a while to talk him into the idea. Either that or Arthur would bully him into staying with him. Explain him as a magical creature or something.

Harry and Arthur passed the last day taking quiet lessons from Merlin. Since they were both small, Marigold easily supported the both of them.

Much of their lessons were theoretical in nature as Arthur couldn’t do magic and Merlin wanted to wait until they reached a warded place for Harry to practice.
Arthur was set to ponder what, if any, difference there was between kings and peasants, without resorting to “well, kings rule over peasants”. Harry probably would have been set the same question, if he hadn’t blinked at Merlin, eyes wide, before saying: “But they’re both sentient beings…”. Merlin decided that Harry either didn’t understand the question because he didn’t understand differences in rank or he was just raised that way.

Instead, he set Harry to theorize about the fundamentals of magic.

They entered Camelot late in the evening with instructions to both report to Merlin’s rooms the next day before the noon bell for instruction.

Merlin had to explain to Harry was the noon bell was, then was noon was, and he might have gone on if the Doctor hadn’t dragged his son off with a wave and a smile.

Arthur was hugged by a grateful and enthusiastic Uther who was glad his son was back. Uther decided that tomorrow was when they would hear everything that had happened, seeing both his son and Harry starting to nod off on their feet.

~~~This is an Ending~~~

Chapter End Notes

Hey! Uber Long chapter! it took me fricken long enough to write it, damn it. Really, the entire last half of it was written for NaNoWriMo. I just...found a rut. And wallowed in my own self pity for a while.

That’s not healthy, let me tell you.
To the many many many people who reviewed and poked at me and hoped for another chapter, here it is and THANK YOU SO MUCH for the reviews. I will try to respond to each of the ones I haven’t yet (I usually curl up into a ball of shame when I realize I got a new review and I haven’t updated in months….)

This arc isn’t done yet, but the next chapter will be more magic-focused and humorous adventure with young Arthur and Harry and Kirigal’s story will be resolved.

It’ll be interesting. I hope.

Now I have to go off and write it. ^___^

Kuroi
As the Doctor half carried his son to the Tardis to go to bed, Rose pulled Kirigal aside. Uther had eyed the Tractite with wide eyes when the group had entered the hall, but a quick look from Merlin told Uther that he would explain later.

“Kirigal, we'll be here for probably a couple weeks. You have some time to figure out what you want to do. There are a number of options. But do you know where you would like to stay for the time being? And don't say outside. There are plenty of warm places for you for now. While Uther may not be too accepting, Merlin would find somewhere for you. The Doctor would also be more than willing to offer you a room. The Tardis probably has a room somewhere for you and you would be close enough if you should decide to leave Earth.”

Kirigal stared at Rose, his four eyes peering at her with a strange intensity. “You are a strange one, Lady Rose.”

“It's Rose, only the knights call me lady.”

“You are deserving of the title. And I shall accept the room in this Tardis you speak of. I fear that any other choice may be met with more lectures.” Rose swore she saw the Tractite smile. “I will follow you, Lady Rose.”

Rose sighed but gestured for Kirigal to follow her.

They came to a halt outside the small blue box and Rose reached for the key under her shirt.

“Lady Rose, I am unsure I will...fit into this Tardis of yours,” Kirigal said, apprehension in his voice.

Rose smiled. She knew why the Doctor loved this part. She opened the door and walked in, taking a
number of steps into the interior. She knew Kirigal could hear her footsteps on the metal framework. She heard his gasp when he poked his head in. “This is the Tardis, Kirigal. Time and Relative Dimension in Space.”

“Time Lord...” he breathed, moving his body inside. The door shut behind him. “A true Time Lord ship. I should have made the connection, but I wasn't aware that Time Lords existed any longer. This...this is breathtaking.”

Rose heard the awe and reverence in his voice. “You know of the Time Lords?”

“Oh, the Tractites were a species with huge potential. It was once thought, when the Time Lords were still active in the universe, that they could eventually be an enemy. Though it wasn't more than a musing, it was interesting that they were considered. The Tractites were a very peaceful race. That they could become a threat was a testament to their ability for technological growth.” The Doctor, sans Harry, walked into the console room. “Hello Kirigal. I take it you're staying with us for a while?”

Kirigal nodded. “Time Lord. It is an honor. I will impose upon your hospitality for a time.” He inclined his head in what Rose took as a bow.

“No problema! Plenty of room. I think we have a room you will find most comfortable. Here, follow me. Now, I know Rose is bugging you about what you should do now, seeing as she might not be letting you die. Here, turn right here. Yes, and left here. Another left. What do you think you'll be doing while we stay here? I mean, if you really get it in your head that you want to leave now, I think I could swing by and drop you off somewhere in the 26th century, not too far from your time, but long after humanity has stopped their interests in Tractis, and you can live your life. But maybe a few days spent thinking about it will give you a better idea. Ah, here we are.”

The Doctor opened the door with a flourish and Kirigal peered in with wide eyes. “This...you are letting me stay in this lush garden?” He took a deep breath. “It smells spectacular.”

“Nah, it's not a problem. There's a small resting area just beyond those Flowering Jarviys. Watch out though, Harry had some issues with growing plants so there are bound to be a few loose experiments that might be harmful, but this room's very pleasant for those who prefer the outdoors.”

Kirigal turned to look at the Doctor. “Thank you, Time Lord. I am in your debt. And yours, Lady Rose.”

The Doctor waved it away with a smile. “Nah, no problema. I like that word. Problemo. Such a nice roll to it.” He rolled his tongue. “Problemo...”

Rose rolled her eyes. “Good night, Kirigal. I am sure we will see more of each other tomorrow.”

Kirigal nodded, then shut the door. Rose rounded on the Doctor. “Alright, time to talk.”

The Doctor blinked, startled. “Now? Really? But...I had...things to do...”

“I'm sure. However, I think we should talk now, and you can deal with whatever things you're about to make up to deal with later. I take it Harry's in bed?”

The Doctor nodded. “He's out. Probably be out for a while. He had a rough couple days.” The Doctor opened his mouth to say something, saw the steely glint in Rose's eyes, then closed his mouth. “Ah, well, how about the library then?”

“Well you can wander off and read something? Or dive into the pool? Why is there a pool in the library again? It wasn't there before.”
“Well, that...that happened when, well, it's a long story.”

“Then I'll hear it. Later. But come on. There's bound to be a room that doesn't have too many distractions around here somewhere.” Rose pulled the Doctor down the hall, opening doors as she went.

Not the game room.

Not the mess of a closet.

That might be the laundry, she would have to remember that.

No, not this one, too many toys. Where does he get all the toys?

She didn't even want to know what made the growling noises when she opened the next door.

“Ah, this one will work.” She pushed the door open wider and pulled the Doctor through, shutting the door behind her. “Nice view, some sitting areas, though I don't trust that spiraling thing. I think it has a chair in the middle, but I'm afraid I might get dizzy just looking too hard at it.”

“Oh, there's where the centrifugal lounger went. I wondered. It was all the rage once, everyone who was anyone had one. Though I don't know why. You could never talk to anyone who sat in it.” The Doctor smiled. “Strange lot invented them. Amazed by spinning things, to an obsessive degree almost. They created a bed that spun in whatever direction you chose while sleeping in it. Though how anyone actually slept in it, I'm not sure.”

Rose let the Doctor go on for a number of minutes, waiting till he had petered to an end, before she gestured to a chair opposite her. He sat.

Well, sat is a tame word. He slumped, falling into it like one falls into a particularly uncomfortable school chair in a class you aren't particularly sure you enjoy and one you know you really don't want to attend.

“Well, I suppose this has been coming,” the Doctor sighed.

“What do you think this is?” Rose asked, voice soft.

The Doctor looked at her. “The reminder that you don't need me anymore. Not really.”

Rose smiled. “Well, if that were true I wouldn't have driven an entire division of my staff to panic attacks ordering large prints of your face so I could rend them to pieces. They labeled a trash shoot “Doctor Pictures” and made sure that there was a stack by the door. I believe Simone, my assistant at the time, called it my “furious raging bitch phase”.”

“I thought you only threw darts at my pictures...” the Doctor said, not sure what else to say.

Rose smiled, the edges sharp. “I threw darts too. And knives. And a few grenades. Taking shrapnel to the face is one of the less pleasant ways to die, I discovered.”

The Doctor gaped at her.

“Well, there are lots of unpleasant ways to die. I'm sure Jack and I could have a field day of interesting deaths as a topic. We beat you hands down, something I never thought I would do.” Rose sighed. “Doctor, this isn't a talk about me not needing you or not wanting you to protect me despite my ability to do that job fairly well myself. It's about us. What we are. What we might be. What I
spent a lifetime convincing myself I would never have.”

The Doctor smiled wryly. “Thank the small magic child asleep in the Tardis for that. He spent days decoding that Diary since the Tardis doesn't translate Gallifreyan of any sort. Found it in the depths of the Shadow Proclamation's library and we snuck it out. He took it on as a project.” He leaned back, contemplating the event. “I wouldn't have given it more than a cursory glance but Harry wants to learn how to read Gallifreyan.”

“You have an extraordinary child. I've only spent maybe a month or so with him and he's the epitome of everything good about you. Smart, friendly, quick on his feet, curious, outgoing, hard headed, stubborn, a trouble magnet. I imagine he's a lot like what you were when you were a child, except he has magic.”

The Doctor laughed. “Oh, you never knew any of my younger incarnations. Right bastard I was, growing up. Ditched school constantly, was a hellion for my teachers and my House, the Time Lords thought I was a disgrace to the entire species enough to exile me. Naw, Harry's what I could have been, had I had as much experience as I've had.”

Rose looked at the Doctor, then her eyes widened. “He doesn't know, does he?” The Doctor's head tilted. “He doesn't know what happened to your people. He doesn't know anything about the Daleks or the Time War or any of the battles you fought.”

She knew she had hit the nail on the head and driven it through the board when the Doctor's eyes widened. His face paled and she saw a tiny hint of fear. “You can't tell him. All he knows is that I'm the last Time Lord. That's it. I've hidden everything on the Time Lords from him. The Time War, the Daleks, the legends and myths. Rassilon's Diary was safe for him to read because Rassilon only kept it through his younger years. He abandoned it once he reached his station as President. There was nothing too incriminating in it.”

Rose shook her head. “One day he's going to find out Doctor. Find out his father wasn't always and sometimes still isn't this champion of justice and righteousness and peace that he knows. That he emulates and strives to be. I hope you're ready for that.”

“I didn't think you came down here to lecture me on how I raise Harry,” the Doctor said, words dry.

“No, not exactly. Though what you're doing to him, hiding all this truth about yourself, is part of the reason we're in this mess in the first place. You, me, the metacrisis John.” Rose smiled, sadness lingering at the edges. “You knew something had to be different about me, when I looked into the Heart of the Tardis and didn't die. But you never told me. You barely told me what happened and I found out about Jack in the worst way possible. I committed genocide, turned most of an entire race into dust, and you barely told me the surface details of what happened.” She shrugged. “Maybe you weren't sure, maybe you never got the chance. But then, when John went and did what I did, you condemned him for his actions. Oh, don't get started on how he was you, and you can't go about killing races without consequences. I was there. If I had had the power, I would have done the same.” She quirked a smile. “Then you sent him to live with me, on a plane of existence where you couldn't reach me. Couldn't give into the temptation. That was vexing.”

“Rose...I...”

Rose held up a hand. “I know, I know Doctor. It's not about then. It's about now. It's about the fact that I am Time's vessel. I will never look any different than I do now, then I did at 19 when I saved you and Jack and destroyed the Dalek Emperor. I will never age, I cannot die. And you don't know what to do about it.”
“Rose...I will one day die. Eventually I will regenerate into a new body, new face, and then again. I have three more regenerations left, then I'm done.” He looked at his hands. “I don't know how long those lives will be. How much of them will you share with me?”

Rose took the Doctor's hands, forced his face upwards. “Doctor, I loved the you with the big nose and ears and bald head and Northern accent and leather jacket just as much as the you with the skinny tie and lanky body and spiky hair. You are the Doctor. You change your face, the surface personality traits, but you are always you. That is what is important. And that's who I left home for.” She smiled.

The Doctor held onto the hand that rested on his chin. “Rose...I don't know...how, what...there's so much that should be said...there's so much about you that's changed and I don't know where I stand anymore. You used to need me for so much. Protection, adventure, rescuing, learning. Now, you can protect yourself and I fear for anyone who would kidnap you. And you've learned so much. What else is there for me to do?”

“There's still adventure, and hugs, and fun. Still teaching Harry and learning about each other. Just cause you aren't the invincible hero I saw you as when I was a child doesn't mean you can't do anything. You became a father, something I never saw you doing.”

The Doctor smiled, a wide and honest smile. “Harry's the best thing that's happened to me in a long time.”

Rose returned the smile. “See, there. You change as you need to. I couldn't imagine the Doctor who wore that leather coat ever being a father. I couldn't imagine you with your unnecessary glasses and red converses being a father. Yet, here you are with a brilliant child.” She made sure he was looking at her. “So we can figure out where we stand, yeah? Learn as we go and find our footing. Doesn't have to be right now or tomorrow, but over time, we'll find it.”

The Doctor stared at her for a long while, eyes wide. Then, without speaking, he pulled her into a hug, holding onto her tight. Rose could feel his heartbeats racing, his head buried in her hair. “Thank you,” she thought she heard him whisper.

She held on a little tighter.

~~~~This is a Scene Break~~~~

Harry groaned, waking up to dim light filtering from innumerable stars (well, that was a lie. Harry knew there were precisely one thousand, four hundred and forty two stars on the ceiling). He was in his room, on the Tardis. Somehow he had made it back to the Tardis. His dad must have carried him back since he didn't remember coming back on his own.

Though he could have sworn that his dad would have gotten them a place to stay at the castle. He wasn’t sure. He ran off before he could figure that out.

Ah well.

He checked the little device Merlin had given him yesterday that, somehow, told time. Why would someone want to tell time something? It didn’t pay attention to what anyone said. It could care less.

But Merlin had told him that it was for showing him when it was a specific time.

Harry didn’t get that either, but it didn’t matter, really. Within the small orb floated a set of numbers and words.

Half past the tenth bell. Merlin said to meet him at the 12th bell, or noon. Harry wasn’t sure what
noon was, but he could count bell rings and knew that ten was two short of twelve. If it was halfway past the tenth bell then he had a bell and a half until he had to meet Merlin.

He was sure there was plenty of time for food before the twelfth bell.

So he wandered out towards a kitchen. Maybe his dad was in the kitchen already, or Rose. There might be food ready. Maybe some of that marvelous green drink from Yelghost that tasted like star shine and minty leaves. Tingly and refreshing.

By the time he did find the kitchen (he must have been not paying attention, having turned a few more times than he thought he ought) the little orb in his pocket read Quarter till Eleventh Bell and he had a good judge of how long he had until he needed to find Merlin’s room.

Enough time for Yelghost’s lovely drink.

Or pancakes, courtesy of Rose, who was flipping them on one of the stoves Harry judged to be from the Mid-23rd century.

“Hi Harry! You have a good night’s sleep?”

“Restful. I have, it seems, one bell and a quarter of another bell until I need to meet Merlin. However long a bell is.” Rose laughed. “What? Are you going to go on about how I can’t do this ‘Telling Time’ nonsense too? I already got the lecture for Merlin. I think it’s pointless, really. Keeping track of time.” Harry shook his head, taking a couple of the pancakes that Rose had finished making, digging out some honey from the planet Vzzfora, a glass of Yelghost Shining, and a fork.

“I’m sure you have. I did hear him talking to you yesterday about it. Though I’m still not sure I get it.”

Harry gestured extravagantly with his fork. “Telling time. What would you tell time? It doesn’t listen anyway. And I know Night and Day. That’s the same on any planet that orbits a star and rotates on it’s axis. Sometimes it’s light out, other times it’s dark out. Not too difficult. But these various ways of measuring time. I don’t get it. You humans measure it in these...hours and minutes and such and so on. Time Lords measure it in circular patterns and if-then, now-dones, could-be’s and such. There’s an entire race that don’t have a concept of past or future. How they have ever propagated I’m not sure. Strange beings. And then there’s a race that measures time by wing-beats. I don’t have wings! I couldn’t even try there if I wanted to!” Harry waved his juice glass to emphasize his point. “Each different species measures it differently so what point is there in figuring out how time is measured?”

“You learn the languages though,” Rose pointed out.

Harry looked at her, eyebrow raised. “How’d you figure that? Why not just think that I let the Tardis translate for me like it does for you?”

“I’m brilliant,” Rose deadpanned. Harry looked skeptical. “Really, I am. You have no faith in me.”

“My dad told you, didn’t he?”

“Can’t keep anything from you, can I?”

“You said you talked to him. I assume that was while I was asleep. Told you all about me, I bet.”

Rose nodded, her face beaming. “Brag all about you, he does. Light of his life and all sorts of other platitudes. It was adorable.”
Harry groaned, banging his head against the table. “Why does he do that every time?”

“You’ve had other companions?” Rose asked.

“Not really. Other than Jack. But every time we meet someone new for longer than a few minutes, all my mistakes and misdeeds and whatever else I’ve done. Jack, the leader of the Shadow Proclamation, Elizabeth, Kryiosper. Ugh.” A ringing sound came from Harry’s pocket, faint but clearly a bell. Harry pulled out the orb. Eleventh Bell. “Well, I better go find Merlin’s tower. Arthur and I are supposed to meet him at the tower.” Harry hopped off his chair. “Bye! Thanks for the pancakes! You should try this, it’s awesome. Tell dad I’ll stay safe!” Harry scampered out of the room.

Rose watched him go with a grin. “Well Doctor, he is your child. I anticipate the chaos now.” She heard a banging crash, a few yells, then Harry’s small voice loudly complaining that his dad always left everything out in the hallways and why did he always have to trip on it! Then his voice faded from her hearing. “Have a good day, Harry. I’m sure I’ll see you later.”

~~~~~This is a Scene Break~~~~~

Harry raced out of the Tardis, his shin smarting from his run in with the boxes and bins bursting with various doo dads and gizmos. His dad always left stuff out and he was forever tripping over it. It was frustrating.

“Hello young one!” a familiar voice called out as Harry ran across the courtyard.

Harry skidded to a halt, turning to find the source of the voice. “Ah, Paskal! How are you?”

“I am well, little one. I am hoping you have fully recovered from your ordeal. I was worried when you didn’t wake up until the last day of our journey.” Paskal, dressed in a leather tunic and wearing a sword around his waist, was heading away from the castle, towards some empty fields Harry could glimpse through the archways.

“Yeah, I’m fine. Just overexerted myself. Just needed a little while for my body to recover from the strain I put on it. Not used to channeling that much magic at once.” Harry grinned.

“Well, I am glad you did, in any case. My men are in perfect health because of you when they should have been dead. I am indebted to you.” Paskal bowed.

Harry fidgeted, uncomfortable. “I...I don’t know what that means, really. And it was Merlin’s spell that really did it. I just provided the power.”

Paskal’s eyes peered at Harry, then he nodded. “Well, we shall discuss the debt another time. You have lessons, I hear. And you have just under a bell to get to them. Do you know where Merlin’s tower is?”

Harry shook his head. “Nah, but that’s half the adventure, find it! I’ll see you later Paskal!” Harry raced off again, leaving the knight to chuckle and head off towards the training fields and morning practice.

He bounded up the steps and through the main door. There was a set of stairs to his right and he took them two at a time until he reached the top, then he headed out into the hallway at a more sedate pace. It wouldn’t do to knock over someone on his way to the tower and then have to apologize and knowing his luck he would break something valuable in the process.

He wandered down the hallway, turning as his fancy took him and peering into any open door. He
figured that Merlin’s door would be open, seeing as how he was expecting them.

He had taken a number of turns, a couple more staircases (some up, some down) and still, no Merlin. He looked at the orb in his pocket. Half past the Eleventh Bell. He had whatever half a bell was to find Merlin.

Though if it was anything like this past half bell, he wouldn’t have any luck.

As he rounded a corner, going faster than was probably advisable, he rushed straight into a tall, sturdy human and he fell, whacking his head on the wall. He rubbed his head with his hand, frowning at the fancy shoes. “Sorry. Didn’t mean to run into you. Rather hard aren’t you?” Harry looked up, then his eyes widened. “Ah, hello! Arthur’s dad! King Uther!” Harry smiled, climbing to his feet. “How are you!”

Uther blinked down at the child at his feet. Harry, Arthur’s young friend who went off to save him with his father and the Lady Rose and Merlin and the knights. According to Arthur, Harry also saved two of his knights from dying. This young man was an enigma. He would have to talk to him in more depth. But not right now.

“Well, Harry, I take it you are going to join Arthur with Merlin today?” Uther queried. It was far from the question he wanted to ask the boy but he figured those could wait until this evening when they would be having a feast to celebrate his son's return.

“Well, I better go find Merlin’s tower. No idea where it is, but I have...” Uther watched as Harry pulled out an orb made from some crystalline stone. “about a quarter of a bell, according to this. I suppose that means the bell is gonna ring soon. Does that mean I'll be late? I've never been late before. That'll be a novel concept.”

Harry groaned. “Please, just, no, I don't. And it doesn't matter. I get by just fine not knowing what bells or hours or wing-beats or solar cycles or cloudlet halves are. You're just so dependent on knowing exactly when something is. It's so strange. Things happen when they happen.”

Uther grinned. “I wish it could be as you say, then the meeting I need to attend would start whenever I decided to show up instead of whenever my ministers decide I need to show up.”

Harry looked at him. “But aren't they supposed to listen to you? I mean, you're the king right? From what I understand, kings get to make the rules or some such and everyone else has to follow them. So shouldn't the meeting happen when you want it to anyway?”

Said king pondered on that, then he decided that he would be imperial king for the day and be late. Bugger the ministers. “Well then, I suppose I shall show you the way to Merlin's tower, which is on the opposite side of the castle from here. You'll be late in any case, so it'll be a fun experience for
you.”

Harry grinned. “Awesome! Come on then, let's get going!” He twirled on bare feet. “Arthur's already there, isn't he?”

“Arthur was there about a bell ago. I think Merlin wanted to go over some of his previous lessons and make sure Arthur was in good health.” Which Uther was forever thankful for. He remembered the day Merlin had shown up in the castle. He hadn't been sure if he wanted the powerful wizard there in the first place, but Merlin had shown his usefulness by stopping a young Arthur from hitting the ground after the boy had decided that playing on the parapets had been a good idea.

Uther led the boy to Merlin's tower, or rather he continued to direct Harry, who had raced in front of him, to go left instead of right, and it was up the stairs, not down. Harry changed directions without missing a beat, grinning the whole time.

By the time they had reached the entrance to the tower, Uther had a new appreciation for Harry's father. The child was a menace with sparkling green eyes and a smile that you couldn't help but return. Harry had run into no less than three servants, one errand boy, two knights, three ministers searching for Uther, and three other children who had been playing in the halls. Despite Harry's profuse apologies, the ministers were still sour and Uther explained that he was escorting the boy to Merlin for lessons.

He was grateful that Harry had taken his hand and dragged him off before he had to start ordering his surly ministers back to the cabinet room to wait.

“Well Harry, here we are. Arthur will be able to help you find your way back if you need it.” Uther pushed open the door with a smile.

Harry grinned. “Thanks!”

“Oh, and be sure to tell your father and Lady Rose that there is a banquet tonight at the eighth bell. It is a celebration, and your family will be with Arthur and I at the main table.”

Harry's eyes went wide. “Really! That's awesome! I'll make sure dad and Rose know. Alright, See you later! Bye!” Harry raced into the room and Uther made his way back to the meeting he was half a bell late for.

He held that it was for a good cause, so he didn't hold himself too accountable to his ministers.

~~~This is a Scene Break~~~~

The first floor was empty aside from a couple chairs and tables, so Harry ran up the flight of stairs in the corner.

Merlin and Arthur were on the second floor. Arthur sat on a wooden chair while Merlin stood next to a large cauldron, stirring something very bright orange. Harry grinned.

“Hey Arthur, Merlin!” He waved.

Arthur turned. “Harry! I thought you got lost and would be wandering about the castle for hours!”

“You dad helped me find it. He said he was supposed to be at some meeting or something but he's the king so I suppose that means you can decide to go to a meeting when you're supposed to be there or not. That's what I thought anyway.” Harry shrugged.
Arthur gaped at him. “You really told my dad that?” he asked, eyes wide.

“Well, sure. That's what kings are supposed to do, aren't they? Make the rules.”

“Well, this debate is interesting, but I had something else planned for you two this afternoon instead of debating.” Merlin tapped the table in front of the two boys.

“Is whatever you're stirring got something to do with it?” Harry asked, pointing to the cauldron. “'Cause' it's really bright orange and I don't remember Salazar teaching me anything good about brightly colored potions.” In fact, Harry recalled, brightly colored potions often meant bad things. At least, that's what he thought.

Merlin smiled. “I suppose for those just learning how to make potions, anything that is unnaturally bright is always a bad sign, but when you advance, you learn that it isn't always negative. Some are very strong potions, some do unusual things to those who take them, some will grant or take away a sense or ability.” Harry nodded. “This falls into the second category.”

“So... it's going to do something unusual to us? Are you sure we should be drinking it then?” Harry asked. “Arthur just got back from being kidnapped. Wouldn't Uther be upset if something happened to him again?”

“The king is already aware of what I am going to do. He approved it, in fact.”

“So that's what he meant.” Harry plopped down on the floor. Arthur looked at him, eyebrow raised. “Your dad. He said that the lesson would be interesting. I assume he meant this.” Harry gestured towards the cauldron.

“Ah. Well, he didn't tell me,” Arthur pouted.

“Where's the fun in it if he tells you what's going to happen?” Harry asked. “Then you already know.”

Merlin hushed them, ladling the potion into two stone beakers. “Let's go outside before you take this. It'll be easier, just in case something happens that I don't expect.”


They followed Merlin with his two cups down the stairs and out through the private door at the base of the tower. It opened into an expansive meadow that stretched until the outer walls, maybe a hundred meters.

“Here, this should be enough room. Now, this one is for you Arthur, and this one is yours, Harry. There's more in yours, young wizard, because I had to make sure it could work with your magic. Now, drink up.”

Harry and Arthur exchanged glances.

“Cheers, Arthur,” Harry said, raising his glass.

“Cheers, Harry,” Arthur replied, then they both downed the potion.

Harry had been expecting it to taste terrible. Things colored bright colors either tasted amazing or terrible and potions tended to fall into the latter category.
So he was surprised when a bright, tangy flavor exploded over his tongue and tingled down his throat. He wasn't able to identify the flavor but it was brilliant.

Arthur didn't think so though, judging by the hacking cough he gave. Harry looked at Merlin, curious.

“The potion tastes different based on the personality of the drinker and sometimes based on the magic. You probably had a better taste because of your magic more than anything else. Also, Arthur has an ingrained dislike of my potions, so it influenced his expectations.” Merlin smiled. “Ah, and here we go.”

Harry's vision suddenly skewed sideways and he felt the earth drop out from under his feet. His body started to tip and he felt the ground rush up to meet him, but for some reason, the sensations were dulled. He couldn't feel the pain from hitting the ground, or the feel of the grass on his skin or his clothes or anything.

He closed his eyes and his magic started to race around his body in wild motions, and he could swear that his form was changing, but that was absurd.

Unless that was what the potion did.

He snapped his eyes open.

Except the world looked different now. There were more...colors. Deeper colors, strange wavelengths. He wasn't sure what that one was, but it was amazing. All the normal colors he was used to were there, and then there were more. Lots more.

He looked around for Arthur, his head feeling strange and light.

But, Arthur wasn't there. Only Merlin and...was that a lion cub sitting next to Merlin? It was, it was indeed a small lion cub right where Arthur had been. Arthur was a lion cub.

“Well, Harry, I hadn't expected this from you. That is a beautiful form.” Harry looked at Merlin. The wizard shone with bright lights, a myriad of silvers and whites and golds and spun together.

“Merlin, what happened?” Harry tried to ask, but all that came out was a sort of snuffling sound. He couldn't talk!

Harry tried to climb to his feet but found more legs than he expected.

He had six legs! Six! That was two too many limbs! He tried to walk, but he couldn't move right. He kept stumbling over his hooves (there were certainly hooves, and two too many for a horse, if that's what he was supposed to be). He looked behind him, since he could move his head, and saw wings. Two sets of jewel green wings, tiny, and folded up on his back. His skin (fur? Coat?) was as black as his hair.

Harry, in the midst of trying to figure out how to walk, suddenly remembered where he had seen this kind of animal before. It was on the planet his dad had crashed into after his sixth birthday party. They never got the name, but the animals there were absolutely gorgeous and Harry had fallen in love with the winged, six legged beasts that would give him rides.

And from what he remembered, they didn't really look like horses. They had several whippy tails instead of a hairy one and their heads resembled a felines with swirlly eyes and strange, multi-pronged ears. Their young were unable to fly though, and Harry was a bit disappointed. He was still a young one, just as Arthur was a cub.
Merlin was still human, which was to be expected seeing as he hadn’t drunk the potion.

Harry, on the other hand, was something he had never seen before. He had six legs that ended in something akin to horses hooves, but harder. The body was sleek and slim, his head looked very feline, something like one of those exotic animals he had been shown pictures of when he studied other countries. And, Arthur spotted, he had wings. Green wings, if his eyes could be trusted. He was suddenly seeing less colors than he was used to. Merlin was now in muted shades of colors, like someone had washed his clothes too many times.

He tried to speak, ask Merlin what was going on, as he hadn’t quite adjusted to his strange hearing capabilities (did someone really just fall down the stairs with an armful of dishes?) and hadn’t heard anything Merlin had said.

What came out, though, was more like a “Mreow?” Arthur snapped his jaws shut.

“You sound adorable, Arthur,” Merlin grinned, stopping down the pat the small lion on the head.

“Adorable.”

Arthur tried to swat the hand away, but stumbled and ended up on his face. Having four legs was strange.

Which meant the Harry, with his six legs, was in an even worse position. Still, the tiny creature (Harry was now shorter than he had been before he took the potion, which was quite a feat) stumbled over on his legs until he was in front of Arthur.

Then Harry headbutted Arthur, making soft, swooshy noises. Arthur supposed that was how whatever animal Harry was communicated.

“All right you two. Today’s exercise is one in cooperation. As you are discovering, you aren’t going to be able to do a lot of the things you normally could. Walking will be a challenge, communication in the normal forms will be impossible, and much of your advantages have been removed. Though you’ve also gained some advantages in your new forms, hearing and smell for you, young Arthur, if I am correct.” Arthur nodded his head, figuring that was about the only way he could answer at the moment. “And I don’t know what your form allows you to do Harry. I have never seen the like of it.” Merlin pondered.

Harry paused, looked at the ground, then started pawing at the grass until he had a spot of dirt.

Writing wasn’t too difficult, Harry discovered, as long as he took it slowly.
“You can see better?” Harry nodded. “Anything else, young one?”

Harry paused, feeling his body out. His wings were still too weak to carry his form, so no flying. He could feel something at the edges of his mind, but he wasn’t sure what it was. It might be an inherent trait of the animal that he just didn’t know how to access. He wiggled his ears. His hearing was about the same as before, and his nose might actually be a bit better but it was negligible. His magic was still present, but he didn’t know if he could use it.

“So you still have access to your magic. Can you use it?”

Harry shook his head and tried to shrug his shoulders/wings/forelimbs in the basic gesture of “No Idea”.

Merlin nodded. “Alright. So, your eyesight is far superior to your human eyes, and Arthur can hear and smell better.” He grinned. “This will be fun.”

Harry aimed what he thought might be a glare at Merlin and sort of whooshed-hissed in his direction. Merlin grinned all the more.

“So, today you will be finding several things I hid around the field. Some of them are visible, some of them are not. Together you will have to figure out where they are, collect any that can be touched and acknowledge those that can't. If you find more than three quarters of them together, and almost all of the ones that can be touched, I shall give you the reversal potion before the feast. If you don't and there isn't an obvious reason for your failure, then you shall remain as you are for the rest of the evening until the potion wears off normally, which will be tomorrow at noon.”

Harry looked at Arthur, who seemed to be panicking. Harry supposed it would be strange for the prince to attend the feast as a lion cub, especially since the feast was in his honor.

Harry nodded at Merlin, who smiled. “I will know when you have gathered or acknowledged an object. Each has a spell on them to alert me to your discovery. I will be out here either when you have found enough of the items or before the feast, whichever comes first.”

Arthur stumbled to his feet, pawing at his mentor's robes. Tiny claws snagged on the cloth. “Mreow?”

“It's alright Arthur. Your father knows what's going on and what might happen. He approved, though I rather think he would enjoy it if you showed up as an animal this evening.”

Arthur looked as indignant as a lion cub could look.

Harry let out soft swooshy hisses, laughing. Arthur glared at him as well.

“Now you two, off you go. I'll be back in a little while. I will tell you that everything this is outside, between my tower and the wall, and between the east wing and the south wing, so within this meadow area bordered by the trees.” Merlin headed towards the tower, waving. “Do your best!”

Harry and Arthur were left, half standing, to their own devices. They looked at each other, and pondered. How could they talk to each other? Speaking was out, they couldn't understand each
other. Harry wasn't sure Arthur could control his paws well enough to write in the dirt like Harry
could with his thin, hardened hooves.

Arthur stood up, shaky, and walked forward. He managed to get a couple steps without falling flat
on his face. He yeowled in excitement.

Harry decided to give it a shot. Really, six legs was too many. What did anything or anyone need
with six legs?

He got his hind and mid legs under him and started to push up with his fore legs, until he stood, just a
hair taller than Arthur-cub. He lifted his front right leg and left mid and back legs, and stepped
forward. One step. Two steps. Three steps. He stopped, feeling mildly triumphant. Maybe he could
do this. He stepped forward again, then leaped.

That was a mistake. His feet decided that getting underneath him wasn't important and he crashed.
He heard the lion cub snickering and glared back at Arthur.

For the next half a bell, the two children-come-animals learned how to walk in their new forms, then
how to jump, then a hesitant run. It wasn't terrible, just not entirely graceful.

Merlin watched from the window of his tower room and his two pupils started to find the ground
again. He smiled as they began to run around, figuring out how their body worked. They hadn't
really needed to relearn how to walk, just figure out how their new body walked. Everything was
ingrained into the animal bodies they inhabited, they just had to access it.

It wouldn't be long, really, until they started searching. Then would come the fun part. Harry would
have a clear advantage on seeing things, Merlin judged. But many of the items weren't tangible.
Some of them were magical and had form only because the magic sustained them. Some were
sounds that were stuck to an object. Some were smells. Merlin had spent a few hours the night before
setting it up.

It would be an interesting lesson. How would two people who were both intelligent yet couldn't
communicate with each other and each with different handicaps work together.

Knowing Arthur, it wouldn't be long before the cub would grow impatient.

Harry, Merlin wasn't sure. The magical items were there specifically for Harry, designed so he could
find them. He had placed a bit of his own magic on the objects to see if Harry could figure it out and
track each item with his own magic. Really, the finding was part of Harry's lesson. Arthur's lesson
was in understanding differences and working together. Putting Arthur through a mental task was
one way to teach the young prince the value of not ignoring those who couldn't speak the same or
who looked different. A practical demonstration was another, one Merlin thought was the most
important.

He wondered how far the two would get. They had just under six bells to find the items. Then he
would see whether a lion cub and whatever strange creature Harry was would be attending the feast
instead of two young boys.

Harry, the moment he managed to run effectively, hurried over to Arthur-cub, nosing the small lion.
They had to find the items. Harry was sure Arthur wasn't interested in attending a feast in his present
form, even if Harry wasn't too bothered by it.

The cub turned golden eyes towards him and tilted his head. Harry looked at a distant tree then back
to Arthur.
“Mreow?”

Harry walked over towards a tree near the edge of the boundary. Nestled in a crook of branches was a small block, glowing bright silver in Harry's vision. He nudged Arthur towards it. It was too high for him to reach especially since he couldn't fly and this body wasn't made to climb trees.

Arthur looked at Harry in confusion.

Harry put his forelegs on the tree and tried to mime climbing. He pointed upwards with his nose.

Arthur nodded, wondering what Harry was pointing it. It was irritating that they couldn't talk. How was he supposed to figure out what was going on?

Arthur unsheathed his claws, looking at them. They were small but very sharp. He hoped they would hold him to the tree as he climbed up after Harry's mystery item.

A few feet up, he found the crook and, looking closely, he managed to make out a little block. It was brown, Arthur thought, and he picked it up in his mouth. Must be what Harry saw. It didn't belong in a tree.

Harry watched Arthur stood in the gap, the cube in his mouth. His butt wiggled, and then he jumped. Harry hadn't seen a less graceful landing since his own attempt not too long ago. He swooshed a laugh.

Arthur glared, dropping the cube in front of Harry before turning his back.

The cube was glowing bright silver and brown and close up, Harry could see the shifting patterns of the strange new colors. They flowed over the stone. He touched his nose to it and his magic roared to life.

Harry would have grinned if he could. He was seeing the magic Merlin had left, he was sure of it.

Harry turned to Arthur to poke at him, but the cub had already left.

Harry rolled his eyes as he caught the cub pouncing on something in the grass. He trotted over, the cube in his jaws. It was almost too big for his mouth.

“Mreow!” Arthur pounced on a bug. Harry shoved at him with his nose, dropped the cube, and pointed at it with a foreleg. Arthur turned resentful eyes on him.

This was going to be a long exercise, Harry could tell.

~~~~This is a Scene Break~~~~

By the time Merlin showed back up on the field, Harry and Arthur had managed to find fifteen different shaped items hidden around the field, five strange noises Arthur or Harry had poked their noses at before jerking back as they disappeared, seven odd smells, and three magical mists.

Arthur had wandered into one before Harry could plant himself in front of it to warn the cub off and had ended up dangling upside-down for a number of minutes until Harry could coax his magic to agree with him. Still, Arthur had bounded off in a huff, upset. Harry carefully skirted the strange upside-down mist and chased after his friend.

They hadn't known if they had gotten everything, Merlin hadn't told them how many items there were, but Harry thought they had gotten quite a bit. Especially since he kept having to cajole Arthur
into the hunt more times than he would care to admit.

The two small animals sat in front of Merlin. One was sulky and upset, the other amused but exasperated.

Merlin looked at the two of them. “Well, I can say that you have managed to beat the challenge, though just barely.” He set down a bowl full of shimmering liquid in front of Harry and Arthur. “Three sips each, little ones. Then we will discuss your performance.”

Arthur pounced for the bowl, almost landing in it, before taking three careful sips and sitting back, hoping his time as a lion cub would be over. Harry took his time, and sipped at the potion.

Within a couple minutes, where two animals had been, two children now sat, covered in burrs, mud, dirt, and sap.

“Why’d you do that Merlin? You didn't even tell us!” Arthur complained, not even trying to clean himself off.

Merlin raised an eyebrow. “Arthur, I told you the lesson at the beginning. Do you remember?”

“Cooperation. I mean, we had to find these things, though I don't know why. Harry found most of them anyway. I just had to do the dirty work since Harry couldn't climb trees and his wings got caught in the bushes if he tried to squirm under them.” Arthur looked at Harry.

“Well, that was also part of the lesson. Harry has magic, and I deliberately made it easier for him to find the items. The fact that only you could reach most of them was only a happy accident. I didn't have any idea what kind of animal either of you would turn into, though I suspected you would be a lion, Arthur. Your fascination with them made it easy to predict.”

“Well, I think it was stupid.”

Harry grinned. “I think it was brilliant. Absolutely brilliant. That was a ton of fun, even if I spent most of the time chasing down Arthur cause he ran off in a huff.”

Merlin looked at Harry. “I would love to know what kind of animal you were. I have never seen the like of it.”

Harry scratched his head. “Well, dad and I ran into them on this planet. Dad never told me where we were, but the animals there were absolutely amazing. I think I was a Fygliera. The adults had huge, jewel colored wings and they soared through the sky. Their babies and younglings would ride on their parents backs until they were old enough to learn. I think I still had a little while to go until I could learn how to fly.”

Arthur slumped. “I don't get why you did that.” Arthur stated, his voice taking a hint of whine.

Merlin sighed. Arthur could be particularly dense when he wanted to be. “Arthur, what did you have to do to finish the challenge?”

Arthur looked sullen, but he thought about it for a few minutes. “Well, work together. Sort of. Harry couldn't get the items, but he could find them. So I had to get them, even if I didn't want to. And we couldn't talk, which was irritating. I didn't know what Harry was gesturing half the time.”

“I would like you to think about it again, Arthur, and think about different ways you could use those skills when meeting different people and cultures. You did something very important today. I would recommend contemplating how a king can use the same skills you used.” Arthur started to open his
mouth. “Tomorrow, Arthur, tomorrow I will hear your answer. For now, I think you should go get cleaned up and get dressed. You have a feast to attend and looking like you went playing about in the bushes and trees for hours is not how a prince should present himself.”

Arthur looked down at himself. “Probably not. Can't you just magic it clean?”

“Then you would never learn the value of doing things for yourself. Now, off you go. I'm sure your dad is wondering if you're your normal shape again, Harry. He did stop by to see me once, and thought you looked adorable, but then he wandered off again.”

Harry laughed. “Sounds like him. I bet he’s gone and poked into every possible room the castle has and probably upset a number of the occupants in the process. I’ll go see if Rose has managed to corral him.” Harry grinned and waved, heading back to the castle. Arthur sighed, following. He had a bath to take and decent clothes to find.

Harry rushed through the castle, bare feet slapping on the ground. He should probably go find the Tardis and get cleaned up. While he hadn’t realized the extent of the amount of dirt and mess he had picked up while he was scampering around in the underbrush until after he had changed back, he could feel stickers and sap clinging to his clothes and his skin. According to the stone in his pocket, he hand under a bell to get cleaned before the feast.

He really would have liked to attend the feast as a Fygliera. That would have been fun and interesting. Seeing the reactions of the various dignitaries and knights would have been worth the hassle of being so small as to be unable to reach the table.

He retraced his steps until he was out in the front courtyard, the Tardis just behind a wall. He hurried over to it, slamming the door open and making for the washing facilities.

Rose popped her head out of a door as he passed, mouth open to say something, then stopped. And giggled. “You look like you've gone tromping through a forest. The only other thing you would have needed to do was to fall into a mud hole.”

Harry looked down at himself. “I’m not that bad, am I?”

“I’m still wondering if you went rolling in a dirt pile after climbing through a whole row of bushes. You have stickers in your hair and all over your clothes and we have a feast to attend in…” Rose turned her watch towards her face. “Half an hour.” She took in the look on Harry’s face. “Don’t worry about how long that is. I’ll make sure I come get you before I head to the feast.”

“Where’s dad?”

“Off somewhere in the castle. Possibly being a menace to decent folk or stealing food from the kitchen. I can picture him standing off to the side, snitching pieces of bread or cheese or a banana, do they have bananas in this time?, as the cooks go by.”

Harry laughed, enjoying the image as he headed to the showers.

He wasn’t sure how long he had, but he decided that taking an extended shower wasn’t the best idea. So he stripped, shoved his clothes into a bin that needed to be tossed into the laundry facilities, and then stepped into the spray of hot water and soap.

The dirt, sap, and various other substances he had crawled through slid off his body and he enjoyed the sensation. Then the air turned on and his hair fluffed up like a kitten’s. He would have to smooth it down again. When he was younger, his short hair would always manage to stick up in every direction. As it got longer, the weight of it would force it into submission and he decided that longer
He slipped out of the shower and towards his room. His drawers were still open, evidence of his failed attempt at cleaning not too long before, and he yanked out a long pair of black pants. They wrapped at his waist and tied to keep them up, but they were his favorite style. A shirt of bright red joined it and he turned to the mirror on the far wall.

Now, his hair was, to put it plainly, frizzy. It looked like he had gotten on the wrong end of a lightning strike. He grabbed the brush the Tardis had left there for him when he had been younger and started to try and tame it.

It was futile though. The amount of frizz was so profound that he could barely get his hair to pull into a reasonable resemblance of order.

He sighed.

“Harry, I’m heading to the castle. Are you ready?” Rose’s voice echoed down the hall. He stared at the mirror, then the brush, before sighing.

Really, it was just hair.

“Yeah, I’m ready. Meet you in the console room!” he called back, spinning on his heel.

He smiled ruefully at Rose’s giggles when he walked in.

“What happened?” she asked, breathless.

“The setting on the dryspin was a bit high. This is the result.”

“Well, if you’re dad uses them too, at least I know why his hair was always sticking up. Come on, I bet he’s in the castle already.”

“You look lovely. Where did you get the dress? I don’t think I’ve seen that dress before.”

Rose spun, letting the colors of her gown flair out around her. “There’s a closet on the Tardis full of these kinds of gowns. I’m sure plenty of them are from other planets, but I figured this matched the era the closest. I’ve seen a number of the ladies at court wear similar clothes. I love the colors.”

“Well, you’re better than me and my dad about fitting in.” Harry dashed around the console room and executed what might be called a bow. “Can I escort you to the feast, Lady Rose?”

Rose laughed. “I would be delighted!”

Harry grinned, then raced out the door and up the steps of the castle. “See you there!”

“I thought you were escorting me Harry!” Rose called after him, laughing. All she got was a bright grin in return.

It was time for a feast.

~~~~This is a Scene Break~~~~

Uther groaned in relief. He had spent most of the day in meetings with his various advisors, lords, and knights. Most were relieved the prince was back and alive but some were suspicious.

Who were the newcomers? Where were they from? Why did they go out to rescue the prince, not
just the knights? Did the king not trust his knights? Why had a child and a lady gone with them? Why was Merlin also teaching this child?

The questions went on and on, all along a similar vein. He had been about to throw all of them out of the room when Sir Paskal walked in, a bit late but that was fine. As the leader of the squires practices, he was occasionally not on time. Not that Uther could talk, seeing as how he deliberately ignored the appointed time for the meeting.

“Well, I see everyone is lively and cheerful this fine day. Your majesty,” Paskal bowed towards the king.

Uther mentally cheered the presence of his knight. Paskal had spent plenty of time with the Doctor and the Lady and Harry.

He waved the questions towards the knight. Paskal listened to a number of them with varying degrees of patience before he cut them off.

“I understand your misgivings. Three strangers come here, and soon after the prince is kidnapped and they are off to his rescue. But I will say that not once did any of them falter. The Lady Rose was a joy to ride with, taking the place of the few squires we brought with us as cook, taking care of the horses and keeping our spirits up. The Doctor rescued the prince from the being who took him and talked him into surrendering peacefully, and the boy Harry healed two of my men from injuries that were fatal. They have no scars and have reported feeling better than they have since they were young.” Paskal looked at each of the various lords and knights. “They are honorable and kind people who were able to solve a most severe problem. Please, don’t accuse them of anything less than nobleness.”

The others looked like they might have objected, but the knight’s glare made it clear that the discussion was over. Most of the lords filtered out, muttering amongst themselves.

Uther sighed. “Thank you, sir Paskal. I was not in a position to answer their questions with any degree of accuracy and I wasn’t quite prepared to just throw them out of the room. I appreciate your insight.”

Paskal shrugged. “I merely did my duty. They are remarkable people and I look forward to the time they spend here.”

“Ah, hello there! Lovely to see you!” a familiar voice called out from the door. Paskal turned, eyes wide, and saw the Doctor striding in, his odd clothes clean and freshly pressed. “Paskal, the brave knight! How are you?”

Paskal grinned. “Hello Doctor.”

“Uther! I do believe I just saw your son outside in a field. Though he was a lion cub, so it might have been another child. Did you know your son could turn into a lion cub? No? Well, he is a lovely lion cub, if I do say so myself.”

Uther raised an eyebrow, settling back in his chair. “A lion cub, you say? I wasn’t aware that would be his animal. Nevertheless, that is interesting. I shall have to ask Merlin for more specific details later.” Uther tilted his head. “What was your son, if I may ask?”

The Doctor grinned. “He was a Fygliare. Lovely creatures, lovely home. They live on a protected planet, relocated when their home was almost destroyed. The entire ecosystem has been untouched by any developed nation in it’s entire history. To even set foot within the solar system it resides in
requires special permissions, if you aren’t me. If you want to get on the planet, it could take up to a full solar rotation before the committee approves your request.” The Doctor’s grin grew wider. “Such a beautiful place though. Jewel colored leaves and every animal shines as brightly as their plants.”

Uther and Paskal exchanged looks, wondering what the Doctor was talking about. They hadn’t heard of such a place before and they didn’t understand half of the words.

When they mentioned this fact to the Doctor, he just shrugged, grinning. Then he waved and jaunted out of the room.

The 5th bell rang.

Uther sighed. He had just under two hours to get ready for the feast. He should check on his son, make sure Arthur would be presentable. He wasn’t sure what being a lion would do to his son’s appearance, but he was sure a bath at the very least would be necessary. So long as Arthur did get the cure and wasn’t spending the feast as a lion cub.

He could just see the irate anger on the various dignitaries faces if Arthur padded in as a lion cub. It might even be worth facing Arthur’s irritation for that.

~~~~This is a Scene Break~~~~

Arthur slammed the door into his room, pulled his shirt over his head and tossed it to the floor. He was filthy, covered in dirt and bark and sap and burrs. His trousers followed and he was ecstatic to see a tub of hot water sitting in a corner of the room. He sunk in, grateful.

Why had Merlin turned him into an animal? Harry had seemed to get along just fine, but Harry wasn’t normal. Harry was a strange person even among those with magic. Merlin’s expression had told him that.

Sure, at first it was all fun and games. But it eventually got tiring and irritating. Harry would drag him all across the field, pushing him and coaxing him across the grass, to the wall, up a tree, under a bush. He couldn’t understand Harry and most of the time he would have rather been doing something else. He was sure that he would still be a cub if Harry hadn’t been motivating him.

Well, motivating was a strong word. Harry forced him into it. And Merlin said it was for his benefit. What was he supposed to get out of it?

Arthur sank below the water, feeling the grime starting to soak away. Merlin was strange, Arthur decided, and he did weird things. Harry was strange and weird and liked doing those things. Arthur wasn’t sure he wanted to be included in those strange things.

His door opened and his father stood there, smiling at him.

“Hello Arthur. I heard you had an exciting day.”

Arthur glared at him. “Merlin said you let him turn me into an animal. Why?”

Uther smiled. “Well, I’m sure you learned something today.”

“Yeah, that trees are covered in sap and getting out from under a thorny bush is far more painful than any scavenger hunt is worth.”

The king shook his head. “No, no, I’m sure there was more than just that. What did you do?”
Arthur shifted a bit so his neck was above the waterline. “Well, we had to find these objects. Merlin didn’t tell us how many we had to find, but that if we didn’t find enough before the sixth bell we would be stuck as animals until tomorrow at noon. And then Harry could sense almost all of them but he couldn’t get to them. He wasn’t really suited to climbing trees and he couldn’t fly yet anyway.”

Uther nodded. “So how did you know where everything was?”

“Harry showed me. Shoved my face into a lot of them or poked me towards them and one time he even pushed me towards a tree.”

“So he did all the communicating then?”

“Well...I suppose.” Arthur felt like he was missing something and starting to grasp onto the edges of it.

“I see. Ponder this son. A delegate from a far away nation arrives to bring you a missive from their king. He speaks a tongue foreign to us and doesn’t understand our tongue well. Yet it is important that you don’t offend this delegate for his king is powerful and strong. How do you talk to him?”

Arthur sat back. “Well, I suppose being able to draw would be helpful. Maybe find common words or trade words.”

“Now, you must fight with this man, side by side. You have been ambushed. How would you work together? You cannot understand each other.”

Arthur’s eyes widened. “Oh. I see. Harry got it all along, didn’t he?”

Uther chuckled. “I don’t think it ever didn’t occur to your young friend. Just because you can’t understand someone doesn’t mean they don’t have something valuable to say. Just because you don’t want to do something doesn’t mean you shouldn’t do it. It is important to face these situations now before you become king. Otherwise they will confound you.”

Arthur looked at his father. “Did they you, father?”

“A couple times, Arthur. Most notably when I met Merlin Emrys. He was called Emrys at the time, but he requested we call him Merlin as well. I couldn’t understand what he wished to do, not truly. That a magic user would want to teach a non-magic prince was confounding. I refused to listen. I might have spent the better part of a week regretting that decision. Though the fact that he saved you his first week here did go a long way to allowing him to stay within my castle.”

Arthur nodded. “Alright father. I’ll think about it. And I’ll apologize to Harry for making him do all the work. I think I was upset and resentful that Merlin hadn’t told me what would happen and then I couldn’t even talk to him.”

Uther smiled. “I understand. Now, you have less than half a candlemark to get ready. Hurry, the prince cannot be late to his own feast.”

Arthur scrambled out of the tub, reaching for a cloth to dry himself before hurrying to his wardrobe.

Uther left his son to get dressed, watching as various clothes were thrown to the ground or tossed to the bed and chuckling. Hopefully his son would manage to find something decent in the fifteen minutes or so until the feast began.

Harry and Rose trotted into the main entrance way just as the main banquet hall was filling up. The
Doctor lounged near the double doors, examining his screwdriver and humming softly under his breath. Harry raced over to him.

“Dad! I got to be a Fygliare today! It was amazing!” Harry bounced as he approached, grabbing the Doctor around the waist in a hug.

The Doctor laughed, ruffling his son’s already messy hair. “I saw. You and Arthur made quite the pair, running about in the fields. Did you manage to find everything?”

“Yeah, most of it. Though Arthur wasn't too keen on the game.” Harry shrugged. “I guess he doesn’t like surprises. Still, it was fun.”

“What happened to your hair? Were you playing with the electromagnetic field generator again?”

Harry huffed. “I blame that dryspin you decided was a good idea. The settings are all wonky and it puffed my hair up till it stood on end!” Harry threw his hands up in the air. “Why is it so hard to get something that works properly in the Tardis?”

“Oi, don't go knocking the facilities. If you want something different, you install it next time.”

Harry stuck his tongue out.

Rose watched with a grin, mentally saving all the smiles and laughs from the Doctor to memory. They were genuine, happy smiles that she didn't remember seeing as often before. It warmed her to know the Doctor managed to find someone to share his life with and to smile with.

She swooped over and lifted Harry in a hug, then gave the Doctor a quick kiss. “Well, let's go inside. I'm sure they've set out places for us to sit.” She grinned, set Harry down, and swished her skirts into the banquet hall.

Harry looked at his dad, eyes wide. “What did you say to her?” he asked.

“I...well,” the Doctor stuttered. Harry eyed him. “Oi, don't look at me like that.”

Harry rolled his eyes. “Whatever. At least she can dress for the period. You are a walking anachronistic time bomb. Half of the materials you're wearing haven't been invented yet.”

The Doctor looked him up and down. “You're barefoot and wearing synthesized fabric from Tourus V and you're calling me anachronistic?”

Harry grinned and reached into his pocket, pulling out a black cloak. “I have a cloak. Automatically fit in.” He draped it around his shoulders and fastened the clasp. “See, I fit in.” Then he swept into the hall ahead of his perplexed father.

“Should never have expanded those pockets of his. I never know what’s in them anymore.” The Doctor sighed, then straightened his tie and headed after his son.

The feast was as grand as Uther had promised it to be. Plenty of strange foods Harry had never tasted before (and a few he was certain he never wanted to taste again). There were many spicy foods, mostly meats with sauces liberally applied. Stews and bread were plentiful and there were even a handful of different kinds of fruits and sweets near the end. Harry sat next to Arthur, who sat next to his father. The Doctor was on the other side of the king and Rose sat next to him. Beside her was Merlin. Ranged around at the tables were the familiar faces of the knights Harry rode with interspaced with unfamiliar faces.
The king stood up, gave speeches about how his son had been returned and heroic efforts and such. Harry whispered to Arthur that it all sounded very over the top and unnecessary. Arthur whispered back that they had saved the only heir to the throne so of course it was necessary and to stop being so weird. Harry rolled his eyes and said Arthur was his friend and at was his fault Arthur had been away from his protectors anyway, so why was he being thanked and Arthur glared at him. Harry went to speak more on the subject but Arthur’s elbow to his ribs shut him up and he sat in petulant silence to listen to the applause and cheers from the dignitaries and knights.

Not being able to get up at will and run around for the long feast grated on Harry eventually. He heard at least three bells go off by the time Uther called an end to the festivities. The various musicians and jugglers were the first to file out through a side door, followed by the knights and dignitaries. Harry was about to make a break for the Tardis as well until his dad caught him by the back of his cape.

“Nope, you’re here with me until we finish up.”

Harry looked up at his father, puppy dog eyes ready to go. “But, really? I mean, do I have to? I ate so much food that my stomach feels like it’s going to explode. Who serves that much food? I mean, they just kept handing me things, what was I supposed to do with it?” Harry mimed an explosion.

Uther raised an eyebrow at the child. “You did not have to take everything they offered. The servants attend to the high table first and you may refuse something. I myself turned down a number of the vegetable plates.”

Harry cocked his head to the side. “So it’s not rude? I mean, they made all that food. I felt that turning it down would be impolite or some such.”

Arthur giggled. “They’re servants. The chefs made the food. The two round men who came out at the end of the feast, they made everything.”

Harry crossed his arms. “Well, how was I supposed to know? I don’t know what a servant is or does. It’s really someone’s job to hand out food and stuff? Do people not get their own food?”

Arthur looked scandalized by the very idea. “Of course not, not the nobility. The servants do almost everything for us. That’s why they’re here.”

“That sounds rather counterproductive to growing up.”

“Alright, alright, you can have this discussion later. Right now, I’m sure quite a few of us would like to see our beds before midnight.” Rase stepped between Arthur and Harry, laying a hand on their shoulders.

“Indeed. Thank you, Lady Rose. Now Arthur, you have sword lessons tomorrow at half past the sixth bell. I would suggest getting to bed soon.” Uther looked at his son before dismissing him. Arthur waved at Harry as he left the room.

“I shall see you tomorrow morning as well, young Harry. I shall enchant your crystal to wake you an hour before our meeting.” Merlin held his hand out for the stone he had given Harry the day before.

Harry reached into his pocket, pulling the crystal orb out and handing it to Merlin. “Here. The most I’ve figured out is that you all have somewhere around twenty-four bells in a day, each one separated by a specified amount of time. I think you start the bells over again after the twelfth bell and that delineates the morning and the afternoon. I assume the same is done in the evening when the twelfth bell rings again. Unless there are more bells in the evening, or less.” Harry grinned. “Still seems
kinda pointless though, measuring time like that. What happens when someone else measures it differently? So much confusion.”

The Doctor chuckled. “It’s not too much of a problem in this age, Harry. Actually, this is the standard that everyone on this planet in the future follows for measuring time”

Harry looked mildly perplexed but shrugged.

Merlin tapped the crystal orb seven times, setting the specified time, then handed it back to Harry. “This will ring on the seventh bell tomorrow morning. I hope you will make it to my tower by the eighth and we can start our lessons.” Merlin looked at him with critical eyes. “I feel that trying to drill time telling into you will be futile, so you should keep that orb with you at all times. Otherwise I feel you will lose track of it completely.” Merlin smiled at the boy. “I will see you tomorrow Harry.”

Merlin then took his leave.

“Doctor, Lady Rose, if I might entertain your company tomorrow? I would like to get to know the people who helped rescue my son and the parents of my son’s friend.”

Rose looked alarmed. “Oh, I’m not Harry’s mother,” she said.

Uther frowned. “I apologize for the mistake. I thought you and the Doctor married. Are you not?”

“No, no we aren’t. Though it is something to discuss in the future.” Rose looked at the Doctor, who was looked everywhere but the king and Rose.

Uther looked between the two of them and his eyes widened, then he smiled. “I see. Well, in any case, I would still like to talk to you tomorrow.”

“We’ll be there, sir,” Rose promised, nudging the Doctor.

He looked at her, eyes wide. “Me? Oh, right, yes. Of course, tomorrow. Right.” The Doctor grinned, smiled wide and slightly disconcerting. Uther wasn’t sure if it was genuine or not. Harry rolled his eyes and Rose sighed at the smile. “What? I’ll be there. I mean, not much else to do. Harry’s off getting magic lessons and you’ve got Kirigal to deal with,” the Doctor gestured at Rose.

“Yes, Kirigal. Something else we need to talk to you about. Tomorrow will be perfect.” Rose grabbed the Doctor’s arm. “Alright, let’s go Doctor, Harry.” Rose smiled at the king. “Tomorrow, then.”

Uther watched them leave, still perplexed. “I sometimes wonder if they even realize that I’m king here,” he muttered under his breath.

His personal guards, who had stayed in the room the entire time, were wondering something quite similar, but they didn’t voice it. They just followed their king out of the room and took up stations outside his quarters.

~~~~~This is a Scene Break~~~~

Harry managed to get up and make it to Merlin’s tower by the eighth bell, skidding through the doorway with his hair sticking up and eyes wild.

“What was that noise you programmed my orb to make?” he said breathless.

“Programmed?” Merlin queried.
“You set the orb to make a noise. What was it?”

“Ah, yes. I see my memory of a nundu screech is still accurate. Blood curdling isn’t it?” Merlin said with a smile, attending to a book he had open.

Harry’s eyes were wide. “Don’t….don’t do that again… I nearly beamed it into space.”

Merlin laughed. “It was effective though. You are awake and here at the proper time. It solves your inability to tell time.” He looked at the frazzled young magic user. “Now, I have a few exercises for control I want you to try for the day. I am hesitant to have you try any kind of complicated spells until you can control the amount of magic you put into something.” Merlin held out a length of wood. “I would like you to use this as a focus. It’s got a weak magical focus, as weak as I could manage. I can barely manage a levitation spell and a light spell is difficult. But I think that having you feel your magic by forcing you to use a focus will help you understand how much magic you need to use for a spell.”

Harry took the want, rolling it between his fingers. “So, this will help me regulate the flow of my magic? Will I be able to do spells effectively without a wand?”

“I believe so, but it will take you longer than you think. I have felt how much magic you have and learning to control it is going to be an exercise in patience and calmness. I don’t expect even you with your brilliance to get it right away.”

Harry nodded, feeling the length of wood in his hand. “What is this made of?” he ask, curious.

“Birch wood and the hair from a water monster called a kelpie. Not terribly magical, but magical all the same so it will channel magic, as any wand will. Just not very well.”

Harry nodded. “I see. Does the wood or the core of a particular wand matter much?”

Merlin smiled. “Yes, they do. But only when a person bonds to a wand. Some wandmakers are notorious in their desire to craft bonded wands so much, they have the customer choose everything from the wood, to the core, to the tools used to make the wand, then stay in the room as the wand is being made, touching it constantly. It is an interesting process.”

“So eventually I will get a proper wand?”

Merlin nodded. “Yes, eventually. But that is a long ways off. I fear that any proper wand you channel your magic through right now would probably explode. Or cause so much damage as to negate the magic of the wand.”

“Later then. So, what’s first?”

“First, I want you to find your magic in relation to the wand. Feel the connection.” Merlin chuckled. “This is a strange way to teach magic, young Harry.”

Harry cocked his eyebrow. “How so?”

“For many your age, feeling their magic would be impossible. In fact, for any magical to feel their magic is considered great talent. I myself didn’t learn how to until I was well past my twentieth year.”

“But I’ve always been able to. Well, for as long as I’ve worn this.” Harry tugged on the chain around his neck.
Merlin nodded. “I expect that the trauma of having your magic sealed away inside you so suddenly allowed the sense to reach a level of awareness. When you had access to your magic again, you knew what sensation the magic was and could separate it from your other senses.”

Harry nodded. “I think I always knew it was there, I’ve been using it since I was little. I used to change the ceiling color in Elizabeth’s throne room when I was a kid, and I’ve been making my solar systems since I learned what stars and planets were.” Harry frowned. “I don’t know how I managed to do any of those things though. I can still create my solar system, but that was a conscious construction that took a while to make.”

“I expect that your magic is far more intuitive than I first believed. As you grow older, closer to coming of age, your magic is also growing and for you, that is not necessarily good news. You have so much magic already that adding to your source is the exact opposite of what your body needs to do, especially since it is trapped within you. Many people’s magic shifts around their body, emanating from a core but allowing the excess that comes from not using magic to siphon off into the environment. But you can’t do that. Your body contains all the magic you possess and you have to siphon off the extra energy, bleeding it.”

Harry digested this. “So, I need to use magic more often as I get older?”

“Yes. Until your core stabilizes around your seventeenth year, you will need to bleed the extra magic. Right now you’re fine. You’ll be perfectly fine for a number of years in fact. But when you come of age in your twelfth or thirteenth year, you will have to take steps to ensure your magic doesn’t have any negative effects on your body.”

Alright. So, now that you’ve given me something to plan for in the future, let’s start figuring out how I can control my magic.” Harry grinned at Merlin’s raised eyebrow. “What? It’s in my future. I don’t need to worry about it now, not necessarily. Besides, by that time I’ll probably be at Hogwarts or some other magical school and their will be plenty of professionals to help me out.”

Merlin shook his head. “I knew teaching you would be an adventure from the moment I met you.”

He waved his hand. “Alright, let’s get started. Now, reach for your magic…”

Not five minutes later, an explosion rocked the tower and the entire castle felt the shockwave. Arthur, resting with a cup of water in the shade, felt a wave of wind ripple through the field. The grass flattened in the direction the wind headed. Uther, taking stock of the day’s activities beside a bowl of fruits, felt his chair rumble underneath him. The Doctor, perusing the library, absently stopped a number of books from falling off the shelves.

“At least he isn’t ruining delicate electronics this time,” he commented absently.

Rose, having made for the door the moment the floor started to shake, turned to stare at the Doctor. “What?”

“Hm?” the Doctor looked over. “Oh, yeah, that’s Harry. Had a blow-up with his magic. Last time he managed to unbalance several delicate experiments so severely that it took months to put them to rights.”

“That was Harry?” Rose asked, voice several octaves higher than normal.

“Didn’t I just say that?”

“But...but...he’s on the other side of the castle,” she said, slumping into a chair.

The Doctor laughed. “That’s magic for you. Unpredictable and against the natural laws of the
universe. Though I shouldn’t really be saying much on that. Time Lords practically invented half of
them.”

Rose opened her mouth to ask, then decided it was better not knowing.

Harry, meanwhile, stared at the now burnt out piece of wood in his hand. He had been trying to get
his magic to flow down the wand. It was being particularly unhelpful and he was having a hard time
forcing his magic to even make a few sparks. Sometimes it surged for the wand only to peter out
halfway up and other times the small strand he managed to get all the way through merely flopped a
few unimpressive dim sparks onto the ground, where they fizzled and died.

He had gotten frustrated. That was the first step to what would end up being a monstrously bad step
in judgement.

Both his hands wrapped tightly around the base of the wand and he concentrated on pouring his
magic into his palms. He started to see a shimmer around the wand.

“Harry, I don’t think that’s a good idea,” Merlin’s voice called out, but Harry was determined.
Spaks. That was all he needed, some decent sparks.

He gripped his magic and shoved it up the wand hard.

Then the wood vibrated and his magic burst from the tip and rocketed outward in a circle.

Harry was blasted backwards into a table. Merlin with his hastily constructed shield managed to stay
on his feet, but the floor shook and the windows rattled.

“Ow…” Harry intoned from his spot on the floor. “That...hurt.” He looked at the wand in his hand.

The wood was now blackened, charred. His magic told him there wasn’t a core any longer and what
had been a wand was now a length of magicless wood.

Maybe he could use it instead?

He didn’t get the option, however, when Merlin snatched it out of his hands. “Well, I see that didn’t
go as planned.” Merlin looked at Harry. “What happened?”

Harry straightened, deciding to stay seated until he felt that his legs would hold him and his head
wouldn’t spin. “I couldn’t get my magic to flow down the wand. Every time I tried, it just fizzled out
halfway up or produced a few sad sparks. Nothing was working so I just, grasped it and forced as
much magic as I could into my hands and up the wand. Then…” Harry’s hands waved around.

Merlin sighed, rubbing his forehead. “Alright. Well, I see we shall have to figure out a better way for
you to channel your magic. Without a wand, you have no control, with a weak wand you can’t
produce sparks and you manage to shake the foundations of a castle in your attempt, blowing up the
wand in the process.”

“The wand’s still in one piece,” Harry protested.

Merlin held it up so Harry could see the small, perfectly circular hole right through the middle. “It has
no core. You destroyed its value as a wand.”

Harry slumped. “So what now?”

Merlin pondered this, staring at the broken wand and wondering what he could possibly use. Then
“Well, I believe I have an idea. One that may make it easier for you to connect to a wand.”

“So I’ll still be using a wand?”

“Of course, just not the traditional style. There are some groups who use these kinds of foci for small children just learning their power. It is more common in groups in the far East, but I have access to a number of them.” Merlin pulled Harry to his feet, steadying him until he could get his feet under him. “Come with me.”

Merlin headed up the stairs, higher into his tower. Harry had wondered if the entire tower was Merlin’s but that was swiftly answered as each floor contained a myriad of different magical items that Merlin had collected through the years.

Three floors up, Merlin headed towards a large cabinet on the far side of the room. Harry followed.

“Here they are. Take a look.”

Harry peered around Merlin. “They look like wands,” he said.

“Ah, yes, I’m sure they do. They are wands, in a fashion. But place your hand on one.”

Harry did so, and his magic swarmed to the wood under his fingers. “They...they feel magical,” Harry said, eyes wide. “The wood itself is magical. And there isn’t a core…”

“Yes. They are from magical trees. There are precious few kinds of magical trees and most are in protected areas. But many have discovered that magical wood without a core reacts especially well to children just learning magic. Young children discovering how to use magic, as young as four or five years, use magical wood foci as first. I forgot about these, they are mostly treasures of time spent abroad, but I feel that they will be most helpful in teaching you control.”

“I thought children didn’t really begin learning magic until they were eleven or so,” Harry said.

“In Europe that is so. It is a practice taken from the Romans, I believe. But in the East, children are taught basic magics by their elders. They are not yet old enough to have a bonded wand, their magic is too unstable, but they can use these. They are prized by the children who use them and seen as curiosities by visitors from the European magical community.”

Harry looked over the slender lengths of wood. “Are you sure? I might break them too,” he said.

“It’s alright. I have a feeling that these will serve you well, and you can’t burn out the core, so it will be much harder for you to really damage these wands.”

“So why aren’t they more popular? Is it really the shortage of magical trees?” Harry sounded skeptical.

“No, not because of the trees. It has to do with how many magicals magic works. The core of a wand has a much stronger connection magic, an innate connection, and allows the magic to flow more freely. With magical wood, it isn’t a connection with magic that the wood allows. Rather it opens the senses, which is important in younger magic users. For you, it may allow you to feel how to channel your magic.”

Harry nodded. “And by being able to feel the wand, I should be able to direct my magic easier rather than forcing it through a core.”
“We can hope. Now, hold your hand above each wand. One will feel a little stronger to you than the others. Use that one.”

Harry did as instructed, sticking his hand out over the wands and letting it hover over each.

The first one he touched hummed pleasantly but he didn’t linger. The next two were dull thuds and the fourth was a short burst of sound. The last one sang in his magic, and he plucked it out of the case. “This one.”

“Ah, yes. Given to me by a young boy who had outgrown it in the foothills of China, made from the branch of a Weeping Willow that actually wept. The tree’s dryad gave him the branch this was carved from.”

Harry’s eyes were bright. “It sounds amazing.”

Merlin smiled. “Well then, let’s get started. I have a feeling this wand will agree with you. Let’s try that first exercise again.”

This time Harry’s magic flowed right up along the wand and sparked into life at the tip, sending a rain of multi-colored fireworks into the air.

Unfortunately not everything could go perfect and Merlin’s robes caught on fire.

~~~~~This is a Scene Break~~~~~

Later that day, everyone out about in town were witness to a young, barefoot, black haired boy in strange clothes holding a stick and carefully manipulating a glass jar through the air. He was trying very hard not to drop it or run it into anything and break it. People close enough to him could see small cracks and chips all along the jar.

He wandered about for about two bells before crowing in victory and promptly dropping the vase. At the sound of it shattering, a look of despair overtook his face and he groaned.

“This sucks. I was almost finished! He said I had to bring it back in one piece. This is going to be a pain.”

Some of the passer-bys stopped to watch at the boy stare at the jar, hands on his hips, before he smiled and waved the stick in his hands. They were certain he had murmured something but they were too far away to hear it. The pieces of the glass jar floated upwards, arranging themselves into a semblance of their previous shape.

It didn’t look like it would hold anything for any length of time, but it did look like a jar.

The boy then walked back to the castle entrance, the jar floating along beside him.

That was not the last mysterious event of the week, and each and every time the black haired boy was at the center of them.

~~~~~This is a Scene Break~~~~~

Harry spent a considerable amount of time with his Weeping Willow wand. Merlin had him levitating objects, fixing items (mostly caused by mishaps with levitating said items), summoning objects, changing their color and size. To practice his control, he would levitate items through the market area for a number of bells. His first couple attempts all ended with broken jars or vases or whatever.
Merlin felt that working with breakable objects was a greater motivator to not drop them since it would be immediately obvious. Harry just sighed and floated whatever his daily object was out the door and down the stairs. He felt that he got more out of the exercise in physical exertion rather than magical.

Still, as Merlin either extended the number of bells he would levitate the object or require him to run a course in a certain amount of time, Harry felt it become easier to feel how is magic flowed through the Willow Wand. He returned for lunch after the initial first days with fewer chips or cracks in the vase he was using.

After lunch was when Harry got to try out new spells. None of them were particularly difficult (according to Merlin, they were the same spells every young magical learned their first few weeks at Hogwarts) but each time Harry managed to get one right without exploding, imploding, blinding, or thereby effecting everything around him, he felt elated.

Merlin’s quarters, on the other hand, were constantly devastated by the newest magical’s efforts to control his power. Walls were missing stones, multiple colours, too wide, too small, cracked, dent. Merlin moved Harry’s lessons to a small building right outside of the tower after he nearly took out the support structures while practicing a shrinking spell. Every spell Harry tried out initially had unintended side effects. While many of them were amusing, Merlin wasn’t sure how he felt about the green and pink striped interior of his tower.

Harry would return, exhausted, to the Tardis every evening, dragging his feet. He would slide by a kitchen, grab whatever was on the counters, and flop into bed.

Rose became worried after the fifth consecutive day of this and brought it up with the Doctor.

“What is he doing every day that is so exhausting? Isn’t he too young to be pushing himself so hard?”

The Doctor looked up from the device he was tinkering with. “Huh? Oh, Harry! That’s just how he learns. Try and tell him to slow down and he’ll just stare at you like you were speaking a foreign language. Well, a language he doesn’t understand. Probably would have to be speaking archaic Gallifreyan. He could never be bothered to learn it since it’s only a spoken language and nothing I let him read is written in that language.” The Doctor paused, considering.

“Isn’t he going to hurt himself doing this day after day? It’s only been a week but I haven’t seen him take it easy the entire time. He leaves early in the morning and comes back dragging his feet. I’ve taken to putting something hot on the counter so he eats well.” Rose was concerned. She had seen her niece do the same thing during her college years and she had called her Aunt Rose wired on Monster and complaining that the sky was falling and what kind of alien was shaped like blue mushrooms with wings. Then Rose had heard a thump. Her niece’s friend answered Rose’s frantic shouts, informing her that Kelly had fainted from lack of sleep and she was being carried to the medical wing of the University.

Rose had rushed over there the same day, finding Kelly sitting in her dorm with water in one hand and a sandwich in the other. She had been restricted to water, 100% juice, and health foods for the next couple days and told to get a normal amount of sleep for the rest of the semester.

The Doctor waved her worries aside. “He gets the amount of sleep he needs each night and eats three meals a day. Exhaustion from magic related activities is normal considering how much effort he’s putting into learning the spells. Most of the exhaustion you’re seeing is him extending his magical stamina. From what Merlin’s told me, he can have as much magic as he can hold and not expend a quarter of it but he’ll still be exhausted because he’s never had much formalized training in
using spells and a wand.”

Rose took this in, uncertain if this made her feel better or not. Harry was still a child, should he be working so hard?

She voiced her thoughts. The Doctor looked up at her from the circuitry that he had been fiddling with, a smile on his face. “I can understand your concern, but Harry would find some way to get back at me if I tried to stop him. He can be very devious.” The Doctor clipped another wire. “Merlin asked me the same thing a few days ago. He was concerned that Harry was pushing himself too hard and he might injure himself.”

“What did you tell him?” she asked, leaning forward.

“I run a diagnostic scan on him every night after he falls asleep,” the Doctor said, partially distracted by a complicated tangle of wires.

Rose slumped forward, eyes wide. Really, she should have known that the Doctor wouldn’t just let his son exhaust himself day after day without making sure he was alright.

She laughed, and the Doctor looked up at her, eyebrows furrowed. “Something funny?” he asked, pulling out his sonic screwdriver and pointing it at the circuit.

“Not really,” she managed, giggling. “Just, I seem to think that you’re far more like the you I left than the you you’ve become with a child. I expect you to leave him to forage for himself and wander off somewhere into the Tardis and vanish for days.”

The Doctor looked up at her, indignant. “Oi, I never did that!”

Rose gave him a pointed look. “You used to wander off into the depths of the Tardis while I slept. I wouldn’t be able to find you for two days. Or whatever passed as days here. This happened several times.”

The Doctor seemed ready to protest, his mouth opening, before his eyes widened and the incidents surfaced. “Oooh, oh, yes. Um, well…I was a bit absentminded,” he confessed, scratching the back of his head. Rose crossed her arms. “Maybe more than a bit,” he conceded. “But you can’t really vanish for days on end with a small child. There’s a lot of responsibility tied up with a toddler”

They spent the rest of the evening in comfortable silence until Rose bid goodnight and headed deeper into the Tardis.

Kirigal wandered out to the console, intent on speaking with the Time Lord about his future. The Doctor would be far easier to talk to, Kirigal speculated, than the Lady Rose.

“Ah, Kirigal! I was wondering if you were going to spend all your time brooding in the garden!”

The Doctor waved at him enthusiastically.

“Lord Doctor,” Kirigal said, inclining his head.

The Doctor waved the formality away, stowing the spare circuits and his screwdriver in a pocket. “You make your mind up yet? We have a couple more weeks till we leave,” the Doctor said, grinning.

Kirigal did that half dance done when someone isn’t sure they want to speak but has something important to say. On four legs, it was more of a scootch around the console than a shuffle. “I...I have decided to take my leave of this century and of Earth. I cannot forgive the human race for what they
have done, but neither will I harm innocents. I would rather live in a century far from my own time, if that is acceptable.” His large, dark eyes bored into the Doctor’s.

The Time Lord nodded, serious and solemn. “I understand. Do you have a preference in location?”

Kirigal shook his head. “So long as it is not populated by humans, I shall have no qualms with wherever you decide to place me. I wish to live my life peacefully and without fighting, and I fear that humans, while full of joy and happiness, are also prone to fighting and destruction too often for my taste.”

The Doctor grimaced. “You aren’t wrong. Well, I’ll see if I can remember such a place and we’ll drop you off when you leave Camelot. Think you can hold out for a week or so?”

Kirigal nodded. “It shall be fine. Your garden provides a most delightful atmosphere to rest and think. The smells are delightful.” Kirigal smiled. “I also found the plants you warned me of, the ones that bite. Your child is very creative, Doctor.”

The Doctor laughed. “I think impatient is a better term. He created most of those by trying to artificially speed up the process of his experiment.”

“As I said, a creative child.” Kirigal bowed once more. “I will take my leave, Lord Doctor. Thank you, again, for allowing me to stay on your Tardis. It is a pleasure one does not receive often.”

“Not a problem! Least I could do for one of the last members of a beautiful species.” The Doctor watched Kirigal leave, heading back to his refuge in the garden. The Tractite was unlikely to emerge from the gardens until they left Earth. The Doctor couldn’t blame him, really. He hated humans for what they had done to his planet and his people but he was so peaceful that he couldn’t bring himself to hurt anyone. Going so far as to kidnap Arthur Pendragon was probably the most violent Kirigal could be.

It would do him some amount of good to live somewhere humans had never been. He would make sure Kirigal ended up on a planet humans never set foot on.

~~~~This is a Scene Break~~~~

Harry and Merlin were standing in the middle of an empty field, the closest building a hundred meters away.

They were in the middle of a field, Harry had been informed, because he was going to practice his control. Or, rather, the minute amount of control he’d mastered in the two weeks he’d been practicing.

He held the Weeping Willow wand lightly, having become intimately familiar with it over the past two weeks.

Oh, that was another thing. Merlin, exasperated at Harry’s apparent obliviousness to time-telling, spent the better part of an afternoon lesson making sure Harry understood at least the basics. While Harry did listen, it ended up being only mildly helpful. He understood that there were 24 bells in a day, or hours, as Merlin called them. That these sets of 24 bells in sevens made up a week, and four sets of weeks made up a month. But he couldn’t internalize them like Merlin seemed to do. He had spent so much of his life not being subject to time as a set concept that tying it down to one species, on one planet, seemed pointless.

But it did give him a vague sense of when things occurred. He met Merlin at the 8th bell every morning, had food half past the 12th bell, and had more food when he stumbled into the Tardis at
about the 19th bell (or the seventh, as Merlin pointed out. Harry had argued that if you had two sevens in one day, doesn’t that confuse people and Merlin replied that there was a time change at the half marker of the day as the candles were refitted and markers switched over. Harry pointed out that this was why telling time was pointless. Merlin sighed).

According to the meager senses he had gained from his constant exposure to people relying to time telling, Harry guessed it was about 12 noon. He had also snuck a look at the crystal when he followed Merlin onto the field, so maybe it wasn’t such a guess after all.

“Alright Harry. We are far enough away from the castle and its inhabitants that I believe it would be safe for you to cast a light spell,” Merlin said, breaking through the haze of time related thoughts.

“You brought me all the way out here to practice light spells?” Harry asked, puzzled.

Merlin nodded. “Last time you tried one it was wandless yet you still managed to daze three people for a short period. I believe this is the safest, seeing as you now have a focus you respond well to and have had more practice in deliberately harnessing your magic.” Merlin paused. “I will cast an enchantment over our eyes, so you won’t burn them out when you inevitably get it wrong.”

“Hey, I’m not that bad!” Harry exclaimed, insulted. Merlin looked at him pointedly. “Alright, so I got a bit carried away with color changing spells. I mean, I didn’t intend to alter the entire tower. And that expanding spell got away from me a time or two as well. It wasn’t like I damaged anything permanently. You gave me those glasses to use, if they broke it was your fault,” Harry pointed out, crossing his arms.

“Just so. I would rather not have a light spell...get away from you...this time. It could have a more permanent effect.”


Merlin grinned, but he did waved his wand over Harry’s head and Harry felt a peculiar shiver race down his spine. His eyes tingled, and then the world looked much dimmer. He watched Merlin do it to himself as well.

“Now, raise your wand and concentrate. You have spent two weeks feeling how your magic pools when you cast a spell. How much rushes through you when you incant. Focus, then when you feel ready, cast the spell. The words are Lux.”

Harry closed his eyes. While it wasn’t really necessary, it did block off his external sensory perceptions enough for him to really feel the pull of his magic. How it slid through his body and rested, waiting to be called.

Before he started learning control, he couldn’t have said how much magic he had, how it flowed, what it did. He could tell you where it was, his whole body buzzed with it, but anything more specific and he was left floundering. Now, after being forced to repeat the same spells over and over, using a wand designed to teach children about their magic, Harry felt like he had a better grasp on how it worked.

Well, as much as one could grasp something as ethereal as magic. There was always an element of unpredictability when one used magic. By its very nature, magic warped the fabric of space/time to allow something to happen out of place. Using it, even in its most gentle forms, with an abundance of power and little control was always dangerous.

Harry pulled the concept of light to mind. The feeling of light, the colors, sensations of seeing it,
feeling it on his skin, how it allowed him to operate in the world. While Merlin was of the opinion that saying the words with the proper amount of focus allowed one to cast the spell, Harry felt it was more important to understand what he was casting. If he knew what he was trying to do, whether it was repairing something, levitating a glass around the castle, or changing the color of a vase, knowing the concept of what he was casting always helped him focus on the spell itself.

He also thought that the language restrictions on spells were silly.

Which was probably why today’s lesson was going to end poorly and rather disastrously.

The young magic user raised his wand, focusing on light, brightness, seeing, everything that made up light, and opened his mouth.

The word that came out of his mouth, however, was not Lux. It was sibilant and elegant and sounded very very old. It was light in such that it encompassed the entire concept of light, it’s beginning and end and everything it touched.

Merlin’s eyes widened, wondering what Harry had said. He had engaged the boy in discussion as to the viability of languages when it came to spells and why certain languages were used. Harry had promptly shown Merlin that he could do most of the spells he knew in whatever language he chose to speak and so it didn’t matter. Merlin countered that the spells he used were simple and easy to convey in different languages because the concepts were similar and more difficult spells required more linguistic precision. Harry had been unable to convince Merlin to teach him any difficult spells so he could prove him wrong.

But this tongue was different from any Merlin had heard Harry use. He learned that different tongues often had slight, sometimes nearly unnoticeable, effects on the spell. He wondered what this strange language would do.

He didn’t have to wait long to find out.

~~~This is a Scene Break~~~~

The Doctor was enjoying the quiescence of the scrolls and books the King had in his library when his ears (his ears? his mind? he wasn’t sure) picked up the sibilant whispers of Old High Gallifreyan. It was the concept for light, he was sure of it, and he was on his feet and heading towards his son before he completely registered the reaction.

Why did Harry think he was doing, using Old High Gallifreyan for spellwork? He had been warned of the language’s power before the Doctor even began to teach him the basics of the language. He had been told, countless times, not to use the language unless he was in extreme peril or someone else was. And mixing it with magic?

The explosion of pure, unfiltered light streaming from all windows, cracks, and doorways momentarily stunned him in his tracks.

Harry would have a lot to answer for.

~~~~This is a Scene Break~~~~

Merlin was thankful he had decided to use the enchantment to protect his eyes. Very very thankful.

In fact, he was sure that without it, he might have become temporarily blind. He wasn’t sure though, because this was a very strange kind of light.
The light emanating from Harry (he was sure it was from the wand, but because the boy had been engulfed in light he couldn’t tell where the wand was) was immense. White light shone out from his body in every direction and Merlin was sure it could be seen in the castle behind them.

Harry had his eyes closed, feeling the energy from his spell flow around him. He wasn’t sure exactly what had happened but it felt amazing. His use of Old High Gallifreyan was more of an accident than a conscious decision. He supposed it had to do with his focus on the word. He had always found it easier to convey entire concepts in one word with Old High Gallifreyan. The language was built for it.

But mixing it with magic was probably not one of his better ideas.

He opened his eyes, and immediately light streamed into them. It wasn’t painful, not like that time he had pointed a bright laser pointer at his eyes off a mirror once. It didn’t make him dizzy or black out his vision. In fact, he couldn’t see anything but light.

Which might have been a problem if Harry bothered to think about it at all. Instead, he was fascinated with the intricate details he could see. The gorgeous swirls of light dipping in and out of itself, the magic of it laid bare in front of him.

He turned in place, eyes wide in delight and fascination.

“HARRY! STOP THAT SPELL RIGHT NOW!”

Harry paused in place, drawing his attention to the noise he could hear. He was sure that was his father yelling at him. But why was he yelling? It wasn’t as if he had made noise appear, just light.

“Doctor, what is happening?” That was Merlin, talking to his dad.

“Harry spoke the name of light in Old High Gallifreyan, no doubt concentrating on the spell. That language fell out of use for a very good reason and he’s just so splendidly shown us why.” His dad. Harry heard the exasperation in his father’s tone.

“What do you mean? I have observed small variances in spells when he uses different languages to cast them, but this is something very different.” Merlin again. Harry grinned. This was indeed something very different. It was creation on small scale. It was the origins of light and it’s essence.

“Old High Gallifreyan is a language that has power in and of itself. The words can create worlds or undo them. And that is when spoken by an adept in the language. While Harry isn’t adept, he has magic to make up for the lack of experience. And by using that language, he created light’s essence, here, on this plane of existence. Which will consume him if he doesn’t let it go.”

Harry frowned at that. Why would such a little spell do something like that? He looked around him, reveling in the beauty of light, in its complexity and layers. What could happen?

He must have gotten lost in the mesmerizing swirls of his spells because all of a sudden he heard a high pitched whirring sound. The Sonic Screwdriver. It pierced into his consciousness and dragged his attention outside of his immediate perceptions.

“HARRY! I NEED YOU TO RELEASE THE MAGIC IN YOUR SPELL NOW!” His dad, yelling at him.

Harry frowned down at his hands. The wand, his Weeping Willow wand, glowed in his palm. “But why?” he whispered. “It’s so beautiful.”
“Exactly! You’ve been inside the spell for two entire bells! What do you think would happen if you were to let it go on?”

Harry tilted his head. “I would eventually run out of magic and faint,” he reasoned.

“No, you would start to use your life force to sustain the spell until you’ve expended it all and then you would die. I need you to let this spell GO!” his dad said, a hint of panic in his voice.

Harry blinked. “I would...wouldn’t I? It’s just so...it’s beautiful. I’ve never seen anything like it.”

“That is why Old High Gallifreyan fell into disuse. People would get lost in the power of its words, and eventually almost all the adepts were lost to their minds and their creations. Those left refused to teach the language anymore. It’s a dangerous language, Harry, and you need to end the spell!”

“But...I don’t know how,” he said, a hint of plaintive whining in his tone.

“I can help with that, young Harry,” Merlin said. “You need to feel the connection between you and the wand. You should feel your magic surging through it. Find that link and break it.”

Harry did what he was asked. He felt the pull of his magic through his wand, the connection to the spell. It was using vast amounts of his magic, so much that he wondered how he had any left. He closed his eyes. He couldn’t look at his creation and stop the spell, he knew that much.

His magic protested as he slowly stopped his magic flowing into the Weeping Willow wand. His spell faltered, shuddered, then broke, and his body fell like a puppet whose strings had been cut.

“Hey dad,” he said weakly as the Doctor rushed over, holding him. “Guess I shouldn’t experiment with languages and magic right now, huh?”

His dad grinned at him, the panic fading as Harry appeared to be safe. “No, probably not. Can you stand or do I have to carry you back to the Tardis?”

Harry felt his body out. “I should be fine soon. I just need to...sit here for a bit. Let me feel the ground. Need to settle my magic.”

“Young Harry, what did you do?” Merlin knelt down next to Harry, eyes full of worry.

“I used a language of power with magic. Powerful, but also very dangerous. It was beautiful, but deadly if I had held onto it. I was getting lost inside my magic. Dad here had to yank me back out.”

The Doctor chimed in, “As I was explaining while Harry was playing with power beyond his control, Old High Gallifreyan was a language used to create and to destroy. It was a kind of key to the code of the universe and not for young children with magic to play with.” He looked at Harry, eyebrows raised. “I told you when I agreed to teach it to you, you aren’t supposed to speak it unless you must, and using it in conjuction with magic no less. You’re lucky it was only something as simple as a light spell rather than something more complicated. I shudder to see what would happen should you try it with any kind of enchantment or ritual.”

Harry grimaced. “I didn’t intend to use Old High Gallifreyan. I mean, I was going to try the spell in Gallifreyan, but Modern Gallifreyan, the kind that we speak more often, but for some reason that word seemed more...significant in Old High Gallifreyan.”

“Oh Harry, what am I going to do with you?” the Doctor lamented.

Harry gave him a cheeky grin. “Probably drill me on all the rules you had me memorize when you
agreed to teach me that language in the first place,” he said. Harry turned to Merlin. “Oh, and that is a
good example of how language affects spells, isn’t it? Not every language is created equal.”

Merlin smiled. “No, I suppose they are not. But using such a dangerous language, I think, does less
to prove your point and more to show why we use the proper language we are taught in. Languages
of power always have different effects on spells. Salazar Slytherin spoke Parseltongue and his spells
were different when spoken in that language. But Parseltongue is a language of power used only in
specific branches of magic, mostly casting enchantments and protection magics.”

Harry nodded, thinking it over. Magic, he decided, had more rules than he originally thought. Not
because you couldn’t do certain things with magic, but because you could do anything with magic
and that was dangerous.

As soon as he could stand up, he got to his feet. He wasn’t feeling physically exhausted but he had
learned that draining your magic could do just as much damage to your body as sprinting long
distances could.

“Alright, let’s leave off any more magic use for a day or so. I want to make sure you recover before
you try anything else,” the Doctor said, looking at Merlin.

The wizard nodded. “That would be wise. You expended a lot of energy on that spell, young one.
You may feel fine right now, but you will feel the drain later.”

Harry sighed. “Alright then. No more magic for the day.”

The Doctor smiled. “We’ll be here until Merlin decides that you have enough control, then we’ll be
off,” he said.

“Actually Doctor, as soon as Harry is refreshed, all I shall need is one further demonstration. Today
was supposed to be that day, if he had not decided to experiment. But his ability to cut the spell off is
also a tremendous display of the amount of control he has gained. I would like to see him perform a
light spell without experimentation to judge how far he has come. At his age though, as long as he
can perform it without blinding either of us, then he will have achieved as much control as one can
expect from one who hasn’t yet reached schooling age.”

Harry grinned. “Awesome!”

The Doctor shot him a look. “That doesn’t mean you’ll be given leave to perform magic all the time.
Magic and electronics don’t get along and if you manage to do something that upsets the Tardis you
have to deal with the consequences.”

Harry’s smiled didn’t dim.

~~~This is a Scene Break~~~

As Merlin said, Harry felt the wave of exhaustion hit him three bells after they had left the field. He
had been bombarded with questions from a curious Arthur, who had been kept off the field by a
concerned father and his dad, as well as stares from the knights who had rushed onto the field
thinking they were being attacked. Merlin and the Doctor had assured them it was merely a spell
gone wrong but the intensity of the light had still made them wary.

He stumbled from the table as his eyes drooped and to bed. He was asleep the moment he hit the
pillow.

Back in the kitchen, Rose watched with a smile as the young boy stumbled out without a word. The
Doctor had told her it would happen earlier, after she had rushed out towards the field, following him.

She had been wandering through various rooms in the Tardis, wondering if she could find that wonderful gym that had existed back when she had been young. It had been so long ago that she didn’t remember where it was exactly and had been opening door after door, wandering through archway after archway, wondering how deep into the Tardis she had gone. Then a loud hum filled the air and she found herself walking through the main doors into the console room. Something was wrong.

She sighed as the doors burst open and the Doctor rushed in, eyes wild. “What happened?” she asked, contemplating anything from alien attack to magical mishap.

It was the latter, she discovered, and Harry was right at the heart of it. She could see the glow from the Tardis doors. She had rushed towards the light source after the Doctor, astonished that, despite its brightness, she could see everything perfectly. The king, Arthur, and a number of knights were at the edges of the field and Paskal held her back.

“The Doctor said to keep everyone here. He doesn’t know what young Harry’s magic might do if someone was too close,” the knight said.

“This won’t be the first time I haven’t listened to the Doctor and it won’t be the last,” Rose told him, pushing his hand off her shoulder.

“Lady Rose, this isn’t just about what effects it might have on you or anyone else, but what it might do to Harry. He is using an immense amount of power. We don’t know what might happen if someone distracts him or gets too close to him and he loses control,” the king told her.

Rose hesitated. That was actually a really good point, she conceded. So she stayed back where the Doctor had left them, fretting.

Arthur too was worried about his friend and found solace in Rose, who sat next to him on the grass and comforted the prince.

“What happens if Harry’s dad and Merlin can’t stop it?” Arthur wondered, blue eyes wide.

Rose hugged the boy to her. “They will. Harry’s done a lot of stupid things and he’s always managed to come out of it okay.”

“But what if? I don’t want to lose my friend,” Arthur said.

“Harry might lose his magic,” Rose said softly. “He might expend all his energy and go into a coma. He might vanish from this plane of existence.” Arthur’s eyes were wide and fearful. “But if you keep thinking like that, you’ll worry yourself into knots. We have to hope that the Doctor and Merlin can help Harry stop before it gets too bad.”

Arthur nodded. He desperately hoped his friend would be alright.

Harry’s spell faded eventually and the light vanished. Rose watched as Harry fell to the ground, boneless, and the Doctor swoop down to check him over. The boy was sitting up, talking, so Rose figured he was going to be alright.

Arthur was grinning. His friend had made it. He was alright. As Harry made his way back towards them, Arthur waved. Harry raised a hand in return and Rose knew he was fine.
The Doctor looked at Rose, mouthing at her to take Harry to the Tardis. He would stay behind to explain what had happened to a concerned king and his knights. Rose nodded. She took Harry up in a hug and walked him back to the Tardis, deflecting all questions towards the Doctor.

She cooked, talking about inane things as Harry drooped in his seat. She could see the exhaustion setting in and coerced him into eating before he fell asleep. He had managed to finish half a plate before he staggered to his bed.

~~~~This is a Scene Break~~~~

Two days after Harry’s decidedly unwise decision to experiment with languages and magic, Merlin, Harry, and the Doctor stood in the same field.

“Alright Harry, no more linguistic experimentations. Just use the latin,” the Doctor said.

Harry nodded. “I’ve figured that much out, yeah. I’ll try out languages and magic when I have a better controlled study area to do it in.”

“If at all,” the Doctor tacked on. He only raised an eyebrow Harry’s outraged pout.

“Young Harry, raise your wand. Light spell, as we have discussed,” Merlin instructed, holding his wand at the ready in case something unexpected happened.

Harry nodded. He gathered his thoughts and raised his wand. He focused on the word he needed to use and intoned “Lux.”

Merlin’s fears were unfounded as a soft light beamed out from the end of Harry’s wand. It glowed with a steady light and was just bright enough to be useful.

The Doctor and Merlin let out relieved sighs.

“Well, young Harry, it seems that your time here has been gainful. Your control has improved immensely!”

Harry beamed.

“As happy as I am that you can now control your magic Harry, I think it’s about time to be moving on, don’t you think?” the Doctor said, laying a hand on Harry’s shoulder.

The little ball of light flickered out. Harry looked up at his dad, then over to Merlin. “Really? I mean, Merlin could teach me so much more, and Arthur is still a prat but he’s awesome, and his dad thinks I’m interesting and I haven’t beat him enough times at chess yet.”

Merlin smiled at the young boy. “You, young magic user, are still too young for much of the magic you can learn. You have mastered a modicum amount of control, something I hope you continue to practice as you get older, but your body is not yet old enough or strong enough to handle the level of spellwork you want to practice. It is why children aren’t taught much before they are ten or eleven. I taught you basic spells, easy spells, spells that are suited to underdeveloped magic and won’t harm you. You are more than capable of learning more spells, more magic, but you are not ready magically. You must mature just a bit more.”

Harry sighed. “Then I suppose it is time to go. But I was having so much fun!”

The Doctor pulled Harry into a hug. “We’ll go other exciting places, alright? And you’ll be taking more classes in magic than you know what to do with soon enough.”
“I want to say goodbye to Arthur and his dad first.” Harry frowned. “So long as it doesn’t involve any feasts or whatever.”

The Doctor laughed. “Oh, you’ll have to do a runner to avoid that!” he said.

“Dad, do we still have that pad that can send messages to a linked pad that looks like an old journal? Cause I wanna give it to Arthur so I can talk to him.” Harry pulled back from his dad, green eyes hopeful.

The Doctor pondered this thought. “I suppose… if you go find them, I’ll make sure I program them properly so the messages will reach each other. But JUST those two linked pads. We’re not leaving out all sorts of future tech here.”

Harry grinned. “Thanks dad!” Then he scarpered off.

Merlin turned to give the Doctor a curious look. “What, exactly, is Harry giving Arthur?” he asked.

The Doctor grinned. “It’s like a notebook that, when written in, will display the exact same message on another notebook. I let Harry play with them a while back and he disguised them as old-fashioned books with blank pages. They’re innocuous enough that they won’t stand out and Harry gets to keep in touch with a friend about the same age as him.”

Merlin nodded. “I wonder, Doctor, if there is a kind of magic in the things you are able to do. I know you have no magic, not the kind of magic that Harry and I possess, but something like these notebooks certainly sounds like magic to me, though you say they are not.”

The Doctor hummed. “A famous writer in your planet’s future once said “Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic” and I suppose it is, in a way, magic to you. I can’t explain it to you so you will understand how it works. You don’t have the technology to conceptualize it. But it isn’t magic in your sense either. It took years for someone to figure out how to send text messages from one device to another, longer still to make it convenient. Your planet still has hundreds of years to go until they reach that point.”

Merlin smiled. “I think I understand how your writer feels. Much of what you say sounds like magic to me.”

The Doctor grinned.

~~~~This is a Scene Break~~~~

They didn’t have to do a runner to avoid a feast, much to Harry’s relief. Instead, goodbyes were said in the relative quietness of the throne room, where Arthur was taking strategy lessons from his father.

“Harry! Come help me, I can’t seem to figure out how to beat my dad and you seem to manage it.” Arthur waved Harry over. “And what do you have in your hands?”

“Try moving your knight to F5. You might be able to salvage something from there.” Arthur scrutinized the board, looking at Harry’s move, then sighed and moved the knight. “Also, I’m leaving, so I wanted to give you something so we can keep in contact.”

Arthur looked at Harry. “Already? I mean, you’ve only been here for a couple weeks, I thought you would be here longer!”

Harry shook his head. “Merlin says I’ve got as much control as I can for now, and I can’t learn anything else at the moment, so it’s time to move on. We’re going to drop Kirigal off on a nice
planet, then figure out where to go from there.”

“Well, I suppose this is goodbye then,” Arthur said, hanging his head. “You’re pretty awesome, even if you’re sort of strange.”

Harry grinned. “Not quite goodbye. Dad said I could give you this. We can talk to each other back and forth this way.” He held out the thin, leather bound notebook.

Arthur took it, furrowing his brows. “A notebook? Is this some sort of magic? How can I talk to you through this?”

“It has a twin notebook, mine. When you write in that, the messages appear in my notebook, and when I write in mine, the messages appear in yours. So we can talk to each other that way.” Arthur tilted his head. “It’s not magic, it’s technology. Well, I suppose it might seem like magic to you, so that might be the best way to explain it, as a kind of magic.”

This seemed to satisfy Arthur’s desire for answers and grinned. “Thanks! I’ve never really had a friend like you, I’m glad I’ll still get to talk to you!”

The king, who had been watching the exchange with a smile, stood up. “Yes, thank you young Harry. You have been a wonderful addition to the castle during your stay here. Tell your father and Lady Rose that they will also be missed.”

Harry grinned up at the king. “You’re not going to miss getting beat at chess though, are you?”

“I believe the score is 4 games to 6, with only two games in your favor,” the king reminded him. Harry rolled his eyes. “Have a safe journey.”

“Wait, no feast?” Harry asked. “Not that I want one, I was just expecting to have to avoid it with more diligence.”

The King laughed. “No, no feast. It takes far too long to organize one and you cannot be swayed to stay much longer. I shall enjoy hearing about your adventures from Arthur.”

“Yeah, make sure you write to me! I want to hear about all the places you go! I never really get to leave the castle, so I’ll have to hear about it from you,” Arthur piped up, holding the notebook to his chest.

Harry nodded. “Of course! Bye!”

The two members of the royal family watched as the boy raced out of the room, leaving the castle for the last time.

“He’s going to be great, isn’t he father?” Arthur asked.

“I would expect nothing less from him. You have made a very important friend, Arthur. Make sure you keep that notebook close.”

Arthur hugged the notebook close to him as he sat down to finish the game.

~~~~This is a Scene Break~~~~

Harry found Merlin standing in front of the Tardis, talking with his dad. As he raced to join them, the wizard turned to smile at him.

“Harry, make sure you practice on your control, especially when you start schooling.”
“Of course I will. I don’t want to blow up my teachers. That would be a great first impression.”


“Your fault,” Harry said, grinning. “You’re the one who decided to teach me how to make sparks.”

Merlin shook his head, chuckling. “Goodbye young wizard. I wish you all the best for your future.”

Harry, impulsively, wrapped his arms around Merlin, hugging him tightly, before dashing into the Tardis. “Thank you Merlin, for everything,” he said, sticking his head out of the door before ducking back inside.

Merlin heard his footsteps echoing out of the small blue box. The Doctor chuckled. “Bye Merlin Emrys,” the Time Lord said, grinned. “And thank you, for teaching my son.”

“The pleasure was mine, Doctor. Goodbye. Give my best to Lady Rose as well.”

“I will.”

The door shut and Merlin stepped back as the blue box phased out of existence, carrying the three most interesting people Merlin had ever met away.

Chapter End Notes

Wow. Waaaaaayyyyy too many words, but I just couldn’t find a place to cut it off at. Even that ending I could have gone on for another three pages. I just needed to finish it. I needed to finish the arc. It’s over. Done. Finished. Merlin Arc is over. Whew.

I hope I got everyone! If I failed to respond, I am so sorry. Thank you so much for reading and reviewing and keeping up with this! I love writing it and I love that you all love reading it!

I hope to maybe do a short side story that is sporadically updated with conversations between Arthur and Harry, cause I think that would be adorable and easy to put up. If you have any ideas you want to see happen or whatever, let me know!

Kuroi
In Which There is Magic

Chapter Summary

The Doctor, Harry, and Rose take a trip to the only know purely magical planet in the Universe. Of course, things don't go as planned.

Chapter Notes

Kuroi: I….HAVE...RETURNED! And from Japan this time! As a teacher of English at eight elementary schools, I found myself far busier at the start of the year than I expected. I have since found a schedule of sorts and settled into some routine. I shan't promise really fast updates but I am using this nifty app called Habit RPG so I should be motivated to write far more often! And since I love writing this, having more time to do so will be awesome!

Now, onto the story! Hope you enjoy it as I enjoyed coming up with the concept and writing it all out!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

~~~~~~This is a Beginning~~~~~~

Kirigal waved to them as he trotted off into his new home, a planet untouched by humans and one that would remain that way for thousands of years. Oh, sure, there were very few planets in the Universe that humans never touched, but they did exist.

Harry watched Kirigal leave, the Tractite prancing as he went to explore his new home. "Dad, are humans really as bad as Kirigal says they are?"

The Doctor sighed. "Humans are creatures of the extremes. Extreme love, extreme anger, oftentimes within the same person. They influence everyone they meet, everyone they know, and every species they come into contact with comes away with some kind of impression. Some regard them as dangerous, others as simple, more as amusing, but they are rarely overlooked. So your answer depends on which human you are talking about."

Harry shook his head. He rarely got straight answers from his father.

"So, Doctor, where to next?" Rose asked, leaning against the console.

The Doctor shut the Tardis doors and looked at Harry and Rose with a grin. "Who wants to visit the only purely magical planet to ever exist?"

Harry's eyes widened and he began to bounce on the balls of his feet. "A magical planet? Really? One exists?!"

The Doctor nodded. "I've never been able to go there. The inhabitants are a paranoid lot and only
those with a magical on board are allowed to land. I've done a fly over, but never gotten into the atmosphere. But you, Harry, are about as magical as a human can get." The Doctor looked at his son.

Harry smirked. "So all I'm good for is a ticket to the only planet you're barred from entering? Sounds like we should just leave you in the Tardis then."

The Doctor blinked. "Oi, that's not fair! Who pilots this ship?"

"When you're not too busy running her into dimensional rifts, I suppose you do," Harry said, raising an eyebrow.

"You've done your fair share of running into things too," the Doctor pointed out.

Rose watched father and son bicker a bit more, before interrupting. "Oi, calm down now. You two can bicker later. I want to see this magic planet before the Universe collapses into entropy."

Harry and the Doctor stared at her. "Time machine," Harry said, gesturing around him.

"You two will squabble until she kicks the bucket too," Rose said. "Now, come on, new planet to explore!"

The Doctor grinned. "Allonsy! To Diagon57!"

Harry looked at his father, perplexed. "Really, it's named Diagon57?"

"That's the name on the star charts for the region. Never been on the planet, so I couldn't tell you if the inhabitants call it something different," the Doctor said, throwing levers. "Now, hold on! Every time I've tried to get close to the planet, it's been a rough ride!"

Harry and Rose gripped the banister railings. The Tardis started to rock, but then, all of a sudden, it stopped, shuddering to a halt. The Doctor looked around. "That's it?" Harry asked.

"Well, maybe it's different with a magical on board. Never been here, remember."

Rose ran for the doors. "Let's go see!" She threw the doors open and bright light filtered in through the opening. "Oh."

The Doctor couldn't tell if that was disappointment or amazement, they often sounded the same. "What? Did we not land?"

"Harry, you have to come see this!" Rose spun around, grabbed Harry's hand, and rushed out the door. The Doctor followed just a few steps after them, shutting the door behind.

He slid to a halt next to Rose and Harry, staring at the world they had just landed on.

They stood atop a hill covered in what might be grass, except it shifted and changed colors and textures with every brush of the wind. Trees, strange colored trees, strange shaped trees, hung in midair, growing from within and without, branches dangling towards the ground. Water ran through the sky, swirling around itself and reflecting the dancing colors of the ground. Mountains floated and music was carried by the wind, no, was made by the wind.

"Wow...all of this is magic?" Harry said, voice soft and eyes wide. "It's amazing."

"You can say that again. I've never seen anything like it!" Rose exclaimed, grinning madly around her. "It's fantastic!"
The Doctor marveled at the evidence of power and energy that swirled through the air, saturated the ground.

A loud, high pitched voice interrupted the tranquility of the scene. "Hey, you all! What are you doing out here? You know it's forbidden!"

They turned towards the voice, only to see a small, round, blue creature hopping over to them, steam pouring from its ears.

"Um, dad? Is this planet home to all the species that have magic in the Universe?" Harry wondered. "Cause it would have to be pretty big."

"I don't know. Never been here. I would assume so, seeing as how it's a haven of sorts. Allows those prosecuted magicals to find a place to live and thrive as well as providing education to those that need it," the Doctor commented. "I'm sure magic has ways of making things the size they need to be."

"You guys might want to be quiet. She...he...it...doesn't look too happy at us," Rose warned.

"So...our first encounter on the only know purely magical planet is being yelled at by a magical being. Yeah, sounds about right," Harry muttered. "Can't go anywhere without being yelled at."

"Hey, we're not getting shot at so cheer up," Rose said.

The little hopping being was still wafting steam from the ears as it made its way up the hill. "Who are you? How did you get past the safety spells on the perimeter? Apparition, Portkey, Flying, Jumping, Sliding, all of it's blocked!" It blinked it's large eyes at them, something Harry thought was anger simmering. "All of the known transportation spells and probably several unknowns!" It looked at the three of them. "Who are you? I know almost every magical on sight, but I've never seen you before...wait...I might have...let me think..."

"Dad, do you know where he/she/its from?" Harry asked.

"No, but I don't know every species in the Universe on sight. That would be impossible and impractical. As many species in the Universe as there are grains of sand on all of Earth's beaches, possibly more."

"And here I thought you were all knowing. Teach me to assume," Harry said. His dad rolled his eyes.

They were silent for a moment. "Um, I don't think you would know any of us from anywhere," Rose said, squatting down. "We aren't exactly locals. Not from this sector, I'm afraid."

"Sector, hemisphere, time stream, doesn't matter. Only one school on the planet for magicals and I handle the paperwork for each and every one of the entrants. I must have seen you somewhere, young one." It eyed Harry. "You're old enough for a couple starter classes, maybe even a focus appraisal. Too young yet, human-age wise, for actual classes. Where have I seen you before..." it trailed off, then it's eyes went even wider, if that was possible. "Oh, oh, it's YOU! Oh no, this is not good. Very not good. You shouldn't be here. Shouldn't be here at all. The council has your magical signature on alert, so they know you're here, no way to get you off the planet now. Oh no, this is very not good."

Harry, Rose, and the Doctor exchanged looks of baffled confusion.

"Um, what do you mean, I shouldn't be here? I mean, the planet's force field let us on." Harry looked
at his dad. "If I wasn't supposed to be here, wouldn't they have put a block on my magical signature, not allow it to enter the atmosphere?"

The little being looked up at them, eyes wide. "Oh, no, that would be a terrible breach of ethics and tradition. No magical's signature has ever been blocked from the planet without a full vote of the entire council and each sub-net's magi circle. Placing an alert is already a drastic measure. Oh dear, you will have to come with me. You, your father, and the Lady Wolf. Oh dear, oh dear, the council will not like this at all."

Harry scrambled after it. "Hey, what's your name? I don't even know your name!"

It stopped, turned, eyes still wide. "I am I'lafy, Keeper of Records for Emerald Academy. You are Harry, son of The Doctor and the Lady Wolf, protected by the Immortal, Child of the Tardis. I never thought in all my days I would ever meet you."

Harry thought I'lafy would bow if it could. As it was, those eyes remained wide and fixed on Harry for a moment longer. "Um, alright, though if you mean Rose, well, she's not really my parent. I mean, not yet certainly, though if you all have word of us then I imagine they manage to get it officially documented somewhere, somewhen."

I'lafy stared a bit longer then turned and hopped away, gesturing for them to keep up.

They were led through the amazing spread of strange magicks and fantastical sights. The ground dipped and curved, glimmered and shone, turned transparent or fell away into depths invisible to the naked eye. Bridges were conjured by I'lafy to cross these harrowing gaps and the vanished as soon as the last person stepped off. Harry would have loved to stop and have a good discussion on just what the magicks in this area were, but I'lafy never slowed the pace and the three of them were forced to keep up.

They finally got a chance to stop after they passed through a shimmering gateway, and I'lafy waved a small, spherical stone in an arc. The gateway vanished, as did the landscape behind it.

"Oi, what's that all about? We left the Tardis back there! How are we supposed to get back?" Harry demanded.

"The Tardis shall be fine, and when the council figures out what to do with you, she will be brought to the Main Hall. Do not worry, the magic of the Improbable Fields won't harm her."

"I wasn't worried about the magic affecting her until you said something. " Rose muttered. "What do you mean? It was lovely there, what could possibly be harmful? We weren't harmed."

"You were there for under thirty minutes. The Improbable Fields have a habit of mesmerizing and ensnaring a magical, and before we implemented the barrier, a magical's non-magical family wandered in, bewitched by the sights. We found them three weeks later, halfway corrupted and unable to be saved. The only magicals who enter are powerful ones given permission to experiment and who are able to resist the the bewitchment, as well as those of us with very specific personal protective magic, such as myself. My species' magic evolved in a harsh climate. We are always the Guardians of the Gates." I'lafy stopped, turned to look at them. "I wonder if the Fields have the same effect on a Time Lord or the Lady Wolf. You are improbable beings, it would be interesting to see."

"Well, as much as I would like to find out myself, we should probably figure out how to get the Tardis back first, and as I doubt you're just going to open the gates for us, the council would be our best bet." The Doctor looked at I'lafy. "So, let's get going, shall we?"
I'lafy turned and hopped off, leaving the three to scramble after.

"So, I assume we've been here before, judging by the reception," Harry said, directing the statement to I'lafy. "Or are we so far in the future I'm a footnote in a history book?"

I'lafy spun to look at them. "Oh no, never a footnote. The Child of the Tardis could never be a footnote in any history book! You are the...no, I shouldn't say anything, I would be in a terrible breach of code. No, you must wait until the Council."

Rose sighed. "Well, that was only partially helpful. I'm still not sure what exactly it is about this whole thing that makes me nervous but I've never liked meddling governments or mysterious comments. They make you out to be some kind of legendary figure, Harry," she said, looking at the back of I'lafy as they made their way from the rolling hills and fields to a pathway made from what appeared to be bright orange stones of various sizes and shapes.

"I see the magical community only gets more insane as time passes," Harry said, stepping onto the brightly colored path.

"Well, they never started out rather sane so it's not as if they had far to go," the Doctor commented.

"You're one to talk," Rose muttered. The Doctor shot her a look. "Oh, don't give me that! Every time we went somewhere I always had to go and get dressed up to make sure I fit in with the time period, but, Mr. High and Mighty Time Lord, you never bothered to change out of that leather jacket or your striped pant suit. And don't even get me started on the licking thing, or that sonic screwdriver."

"Don't insult my sonic screwdriver! I love my sonic screwdriver!"

Harry rolled his eyes. As if they weren't practically married already.

The orange pathway led into what appeared to be a shopping district, if the various signs were any indication. Though the buildings were anything but normal, Harry could pick out some of what was being sold.

A multi-tiered building surrounded by a floating walkway seemed to sell books. A white path split off from the orange one, meeting up with the walkway about five feet off the ground. Harry wasn't sure where the door was. Or if it needed a door. Maybe there was some other kind of magic that allowed the customer to access the books.

A black path that looked like a black hole led to a squat shop that melded into the ground. It appeared to sell supplies that assisted one in creating physical magic like potions, alchemical reactions, crystalline magic, and…"Kelhestery?" Harry asked, unsure of that last word.

I'lafy spoke from up ahead. "Kelhestery is a branch of magic devoted to the study of magical beings. Many of them devote their bodies to magical study when they pass."

Harry blinked. "Ah, well, that's interesting. How many magical species are there? How different are they from each other? Can they do the same kinds of magic? Are there restrictions based on species and if so how is magic taught?"

There were chuckles from the two adults. I'lafy grinned. "You are a most fascinating person, Harry. I would love to observe you in classes. You would be quite the headache for any teacher you have."

Harry pouted. "That doesn't answer my questions though. I mean, you've told us your species has a special magical protection that allows you to enter the Improbable Fields. I'm sure there are lots of interesting diversities in magical species, especially since magic is a fundamental cornerstone of the
Universe. Humans received their magic differently than many species did, so the naturally created magical humans never achieved real prominence on Earth. I want to know how naturally created magicals from other species adapted their magic to their surroundings. I mean, magic's a tool developed by a species on a planet aligned too closely to the flux patterns of energy in the Universe, so there are plenty of different species.

Rose looked at the Doctor with a raised eyebrow. "What have you been teaching him?" she asked.

"I just provide a library he can access at any time. What he learns there is entirely up to him," the Doctor protested.

Rose rolled her eyes. "Yeah, I'm totally buying that. Like you never subtly direct him to one part of the library or another."

"Well, it doesn't hurt if he suddenly finds the section on the magical energy of the Universe, and it certainly isn't bad if he develops a keen interest in magical development in the Universe. Being a magical being, it's important to know where one's roots are."

"Yet I never manage to make it back to the time zone I was born in," Harry butted in.

The Doctor narrowed his eyes at him. Harry glared right back. For a moment, Rose wondered if it was possible to glare someone into combustibility.

"Young one, I would much like to introduce you to the overseer of the Magical Universe studies. I believe you will find many of your answers there," I'lafy interrupted.

Harry spun around, eyes widening in delight and his irritation with his father momentarily forgotten. "Really, you would do that?"

"If the council sees no problems with it, I'm sure she would love to speak with you on the topic. It is one very dear to her and she rarely finds those with a fervent interest in it."

Harry's eyes went dreamy and he floated along after I'lafy in a haze of questions and ideas and thoughts for the expert he might get to see.

They had reached the end of the orange pathway, which Harry figured meant they were leaving the shopping district as instead of branching paths leading off to strange buildings there was only a solid black marbleized road, raised up about fifteen feet and heading straight towards a large dome.

"I take it that's the council?" Rose said, pointing towards the dome.

"Oh yes. Well, the council inhabits the highest portion of the Central Hub. Many important portions of Haleysio are run from the Central Hub."

"Haleysio?" Harry queried.

I'lafy chuckled, steam piping from the large ears. "Oh, that is the proper designation for this planet. It was changed by the Magi Circles nearly five centuries ago. I believe before that someone unimaginative had called it Diagon57, following some silly Earth tradition." Steam hiccuped as I'lafy continued to chuckle. "I remember stories about the frustration the council had trying to get the proper authorization to change the name. It seems the original human colonizers who wove the naming spells were a little wacky and, when naming the planet, tied the name into the shield matrix that protected the entire planet. After a few millenia, after the Times of Chaos, everyone realized how insane the first few were, as well as complaints about human-centric naming customs, and everyone began researching into how they could change the name."
Rose couldn't help but be reminded of her first assumption about magicals: they were all crazy.

"It's still listed as Diagon57 on the star charts for this region, and it continues to be, to my knowledge. I wasn't aware of the name change, it doesn't seem to have made it off planet," the Doctor commented.

"I'm not surprised. It took a great doing for them to change the name on official documents and allow the new name to be used for all following official and unofficial reasons. For them to change the name outside of the planet's protective matrix would have taken far more effort and possibly a much greater cost than the council was willing to take," I'lafy expanded.

"So, where does the name come from? I don't recognize the root dialect, or any root dialect, really," Harry said. "Then again, I'm not an expert. What language does Haleysio use?"

"That's quite a story, but not too long of one," I'lafy grinned back at Harry. "While each species has their own translation spell, it would be pointless to travel the universe without one, small differences in magic made them very hard to use in large gatherings and misunderstandings between translation spells were the leading cause in council member deaths. The Haspethi Council was the one who took up the chore of setting to mind a common language to be used by all. One linguist from each species were the collaborators who helped lend their expertise to the creation of the language and it was called, officially at least, Haspethi, after the council leader who started, funded, and directed the movement. Though Haspethi never saw the fruit of her work, you'll see her halo-shape among the Revered Council. She takes up a good corner of the Revered Council's tier. She hails from a species known for their directness, ruthlessness, and their many-limbed bodies. Magnificent fighters and users of destructive magic, so long as you aren't their opponent."

"Officially?" the Doctor asked.

I'lafy turned bright eyes towards them "Anyone who's anyone, and has taken the most basic courses of Haleysion history, knows Haspethi only started the movement for a common language because she was utterly useless at translation spells and refused to let anyone cast them on her. Her species' has an inability to produce a particular range of sounds crucial to about three-fourths of the population's native languages, and many of them couldn't speak more than their own language, then eventually Haspethi, and relied heavily on translation spells. Haspethi's inability to use translation spells was a poorly kept secret, mostly because she would rage about it, pacing the floors of the magic researchers rooms until she would leave footprints in the reinforced stone. To this day, almost everyone calls it Frustrations Tongue or Pethi's Voice, or similar variations."

"The latter doesn't sound so bad," Rose said.

I'lafy grinned at her. "You must read the dissertation on the Haspethi Council written by J'xrafi-Korilkhan. It makes for a wonderful insult when used in conjunction with the knowledge that Haspethi was completely ignorant of her inability to use translation spells until her mother died. Haspethi was well beyond her second molt and should have been completely aware of her magical abilities. The fact that she wasn't, and that her mother had been secretly casting the necessary spell on her for the first two cycles of her life, was a shocking revelation."

Rose blinked. "Ah, well then, I can see why she was so angry." What she really wanted to know was why Haspethi's mother hadn't told her what she was doing, but before Rose could ask, the Central Hub's main plaza came into view.

Harry had been listening closely to the story of Haspethi and the creation of the language named after her. It was interesting to hear about a language created deliberately by so many diverse species. "Dad, have you heard of something like this before?" Harry whispered.
The Doctor's eyes twinkled. "Oh, there are a good number languages that are deliberately created. One from Earth is called Esperanto, another on Vrshhx named Vrrrxx, several in the Seventh Grand Elcil Conglomeration. But I have never heard of a language created by the will of one person alone. That is rather astonishing. I would like to meet this Haspethi." The Doctor winked at Harry.

Harry grinned back.

The plaza was mostly empty despite the planet's star being high overhead.

"Where is everyone?" Rose queried. "I would expect a place that houses the central government to be busy."

"Oh, at this time of the year most everyone is indoors, taking the time to prepare for the upcoming festival. Most of the great magi of the planet will be participating and the young ones from the Academy have a demonstration that requires immense concentration. Though on the ground of Emerald Academy you can find the older students outside working out the kinks to their spellwork," I'layf said.

"Festival?" the Doctor piped up. "I love a good party! Hope there will be bananas. You can never have a good party without bananas."

Rose rolled her eyes. "He once nearly let me be cannibalized by a space ship's mechanical crew once while making banana daiquiris at a party in 1700's France," Rose confided to Harry in a voice just above a whisper. Harry giggled.

The Doctor just grinned. "Well, you weren't cannibalized and the French really did love the daiquiris."

"I believe there will be a great many types of food at the festival. It is the annual celebration for the official Naming. The changing of Haleysio's name is a momentous occasion and is celebrated with all the joy that can be mustered."

"When is the festival?" Harry asked.

"In five days," I'layf replied, ushering them into the large building, through the odd black archway. A film of magic separated the indoors from the outdoors. Harry shuddered as he walked through it, feeling the magic probe at his power.

"What's that for?" Harry asked, pointing at the ripple of power from the doorway.

I'layf raised an ear quizzically. "Are you referring to the barrier? It's a layered spell. I believe part of it keeps the weather outside from influencing the indoor temperature, another layer registers your presence and adds you to the visitor's registry in the Council's entrance hall, and the final layer checks your intentions and if anything untoward is detected the guards will be alerted and you will be escorted to a private and spelled room for questioning." I'layf looked between Harry and the archway. "I am surprised you felt it. It's intended to be very subtle."

Harry shrugged. "I've always been a fair hand at detecting magics, even if I can't tell you what they are for. That one was very….invasive. I could feel it prodding at my magic. It was unsettling."

"Really," I'layf said, and puzzled astonishment flashed across the blue face.

The Doctor laid a hand on Harry's shoulder, eyes friendly but with steel lurking just under the surface. Rose stepped closer. She could see the curiosity in I'layf's eyes and didn't know what that meant for Harry.
"Let's go see the council," the Doctor suggested, and I'lafy reluctantly turned and led them onwards.

They would have stepped onto a floating disc that lead directly to the Council's Entrance Hall, but were instead met by a tall, stick-thin figure stepping off the disc.

Tall was an understatement, Harry thought. The figure towered over them, was a deep shade of green, and possessed an intriguing number of limbs. Every limb was as thin as the figure's body was.

I'lafy stopped, and the steam piped out his ears in little spurts. "Grand Council Member Shorll of Halesio Central. I was unaware you would be meeting us down here."

"I'lafy, I thank you for bringing them to the Council. I shall take over from here. Your Partners have requested your presence at the Academy to look over the upcoming new students," Shorll said, and the high melodious voice put Harry in mind of a wind instrument.

The steam poured out in greater quantities and I'lafy grinned. "I shall go meet them at once. Thank you, Grand Council Member." I'lafy hopped off, only stopping to turn to Harry and tell him, "I shall inform the pertinent members of Emerald's staff that you wish to speak with them, and, should the Council permit, set up a time for you to meet them!"

"Thank you I'lafy!"

"I shall request your report within the hour, I'lafy. Please make sure it reaches my crystal soon."

"Yes, Lady Shorll. I shall transmit it as soon as I reach the Academy.

Lady Shorll huffed as I'lafy left the confines of the building, then swirled out of existence. "I wish they would not call me Lady. I have tried my best to leave that title behind me."

"People shall call you what they will, no matter what you say. I've collected more names in my lifetime than I shall ever remember. What would you prefer to be called then? Might as well let us know, so we shan't trample all over your desires and call you Lady," the Doctor said, grinning impishly.

Shorll tilted her large, luminous eyes towards the Doctor. "You, Time Lord, are most unusual. I prefer the use of Shorll, if possible. It too is a title of sorts, but one I gained fairly and was not born into. I like it."

Rose furrowed her brows. "So Shorll is not your true name?"

"No, it is not Lady Wolf. My people prefer to keep names a private thing between mates and family. Maybe close friends. Every child earns a title at a young age through accomplishments and that is their public name."

"How fascinating," the Doctor murmured. "It is quite similar to my people's system, though we often chose our names."

Shorll tilted her head. "Such customs are not uncommon on Halesio. Names in magic are a very powerful thing, though some peoples are not as troubled by Name Magic as others."

Rose grinned. "Names are a powerful thing. The one you called me is one given to me by Time itself. Though I suppose I chose that path as well."

"Your name is written in the stars, Lady Wolf. Though if you are uncomfortable, is there another name you would prefer?" Shorll asked, tilting her head down towards Rose.
"Rose is fine. I've had it for well over a century now and it's done me no harm."

"Like the flower that blooms with the rain, beautiful but with thorns that will prick the unobservant. An apt name for one who has ensnared the Time Lord."

Rose laughed.

"Well, shall we head to the Council now then? As much as I love this discussion of names, I would like assurances that the Tardis will be moved to a safer location than the Improbable Fields. I don't know how the concentration of such powerful magics will affect her."

"The Council is waiting for you. Though I must regretfully inform you that young Harry shall not be allowed into the Council." Shorll looked over at Harry. "I am sorry young one, but your presence on Haleysio is already causing quite the uproar. If you were to attend the Council then I am unsure if we could prevent any number of unpleasant things from happening. Your father and mother shall be allowed to inform you of certain discussions that take place."

Rose grinned. "I take that as a sign that we managed to get marriage and adoption on the record at some point before this time," she said, grinning at Harry. "So long as you don't mind, Harry."

Harry raised an eyebrow. "I figured you two had married in some fashion long before now. I'm more concerned over my ban from the Council."

"Indeed. I was unaware that there was such a stigma against my son," the Doctor said, frowning.

Shorll moved her limbs elegantly. "It is not a stigma, but rather a protection of a timeline. There are certain things we can entrust to a Time Lord and the Lady Wolf, but young Harry is too much a focus for events to have sensitive information that we must relay today."

Harry grumbled, but having been raised traveling through time made him far more accepting of the reason than he otherwise might have been. "Fine. I'll find something to entertain myself. There must be something interesting going on."

"Don't wander Harry," the Doctor warned. Harry grinned. Rose winced. She knew that grin. "Would I ever do such a thing?" Harry wondered.

"Harry," the Doctor warned. "I don't want to have to go searching too far for you. Please stay out of trouble."

"I'm not usually the one who gets into trouble. Trouble finds me," Harry stated. The Doctor raised a skeptical eyebrow. "Well, alright, sometimes I go looking for it, but trouble does it's level best to find me too!"

"Well, don't tempt it alright?" the Doctor said, resisting the urge to rub his eyes.

Harry waved them off, and the Doctor and Rose joined Shorll on the disc. It flew upward, swiftly taking its passengers beyond sight.

Perfect, Harry thought. Now time to explore.

"Young Harry, Grand Council Member Shorll has assigned me as your guardian while the Doctor and the Lady Wolf are otherwise engaged."

Harry spun around. Then looked upward.
A nebulous figure, more smoke than solid, floated a foot above Harry's eye level. It was a dark grey in color with what might be the appearance of eyes somewhere near the middle of the cloud. The deep, rumbling voice issued from the whole being.

"Um...hello there. I'm afraid I don't know what or who you are," Harry confessed.

"I am Kyst, of the Marbleous Faction from the Northern Regions of Haleysion Magi. I am in the service of the Council, and Shorll has given me the privilege of watching over you."

Harry eyed Kyst. "You look like the beings from a planet I once visited, called...." Harry furrowed his brows. "Actually, I can't quite recall it's name. It was a series of whirling clicking noises. Never could replicate it."

Kyst's body shivered. Harry wondered if that was the equivalent of laughter or something similar. "I believe I know the planet you speak of. My people are the magicals from that planet, and most of us settled on Haleysio for knowledge and a modicum of freedom. While our home planet had no discrimination against magic, there were strict cultural laws which prevented the free use of magical learning, a restriction applied to all forms of learning not specified as acceptable. Magic was not it's main target. Despite an effort by a variety of peoples, these laws were never overturned, so the magicals left, with the blessings of the government."

Harry contemplated this. "Are many different species here because of discrimination?"

"Not the majority, though that is certainly the case for a number of peoples. Some are here because this is the only purely magical planet, with an abundance of natural magics to encourage growth and experimentation. Some come because wars have destroyed their homes, though actual warring species are not allowed through the barrier. That happened once and the consequences..." Kyst's body swirled rapidly. Then it tilted and seemed to look at Harry. A strange shuddering came over the cloud-like being and it fell silent.

"Do you think I could see any books on Haleysion history?" Harry asked, curious about the reaction and wanting to learn more. Kyst didn't look like giving any more information.

Kyst swirled around again. "I fear I shall have to disappoint you. I was given strict instruction to allow you nowhere near any receptacles of information on historical deeds."

Harry sighed. Of course. They were banning him from the Council for a similar reason. "So, what shall we do? I refuse to stay here until my father and Rose return."

"Well, we can always go see the small town nearby. It is only a short walk for you, since I am hesitant to try any magical transportation without approval from the Council."

"I think we walked through it to get here," Harry mused, nodding. "Well, let's go then!"

~~~~~This is a Line Break~~~~~

"Will Harry be alright?" Rose asked. "He does have a tendency to wander into the worst sort of trouble."

"I noted a member of the Marbleous Faction coming down the corridor, before hovering nearby and swirling at Shorll. I took it as a sign that Harry would be watched over," the Doctor said, looking up at Shorll.

"Indeed, Time Lord. Kyst is a valued member of the Council High Guard. Very honored to guard the boy. Indeed, many fought over the right, though it is unwise to gamble against Kyst. Always has
had a kind of second sense for that sort of thing." Shorll smiled.

Rose nodded, understanding. "How will Harry take it, then, knowing he's being watched over?"

"Oh, I assume he'll try to get Kyst into all sorts of trouble and when unable to, he'll try to wander off all unassuming and get into mischief of his own." The Doctor shook his head. "Harry is prone of wandering off."

"Kyst is probably the one best suited to watching him then. Very apt at tracking and protection magics, is Kyst. Harry shall be safe. Kyst has instructions to let Harry explore within a certain area, and to keep him out of bookstores and information hubs."

"You still have books? I would think that paper and ink would be beyond you by this time," Rose commented.

"Oh, in many ways we are dependent on paper and ink for some things. Magic is quite volatile and some branches of study cannot put anything down unless it is on paper with ink. We only keep quills and such for the truly eccentric though. Our writing utensils are much more advanced, even if our methods are occasionally quite ancient." Shorll looked around as the disc came to a stop. "Ah, we have arrived. The Council is awaiting you."

The entrance hall was large and rounded, the ceiling an unseen distance away. A large archway covered in an opaque cloud of magic swirled in front of them. Shorll stepped towards it, beckoning the Doctor and Rose.

"Why is the hall so large?" Rose wondered.

"There are nearly two hundred members of the council, and at least one representative from each species on this planet joins the council every half-turn. We must be able to accommodate beings of all size and manner. Though we have no members of the giant races on Haleysio, some of the peoples are near enough to their size that it would be nearly impossible to welcome them if the hall were not as big as it is." Shorll gestured towards the archway. "Please, the council is through here."

She stepped through the shimmering magic and seemed to vanish from sight. Rose and the Doctor exchanged looks. "You first," Rose said, pointing towards the archway.

"Aw, where's your sense of adventure Rose?"

"Hidden behind my carefully cultivated sense of self preservation," she replied.

The Doctor sighed. "And here I thought you didn't have one of those."

Rose grinned, held out her hand. "Well, let's give it a go together then."

They ran through the archway giggling like children. Shorll, standing on the other side, blinked her large eyes down at them and Rose wondered if that was her expression of amusement.

"Nice of you to join us."

The Council room was enormous, lined with sectioned off areas of different sizes and designs. Larger sections seemed to line the back of the room and the smallest were near the front. Magical beings of every imaginable size and shape (and a few Rose hadn't even thought of. She was sure that strange angled creature near the middle was flickering into an unseen dimension) were standing, sitting, swimming, hovering, flickering, or swirling around the room.
"Wow. I've never seen such a gathering," Rose said, eyes wide. "So many different species."

"These are the 200 council members, chosen on the morn of each seventh year by the magical construct Kespryi. Those who wish to serve on the council submit their names and a sample of their magic in the days leading up to the choosing. Those who have served must wait two cycles before they may resubmit their names for consideration, with the exemption of the four Grand Council Members. They remain for twenty years to lead. They are chosen every five years by the Kespryi, one at a time. The council is never without a senior member," Shorll explained.

"These are the parents of Harry Potter?" a deep, rumbling voice called out.

"Why are they here? I was under the impression he had been banned from the planet!"

"You know full well you cannot ban a magical signature from entry unless the entire Magi Court gives their permission! The vote for Harry's signature was decided as unnecessary by the full court!"

"Such a child cannot be allowed free reign on this planet! The damage he could do with the knowledge he might gain here is astounding!"

"Kyst is watching the boy right now. He is restricted from the knowledge centers and the libraries of the planet," Shorll input, raising her musical voice to be heard over the squawking and clashing of ideas.

"Well, at least it's a member of the Marbleous Faction. Always have been good at tracking magics," a small figure near the front mumbled.

"Now that the Time Lord and the Lady Wolf are here, we should get the point of this meeting. I was taking my restitution when the alarm was sounded. I would like to return to it."

Shorll looked at the cat-like being stretching. It would have been mistaken for a common house cat on Earth, had it not been four feet tall and colored an unusual purple and blue, with three twining tails and silver whiskers.

"Grand Council Member Prryxt, you know how important it is we head off their arrival before they can make any mischief. This is not a matter you should be content to rush," a chittering voice said, coming from the small blob hovering nearby. It twisted, forming a disapproving face.

Prryxt elegantly shrugged large shoulders. "Jorffyin, you should lounge in the sun far more often. It might clear your mind and calm your manner."

Jorffyin squeaked in alarm.

Rose was grinning. "This is more fun than listening to the Torchwood executives arguing," she whispered to the Doctor.

"Well, put a myriad of different species in the same room and there will be bound to be disagreements of all kinds," the Doctor replied.

Prryxt stretched once more, then padded forward. "Well, Time Lord, Lady Wolf, let's get to it. Young Harry, how old is he? We must place his timeline before we can decide what we shall do about him."

The Doctor frowned. "Harry just turned eight, or thereabouts. I never knew his proper birth-date on Earth, must have forgot if Dumbledore told me. His medical scans indicate he is about eight though."
Immediately the hall began to clamor again, this time with incredulous voices and outrage.

A sharp chime cut through the whole mess of noise and Prryxt was now sitting on top of a large podium. "This is NOT how the Council of Haleysio is to behave!" The sibilant voice was raised and sharp. "We asked a question and it was answered! This is the first visit the young Harry has made to Haleysio and he is not of age and has not gone to Hogwarts yet, this is true, but the comments you wish to make shall be made with calmness and quiet voices."

Everyone was silent, then a small, almost childlike woman from the front raised a small stone and sparks flashed from it. "I request permission of the Grand Council Members to speak," she asked, deep blue eyes firm in a dark, coffee colored face.

"Granted, Council Member Orella of the Silven Clan," Prryxt replied.

"Thank you. Time Lord, I am the Historian of the Council, so it would be easier to place Harry's timeline if I could have a few questions answered honestly."

"Sounds brilliant. Just, call me Doctor, please."

"Doctor, then. This is the first time you have been to Haleysio?"

"Yep! Just left Merlin, figured Harry should see the only magical planet to ever exist, and he's magical, so I could get through the wards you all have around the planet." The Doctor grinned.

Whispers broke out again. "And he has not been to Hogwarts yet, correct?"

"Nope, not until he's eleven. Technically he has been to Hogwarts, but that was during the Founders Time. Long before his birth time."

Orella blinked. "Alright. Thank you. I have managed to place his timeline. I must say, I did not expect it would be this Council who would meet the young Harry first. Then again, very few people ever expect what happens in regard to Harry and his family." Orella nodded to the Doctor and Rose.

"We did not expect Harry to be so young upon his first visit to Haleysio. There is little we can tell you, Time Lord and Lady Wolf," Prryxt said, looking at the Doctor and Rose. "I would rather you ask questions of us, since we are uncertain of what may or may not impact the future of Harry Potter and it is easier for us to refuse questions than to formulate information."

Rose and the Doctor exchanged looks. "Well, no matter what I would like to know about the future, especially in regard to my son, it is a comfort to know that he comes back often enough to become a concern to the council. It means he lives long enough to do so. I'd rather know if we can visit Emerald Academy and talk to some of the experts there. We have a few questions of a more academic nature." The Doctor grinned widely. "Just pick a few brains about magic and such."

Prryxt looked at Shorll, tilting his head. "We will keep him away from the library and the Knowledge Deposits, so I don't feel that this would be a problem, so long as the people they wish to talk to are told in advance about the restrictions."

Shorll nodded her assent. "This shall be acceptable. Now, I believe I'lafy found you in the Improbable Fields. The Tardis is still there, I presume."

"Yes, about that," the Doctor said. "I would prefer it if she weren't there at all."

Shorll trilled a laugh.
Harry had wrangled Kyst into discussing the passing monuments, structures, and views.

"What's that? That cloud like thing moving against the wind?" Harry pointed over to the left, stopping to stare.

"That is the home of one of the clans of Curio, a very reclusive species that specializes in elemental magics. I believe that is the Curio Clan known as Orpell. Today must be their youngs first attempt at Air Manipulation. It is traditional that the young practice controlling the currents that surround the Clan's home, maneuvering it. One of them must have quite strong magic to move it against the natural air currents so obviously. I expect a celebration soon in honor of the young prodigy."

Harry smiled. "That sounds pretty awesome. Do they let non clan members come to the celebration?"

"On special occasions, though this is likely to be a clan only event, seeing as the young one is very young and the Curio do not enter society until they are past maturity. They are among the few that don't attend Emerald Academy until the later years."

"Ah, well. They sound fascinating." Harry looked around. "Ah, there's that orange path! We walked that was to get to the Council!"

"That is where the elite stores are located. It is isolated from the main part of society out here, accessible only by the Black Bridge or from the Improbable Fields. The latter is not usually the place people start from." Kyst gave Harry a Look that Harry somehow knew was both amusing and disapproving at the same time. He was on the receiving end of it from his dad often enough.

"Why's it so isolated? Wouldn't they want to be closer to where people would shop normally?"

Kyst swirled around as they neared the orange path. "The stores out here need the isolation for more than just selling their wares. They are also inventors and experimenters of the highest order, which makes their products that much more sought after. Any one of them could be a Magi, a magic user of the top level. They chose to create magical items to sell instead."

Harry nodded. "So, since I can't go to the bookstore, you think stopping by the wand shop would be better?"

"Wand? Oh, yes, a focus." Kyst gave Harry an appraising look, circling him and hovering closely, seeming to assess everything about him. "Well, you seem to be old enough for an appraisal at the very least, and the focus maker here is very good. He should be able to give you a solid idea of what you would have to look for in a focus."

"Focus? So not everyone uses wands here?"

"No, indeed. Though they are still used, mostly by humans, Elves, Sylvan, and other species with similar features, they are not the only, or even the most common." Kyst began to move towards a hut like building further away from the Black Bridge, near a large hill that towered over the shopping district. "Vanderian has his shop back here. His work is particularly dangerous and he has wards up to prevent property damage to the nearby buildings."

Harry followed, eyes wide and curious. It sounded much different from what Merlin had told him, but then again he doubted Merlin had experience with beings not from Earth using magic.

The hut wasn't a hut, but rather a door leading into a mound built into the huge hill. Harry felt the
wards ripple around him as they approached the door, and Harry knocked politely. If they were in an elite shopping district, he felt that barging in wouldn't be the best of ideas.

Kyst gave him a strange look, but didn't say anything. A moment later the door was yanked open by a hand that was nearly the same color and texture as tree bark.

"Didn't ya hear me shouting at you? I've got enough wards on this place to keep customers safe, no need to go banging on my door when ya could just walk in!" Vanderian was, Harry suspected, from Hadroon, the planet of Forests. He was the color and texture of bark, his eyes slits of black and yellow, and where hair was, a crown of leaves circled him instead.

"I would think that with the silencing wards on your door, anything you said on the other side wouldn't filter out to us," Harry told him, grinning.

Vanderian looked down at him. "And who do you think you are? I don't have any silencing war….oh, wait. I do, I remember, sorry. Put those up a few days ago, forgot to take them down. Loud experiments." The focus maker turned towards Kyst. "Hello. Kyst, it's lovely to see you again. You had a wonderful Fan-Stone. Lovely color, brilliant shape. Still have it?"

Kyst swirled around, and Harry watched a gem the shape of a small hand fan come from within the inner cloud-like body. It wavered in the currents. "Indeed, Vanderian. It has served me well."

"Good. I always like seeing a good focus being well taken care of." Vanderian looked down at Harry. "And you, small one. Your energy is most perturbing. I see you are of age for an appraisal, maybe even an actual focus." Another long look. "A difficult customer, you are. Well, come in. Don't touch anything. I can't afford having you blow anything up, that would be a disaster."

The door opened wider and Harry followed Vanderian into the large room beyond the door.

There were stones, sticks, pieces of fabric, jewels, and other various odds and ends Harry couldn't name laying on tables and pedestals, under glass and within wards. Harry kept his fingers laced to resist the urge to touch everything he walked by.

"This way, young magical. I have a room in the back where we can test your powers. It will be easier to give an appraisal after I know your aura."

Harry wondered why that sounded ominous. He fingered the necklace he always wore and wondered if he would have to take it off for the appraisal. That would be an interesting explanation.

The door Vanderian led him through was marked by strange symbols all along the edge. "Kyst, I would request that you wait out here. I wouldn't want your own power to interfere in the appraisal."

Kyst nodded, hovering just beyond the door as Harry entered behind Vanderian.

The room was sparse, everything tucked away behind glowing symbols on the walls. Harry eyed them, curious as to what they did.

"Young one, stand on this rune. Yes, that one. And be still. The appraisal is very thorough, but it needs the magical to be unmoving." Vanderian looked at him. "Are you wearing anything that might hinder the appraisal? I know several peoples have inhibiting spells or magical concealments. It would be best to let me know, I can undo most of the known enchantments."

Harry reached up, pulling the necklace out from underneath his shirt. "This might be a problem. It's a restrictor, but one that's been specifically designed for my particular...problem."
"Problem?" Vanderian's voice sounded skeptical. "Out with it, we don't have all day," Vanderian said, and Harry had the feeling he was rolling his eyes.

"Well," Harry shifted. "When I was a toddler, I was...kidnapped. The kidnappers had a grudge against my dad, and they rather enjoyed having his magical child in their possession. They did a number of things to me, but the most significant was to alter my nerves so that they ran along my internal magical conduits. They effectively made me a touch empath….and I can tell by that wince you know what that means," Harry finished, raising an eyebrow at Vanderian.

"Yes, I rather do. Touch Empaths are rare by their nature. Most sentient species are social creatures but being a touch empath doesn't allow this. The fact that you can be around people means that your necklace must be very special indeed. I can assure you I shall not touch you while you have your necklace off, but unfortunately off is what it needs to be." Vanderian stood back, making sure he kept his distance. He knew the sensitivity of touch-empaths. It would not do to be within the young boy's range.

Harry shrugged, unhooking the clasp. "It's not a problem. I'm strictly skin to skin or it's closest approximation. Have to have touch for it to work. Which is why the necklace works in the first place. But it does restrict my magic in turn."

Vanderian nodded, mildly relieved. "Alright, stand still. I'm activating the rune. Your magical aura will become visible and should reach towards the runes on the wall that indicate what kind of focus you will need. Whether you're ready for it or not will also be indicated, so don't get your hopes up. You might not be ready."

Harry grinned. "Sounds awesome." He stuck his thumb in the air. Vanderian shook his head.

The focus maker closed his eyes, pulling a swirl of wood that was shaped like a flower from some hidden pocket, clasping both hands around it. His eyes closed and Harry felt the power fill the air. His magic reached out, much like it used to when Harry was little, and he gasped as it became visible, streaming through the air in a swirl of color.

It was the universe, the stars and planets and galaxies, everything he had witnessed in the Tardis dancing around him in a riot of color and movement.

"Wow," he breathed, reaching out a hand to touch it. His magic twined around his arm, stars dancing against his skin. Harry giggled.

The focus maker opened his eyes at Harry's giggle, then blinked a few times. He wasn't sure exactly what he was seeing.

With the explosion of power, Vanderian finally placed the nagging feeling that he knew the young boy. This was Harry Potter, child of the Time Lord, the Lady Wolf, and the Tardis. This was the figure of heroism not just from Earth, his birth planet, but from hundreds of planets the Universe over. This was the young magical who reached out with his power and affected millions.

It was humbling, in a way, knowing that such a child was now in his shop, looking for his first focus. His eyes sought out Kyst, hovering beyond the doorway. The Faction member merely twisted, knowing that Vanderian had figured it out.

Vanderian examined the power flowing through the room and twining around the boy as if it was an affectionate playmate. It was an astonishing connection with one's magic, a connection he hadn't expected, seeing as Harry wore a Restrictor.
"I have never, in all my time, seen someone so in tune with their magic at such a young age," Vanderian said lowly, eyes as wide as they could possibly get. "You are a powerful little thing, aren't you?" That was a rhetorical statement, Vanderian reflected. There was no question that Harry Potter was powerful.

"I've been told so," Harry replied.

"There's no question that you should have a focus. Your magic is so powerful I'm surprised you haven't gotten one before. Rarely do young ones need a focus as much as you do. Usually a focus stunts the growth of a young magical, shaping it too much too early, but I fear without a focus your power would grow out of control quickly, and with devastating consequences."

"Also something I've been told," Harry said. "I had to wait until I could find some control first though. I spent some time with Merlin, you know Merlin?"

"Every magical is told the tale of the great heroes of each race on this planet. Merlin is one of the humans' greats. He is told of alongside the stories of Frrstir, BlexicalVII, Kasperian, Shrygth, and hundreds of others." Harry would number among them, Vanderian knew.

"Merlin helped me find some control. I can cast a few basic spells without overpowering them and I can feel the flow of my magic much better now." Harry wanted to ask about these other heroes of magic Vanderian had mentioned, but refrained. He didn't know if it was on the banned list and would rather be able to finish this appraisal and not have Kyst escort him out for breaking one of the rules.

He could ask afterwards.

"Well, he was correct. I can see your magic shaping more around you rather than flowing amorphously. Beyond just the colors of your aura, which are spectacular in themselves, it is quite expansive." Vanderian paused. "Hold still again please. The next part of the appraisal will require more concentration, or less. I'm not sure, your magic is so eager to listen."

The hum of power grew, and the swirling, playful aura around Harry slowed, then began to search the room, a curious sprite. It paused here and there, touching rune after rune but never lingering. Part of it settled on one rune, another part settled on a second, a third settled right across from Harry, but a fourth part wandered around, and Harry wondered if it was making keening sounds. It seemed to be, what with the confused twists and twirls it was doing, before it circled around Harry, seeming like it was seeking forgiveness for not performing adequately.

Harry reached up a hand, stroking through his magic. "It's alright, I'm sure Vanderian has an explanation," he whispered, unsure why he was reassuring his magic. It felt right though.

"I might, young one," Vanderion replied, and Harry started. He didn't realise the focus crafter had heard him. "You are a strange case. Four separate parts of a focus. That is most unusual. And judging by the runes your magic has chosen, you are also more unusual than I would have ever expected."

Vanderian walked the outer ring over the room, stopping by the runes Harry's magic twined around. With a gesture of request, Harry's magic returned to him as Vanderian pressed the runes, and small boxes popped out of each one.

By the time all of Harry's magic returned to him, three strange boxes were being laid out on a wooden table elegantly carved to look like a tree whose crown was spread.
The first was pitch black with a complex locking mechanism that Harry figured was magical in nature. The second was honey gold and shaped into a star. The third was almost plain in comparison, except for the power Harry could feel vibrating from the box.

"These are the three chosen pieces, though they are only the containers for various types. I can only use the appraisal to narrow down the choice, but often times there are only two. With three chosen and a fourth missing, you are a difficult customer. I cannot rely on experience alone. You shall have to remain with me as we attempt to piece together the base of your focus."

Harry ran a hand over the tree boxes, pausing on the third. "Can I open this one?"

Vanderian gestured. "It is yours to open."

Harry slowly lifted the lid. There were no locks preventing him from doing so, which was surprising considering the power he could still feel humming under his hands, despite the spell showing his magical aura ending with Harry's movement from the central rune.

Inside were a collection of glass bottles, magical spheres, and little boxes. Harry let his fingers run over the collection, pausing now and again when something called his attention. But it was merely a buzz, so he moved on. His fingers brushed against a small magical ball, and his magic sung in his mind. His fingers curled around it, and he lifted it from the box.

"This one," Harry murmured. "It sings." he gently laid it on the table, conscious of his necklace still laying in his pocket.

"Just so," Vanderian responded. He prodded the magical orb, his branchy fingers etching something on the outside. "It is the bone of a Prime Thestral, powdered. I was not aware this was still in my collection. I inherited much of my materials from my predecessors, the rare stuff that the powerful use oftentimes is old and before my time. This is such a thing."

"Prime Thestral?" Harry asked.

Vanderian looked at him, surprised. "You don't know what a thestral is?" Harry shook his head. "Well, a thestral is a spectral winged horse. They used to be considered bad luck, but that was before people became civilized and understood what they were. You can only see a Thesral if you've seen someone die. It doesn't have to be a violent death, mind. Watching the peaceful passing of an Elder is still watching someone die. They are the guardians of the dead who remain on the plane of the living, making sure their spirits find rest eventually. Very elegant and noble creatures not well understood."

Harry grinned. "Sounds like my dad, really, besides the elegant part."

Vanderian's eyes twinkled. "I should like to meet the father of one so interesting. To continue the explanation, a Prime Thestral is the oldest member of a herd, granted their position by the mark of magic showing up on their forehead."

Harry rubbed his own forehead where a scar shaped like a lightning bold hid under his fringe. The crafter followed his hands. "It's something I got before dad took me."

"I see. Well, it might help explain the choice of core."

"I'll ask dad when he shows up. He always manages to find me eventually."

Vanderian nodded, setting aside his own knowledge of the cause for Harry's scar. "I suspect that the core of your focus, the Prime Thestral bone, will be the easiest of your base materials to find. They often beckon the loudest, as you realized. Let us move on to the second box. It is an anchoring
material, which very few magicals need, and only for those particularly difficult cases. I haven't had to work with it for some time now." Vanderian caressed the second box and it sprung open.

Inside Harry saw himself looking it bright, jewel-like colors. Silvers, golds, reds, greens, all laid out neatly and pinned to one side of the box's edge.

Harry ran his fingers over them again, wondering if they would sing like the thestral bone did.

They did not. But Harry felt his hand pull towards the golden and green ones, and he gestured as much to Vanderian. "These two colors seem to be the most prominent," he said, pointing.

"I shall take them out of the box. We will inspect them at length after you choose the final part."

Harry touched the black box and it sprung open with a violence he hadn't been expecting. His startled eyes met the equally startled Vanderian's. "Umm...."

"I would suggest seeing what the box wants you to look at, young magical," Vanderian said after a moment.

Harry shrugged, then looked inside.

Wood. Mostly dark woods, in many shapes and shades. He ran his hand over them, snagging the pieces that hummed. Four pieces of wood, three pitch black and one a smokey grey, lay on the table when Harry was finished.

"Black Kifeern from the Undying Tree and Smoked Hallow from the Mouth of the Giants. What interesting choices. And the shapes are most strange." Harry heard a note of excitement in Vanderian's voice. "I have not had such a challenge in years."

"I take it you get rather boring customers then?" Harry asked.

"Oh, not at all. People don't come to me because they just need a focus. They come to me because they are difficult to match within the traditional sense. I would bet any premade focus would shatter in your hands, young magical. Most of those who come here need the more esoteric elements I use in my crafting. Standard focus makers limit themselves to the materials that they handle well, which sometimes means a magical will have to visit several stores before they find the proper focus. Here, I have all the materials anyone would need to find a focus, and since I craft specific foci for the difficult customer, they are most in tune with their wielders." Vanderian shook himself. "Now young one, we need to find the shape of your foci. This will be a rather...destructive portion of the process as the woods you have chosen are volatile by their nature."

Harry laughed. "My dad would think that appropriate."

"Given the nature of your magic, I would expect it to be." Vanderian looked around. "We shall move the crafting into the warded chamber. The magics within are complex and took many days to craft. They protect any who enter from stray spells and magical backwashes."

"Useful." Harry frowned. "I have a question. With the various shapes and types of foci, wouldn't the process of teaching magic be different for each person? Or at least for each different type of focus? With wands, I remember Rowena and Slytherin being very adamant about how you move a wand being important."

Vanderian chuckled. "You are quite an intriguing child, young magical. As to your question, that is taken into consideration when you enter Emerald Academy. There are several basic foci types: stationary, mobile, and wild. For control and basic magical theory classes, students are divided into
groups based on those three types. There are several levels within each type that are further sub-divided. Most species have a standard type that is tried first. My people use Stationary Natural Wood Types, I believe your people, Kyst, use Stationary Jewel Types, and humans tend to be Mobile Wood Types."

Kyst swirled. "Indeed. I was considered abnormal when I matched with a Wild Jewel Type. It is why my Faction took me to Vanderian in the first place. I could not match with any of the local crafters near my Faction’s home."

"So I would most likely be a Mobile Wood Type?" Harry wondered.

"Maybe, young magical. You are certainly at least partially a Natural Wood Type, but the anchoring material is seen more often in Wild Types, and Thestral is, if I remember my lore correctly, a Wild Type as well."

"What is the difference between Stationary, Wild, and Mobile?"

Vanderian smiled. "Stationary foci are foci with direct the magic of the wielder through a series of folds, grooves, cuts, and other shapes within the foci. The core is anchored into the whole focus and the focus is held still while the magic takes shape." Vanderian took out his focus. The flower Harry had seen earlier was presented for Harry to look at. "The grooves of the flower petals and the stem provide the conduits for my magic to act and are specific to me. No other person could wield this focus. Those who use Stationary Types spend the first few cycles at the Academy learning the ins and outs of their focus and what each groove will do, and it takes a long time because each one is unique to their wielder."

Harry looked it over closely, paying close attention to the grooves and details. They were exquisitely carved. "It's beautiful," he said, resisting the urge to run his fingers over the wood.

"Thank you. My grandling made it for me when I was little more than a sap." Vanderian tucked the flower away. "Wild Type foci are ones that have a deep connection to magic through it's components and often seems to be flickering. It can literally only be held by its wielder and it's know to be one of the more difficult types to control. Wild types have a will of their own, in a primitive sense. The wielder must meld with their focus to perform magic."

Harry looked at Kyst. "That sounds difficult," he said.

"The lessons for those of us with Wild types in melding with our focus often takes up the majority of the first cycle of the Academy. We have special rooms to do so, as often magical backlash is a consequence. Before the spells that Vanderian uses in the next room were created, the backlash was often the main contributor to the deaths of young magicals. Having a Wild type is both a blessing and a curse for their wielder. Meld with yours and you have near instinctual magic at your disposal. But the process to meld is long and dangerous. Even now, while the backlash rarely kills any young magical, it does damage the magical cores of those who don't listen to their foci."

Harry's eyes widened. That sounded dangerous. "So, uh, what about Mobile types?"

Vanderian smiled. "You know the main component of that type, the wand. There are several Fabric Mobile types, some Natural Mobile types that aren't wands, and a few Elemental Mobile types. Each one has an element of control as being the basis of their magic. Mobile types must move their foci in specific patterns to create the effect. It makes the classes for Mobile types much more focused on the manipulation of their focus and they spend a few cycles at the Academy learning all the basic movements and their meaning."
Harry nodded. He was now immensely curious as to what kind of focus he would have. There seemed to be interesting differences to each one. "Can someone have multiple Types?" he asked. Vanderian looked at him. "I mean, you said humans tend to use Wood Mobile Types, but having an anchoring material and Thestral as a core is more closely associated with Wild Types."

Vanderian paused at a solid door, hands raised. "Young magical, we cannot know your Type until it is crafted, and that cannot happen until we have the fourth piece. Then we shall discuss the ramifications of your focus. It will certainly be most unusual, that much I know."

The focus maker turned to the door, his long, slender, twig fingers pressing various runes around the frame. Harry noted that he had seven twig fingers on his right hand and eight on his left hand.

The door slid open and inside was a cavernous room. Harry figured it had to be magically expanded because the hill he had seen from outside on the pathway.

"Vanderian," Harry said as he followed the crafter into the room. He felt the magical protections wrap around his body much more acutely without his necklace on. "Why do you call me 'young magical'?"

"That is what you are, are you not?"

"But you called Kyst by name. You didn't ask for mine."

Vanderian looked at the child standing before him with power and fate swirling around his body. "Everyone knows your name, young magical. Still, you are but a child in the eyes of your people. Your name is only rooted into your being when your magic is rooted in your body. You still have a ways to go." Vanderian looked at Harry out of his craggy, bark-y face. "Now, let us examine your materials."

The Doctor and Rose left the large building that housed the Council alongside Prryxt.

"So, what planet are your people originally from? I must say, I've never run into your species before and you are rather magnificent," the Doctor babbled on. Rose rolled her eyes, smiling. He never changed, the Doctor.

Prryxt grinned in a way that housecats on Earth couldn't, using muscles in his face that tilted the corners of his lips up in a way that might have been menacing. "My people are from Wryysip. We left soon before the collapse of our home star, many of the magicals choosing to come to Haleysio rather than to one of the nearby colonized galaxies. Some of course went with the bulk of our people, mostly those with close ties to those without magic. There are two other species from Wryysip that were magical and came to Haleysio. If there is time, I would be honored to introduce you to some of my people."

Rose looked at Prryxt. "Are there many who come from the same planet?"

Prryxt nodded. "In a sense. There are a limited number of species who can wield magic, but many magical beings. Beings who require magic to survive, but cannot wield it in the way that those with a focus can. They have a council to help lay down rules for their people, and have a representative within the Magicals Council, just as we have a representative in their council. It helps maintain the balance. They cannot interfere in Magicals Council without just cause, just as the magical cannot interfere in their doings without just cause."

The Doctor nodded. "You seem to have a good set up here. Very thorough and balanced."
"This is a recent phenomena on Haleysio, well, as recent as One and a half millenia ago, but to some long lived species, they are only three generations from the time of chaos, and a very few are only one or two generations. It took the creation of a common tongue for everyone to use before such a government could be created. Before that, many mistranslations, errors in cultural understandings, and simple clashes in ideas that could not be properly explained led to constant wars and battles along the borders of some species' lands. Pethi's Tongue made communication much easier, and much of the confusion was put to rest."

Rose blinked. "How was this planet established if there was so much confusion between species? I would think that would lead to fighting before a society could be established."

Prryxt looked at Rose. "The first people who came to Haleysio were fleeing persecution. The mutual need for a safe space was enough for many to put aside the small things and work together. Translation spells might not always work well, but they were good enough to set up a framework for society. When humans came here, nearly five thousand years ago, they put up the barrier spell. It seemed that Earth and it's Empire had become suspicious of its magical population and the magicals wanted to make sure they could not be followed. In the time that followed their arrival, the output of magical energy from the erection of the barrier called to hundreds of magical species. Some came out of desperation for a new home, some out of curiosity. Many were content on their homeworld, having a place in society and not needing a new planet. But with the arrival of upwards of a hundred new species in less than three hundred years, mistranslations were a daily issue and species eventually withdrew into their own lands. It took the arrival of an external threat to unite even a majority of the species, and a thousand years after that before Haspethi's Council created Pethi's Tongue. With the creation of a common tongue, people ventured out of their lands and Haleysio was created into what you see today."

The Doctor was grinning. "Oh, I love history me! And Haleysio is such a fascinating place. Did it have an indigenous population before you lot arrived?"

"We have found records of a people native to this planet before the first magicals arrived. My people were among the first, and they built their first sanctuary in the ruins of a giant sphere. But any people here were not here when others arrived. Only the ruins of their civilization remain, and their language has never been deciphered." Prryxt looked at the Doctor. "Then again, we have never before let you, the Lady Wolf, or Harry see the script. I wonder if you could read it."

The Doctor grinned wider. Rose sighed. "Now you've done it. He'll never be satisfied until he's managed to see whatever it is."

Prryxt looked concerned. "I hope I haven't done anything wrong, Lady Wolf."

"Oh, no, not at all," Rose was quick to reassure. "It's just, give him a puzzle and he'll travel to the ends of the Universe to solve it."

Prryxt looked even more concerned, and eyed the Doctor warily.

The sound of an explosion from up ahead interrupted the history lesson.

"Ten pounds says that's Harry," Rose said.

"That's a sucker bet," the Doctor replied.

Prryxt chuckled. "There are many people on this planet. It could be any number of them."

The Doctor looked at him. "You can take the sucker bet then," he said.
"I shall refrain. Let's go see what your son is doing."

The three took off at a loping run. It took them only a couple minutes to arrive at the orange path and heading towards the smoke billowing up into the sky.

Prryxt made a low purring noise Rose and the Doctor took awe. "That is Vanderian's shop. It seems Harry has decided to look for a focus. Must have been quite a violent reaction for that to occur." He saw the panic flicker over Rose and the Doctor's face. "Don't worry, Vanderian has many wards to protect anyone within from explosion. They occur with worrying frequency, so he had his entire building warded, and one room in particular, the room that smoke is coming from, heavily warded."

Rose let out the breath she had been holding and the Doctor grinned. "Well, let's go see the chaos that Harry's caused. It's bound to be spectacular."

"You would say that," Rose muttered.

"You weren't around to witness him nearly blowing up a star system with an ill placed Matter Realignment Portal. It was a brilliant light show, as soon as we managed to disable the Portal and pacify the local populace who thought Harry was The Darkness Bringer from one of their prophecies."

Rose stopped, squinting her eyes up in confusion. "Really? Harry? I would think you were the one they would accuse."

"It seemed their prophecy mentioned "Jeweled Orbs of the Brightest Green and a Crown of Blackest Night." You've seen Harry…"

"Ahhh. That makes sense. How old was he?"

"Five."

Rose rolled her eyes. "Really, you can't keep a five year old out of trouble?"

He was a very precocious five year old. Oh, and here we are." The Doctor opened the door that was already partially set off its slide and walked in.

He could hear the argument from the entrance way.

"How was I supposed to know that touching that particular rune at that particular moment in your chant without wearing my restrictor would cause a catastrophic explosion?"

Ah, yes, the dulcet tones of a frustrated Harry.

"You magical, I gave you strict instructions to NOT TOUCH ANYTHING!"

"No you didn't! You only said to not interrupt you! Besides, I wasn't intending to touch the rune! I was only going to touch the wood!"

"That would have been worse! Do you know how much magic I was channeling through that pedestal?"

The three of them headed towards the raised voices. Right outside a door that seemed to have been crumpled by the explosion was a rapidly swirling Kyst.

"Hello, Time Lord, Lady Rose, Grand Council Member Prryxt. I see you have arrived in time to
intervene in the argument between young Harry and Vanderian."

"What happened Kyst?" the Doctor asked.

"I was not within the chamber at the time, but from what I have gathered, Harry brushed against some important runes and his magic, already wild around his body, interfered with Vanderian's spell. The resulting magical class created the explosion. They are now trying to ascertain blame, I believe, but in a most unusual manner." Kyst swirled faster, confused.

Rose smiled, shaking her head. "They are arguing Kyst. It is a common pastime for many."

Kyst didn't stop. "It is unusual. But I suppose I understand. It is most amusing though."

"It is indeed."

"Dad! You're here! Come tell Vanderian that I didn't mean to do anything to his spell!" Harry came over, hand reaching out for the Doctor.

The Doctor stopped, eyeing Harry's neck. It was bare of the golden necklace Harry always wore. "Harry, why don't you put your necklace back on first, yeah?"

Harry paused, eyes wide, then dug into his pocket, pulling out the golden loops and clasping it around his neck. "Okay, now come tell Vanderian that it wasn't my fault!"

The Doctor chuckled, taking Harry's hand. "Harry, while I'm sure it wasn't intentional, you probably did do something. Magic is finicky like that. Didn't you learn that with Merlin?"

Harry groaned. "Why can't you be on my side?"

"I'm not on anyone's side Harry. I wasn't here."

Vanderian stepped towards the Doctor. "Hello, Time Lord. It is a pleasure to meet you. Your child is a very fascinating being, if unwilling to listen to instructions all the time."

"Oi!" Harry interrupted.

"Harry, why don't you and Rose go check out some of the other stores nearby? I have some questions for Vanderian."

Harry's eyes widened. "Hey! Dad! You can't just send me off! I was getting my focus!"

"Young magical, you cannot get your focus without a fourth element that I do not have. So it could not be completed today at any rate." Vanderian stepped forward. "I would like to talk to your father, he might have an idea for what could be the missing element, he knows you well enough."

Harry groaned. He was getting kicked out of his own appraisal! "Fine, fine, I'll go. I'm not wanted here anyway." He looked at Rose. "You can stay here. I want to go check out that shop I saw with the coats in the window."

Rose nodded. "Alright, I'll keep an eye on your dad. Make sure he doesn't do anything crazy."

"I shall be accompanying you, Harry," Kyst said. Harry sighed. "It is protocol."

"It is indeed, Harry. You must have an escort on this planet," Prryxt said.

Harry blinked at the Grand Council Member. "Wow, you look awesome! I've never seen your
people before."

Pryx chuckled. "Your father said much the same. I shall tell you more about them later."

Harry nodded, then left, Kyst swirling behind him.

He was determined to get a jacket this time. Absolutely determined. He wasn't going to be outdone by his dad and his uncle with their swirling, awesome looking jackets. And since he was basically getting kicked out of the focus shop, he might as well see if he could one up his dad and uncle by getting a magic coat.

~~~~~~~~~~~This is an Ending~~~~~~~~~~~~

Chapter End Notes

Kuroi: OI! LOOK! I've FINISHED THE CHAPTER! I think I have an obsession with making these super long chapters. Anyone have any objections to super long chapters?

I hope this chapter helped satisfy the desire for Hogwarts at least some. It's a very magic oriented chapter and I had a ton of fun coming up with history and explanations and such. If you find anything that doesn't make sense, let me know.

Thanks for reading, for liking and following and commenting and just enjoying this story! Now that I have settled into Japan, I shall hopefully find a lot more time to write.

Kuroi
In Which there are Many Pronouns

Chapter Summary

The day continues on Haleysio, despite Harry's explosive tendencies at Vanderian's shop and his summary dismissal from said shop. He is on the hunt for a jacket. Kyst is just wondering if Harry has his head on straight.

Chapter Notes

Kuroi Is Back!! *kicks in door, promptly trips over step leading into room*

So, sorry about the wait and everything. I’m working on writing more when I can. This got written in the past two days, in a vast majority.

To all my reviewers THANK YOU SO MUCH! Your words, whether stuck in caps lock, questioning, requesting, whatever, they all are precious to me! I love seeing every review pop up in my inbox and if I haven’t personally replied back to you, especially if you have a question, I’ll be doing that soon! Thank you!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

~~~~~This is a Beginning~~~~~~

Harry stalked out of Vanderian's shop, mumbling about the unfairness of being kicked out of his focus appraisal and how should he have known not to touch one particular rune while Vanderian was casting the spell, there wasn’t any kind of sign.

Kyst followed him, amused at the young boy. Harry certainly was an impatient child. He was also unafraid of challenging those older than him and masters in their field, if his argument with Vanderian was a standard habit. Then again, Harry lived with a Time Lord, whose age was impossible to figure, the Tardis, who was probably ageless, the Lady Wolf, who had lived every moment at once, and the Immortal, who was fundamentally immortal. It was understandable that he didn't really have a concept of adult authority.

They found the orange path again and Harry took an abrupt left. It was away from the main shopping area and towards the Fields, which Kyst was concerned with. Was Harry trying to get back to the Tardis? The Council was surely sending a specialized team to retrieve the Tardis from the Fields, so it would only be a matter of time before the trio could return to their ship safely.

Kyst was about to mention this to Harry when the building Harry was heading for came into view and was, in fact, not the gates to the Fields but rather a multi-story cylindrical building in a pale powder blue. Each floor twirled independently of the one below or above it and Kyst recognized the shop as the most prestigious magical fabric and materials shop on the planet, belonging to the most eccentric member the Factrily had ever produced, Prysh.

What kind of business an eight year old human would possibly have at a clothier’s shop? Most
children of any race usually abstained from willingly shopping for clothes of their own accord. They
didn't mind when their guardians brought them, but going on their own, rather than to a candy, toy,
book, or even obscure magical artifacts shop, was unusual.

Then again, it seemed Harry wasn't normal by any stretch of the imagination. Kyst wondered how
many of the stories known about Harry were true. Many seemed completely unbelievable, even on a
planet exclusively magical.
~~~Change of POV~~~~~
Harry headed straight for the door, a round contraption that receded when Harry was only a few feet
away, and he felt a brush of magic over his entire body as he crossed the threshold. Barely a minute
passed before he was nearly engulfed in the limbs of a tall, transparent, and somewhat slender being,
if you discounted the….Harry counted seven limbs, plus what might be a head if the being had been
human.

“Oh stars above! You are absolutely perfect for my creation! I was worried I would have to resort to
the magical constructs for my show, something I have never done in all of my career. I believe them
to be an inferior model, since they can be tailored and require no effort at all, lazy if you ask me, but
here you are! You are absolutely perfect, down to your ankle circumference! When I tell Kryill and
Marstiiik they will never believe me! Oh, you must come with me, I must see my clothes on you!”

Harry blinked at the rapid, high pitched squeal coming from the being who now had his arm in the
tight grip of three appendages. He wasn't sure how he was getting out of this one.

“Prysh, what have your Family Units told you about manhandling people? I seem to recall a long
discussion on the topic the last time you scared away a potential model,” Kyst said, hovering right
behind Harry.

Prysh sighed dramatically, reluctantly releasing Harry from the tight grip. “That I must ask before
assuming a willing model.” It was a rote repetition, Harry would bet his newest Sonic device on that.
“But he….you are a he are you not?” Prysh looked at Harry closely. “Young humans are hard to
differentiate between the sexes, and sometimes even older humans are difficult. I always forget with
sexual organ goes with which gender noun, or what gender noun you prefer, since there are only so
many you can use I wonder how you all decide which one you like. That you all develop sexual
organs so young is fascinating. That you only have four different combinations at most, and only two
common ones, is absolutely strange. How do you possibly procreate when only one of your sex can
carry a child?” Prysh looked up at Kyst, then back down at Harry. “Kyst’s people don’t even use
gender pronouns, they have none in their native language, which I think is amazing, and a bit
confusing. How do you concisely describe your position within a Family Unit without a gender
pronoun?”

Kyst swished. “My people function just fine without gender pronouns, and we do not have the same
kind of Family Unit you have, Prysh, so the need for such specific pronouns that your people use is
unnecessary.”

do you use a gender pronoun? Or are you more like Kyst?”

Harry laughed. “I prefer ‘he’, if you want a gender pronoun. I like my name too, Harry. That works
if you get confused.”

Prysh squealed. “Oh, you are adorable Harry! I am Prysh, and I prefer the ‘she’ pronoun, though my
proper pronoun isn’t translatable into Pethi’s Tongue. I guess it gets confusing for you all when there
are seven standard gender pronouns and up to five specific gender pronoun sections, which create
hundreds of thousands of gender pronouns completely individualized. The Council didn’t try to
translate Factrily pronouns when they made the language, which didn’t much bother us. Factrily are
the only peoples on the planet with more than four standard sexes, so the majority of people didn’t
need more than four pronouns, and those that desired more just changed the base pronouns a bit to
suit them without actually changing the inherent meaning, since no other race we know of use
gender pronouns with such meaning behind them. We prefer names in any case.” Prysh leaned
forward, dark blue orbs, three of them, which Harry took to be her eyes, peered at him closely. “So,
will you be a model for me? Please? I have the best design for childhood clothes for those with a
standard upright, two walking limbs, two gripping limbs body and you are the absolute perfect size
to model it for me! Please?!”

Harry raised an eyebrow, looking down at his body. “How do you even know I’m right for your
clothes? Was that what the spell on the door was? It’s a very complex spell.”

“Oh, are you at the Academy? You look a little young for an academy student. I’m not the best at
judging ages, but I was just there the other day helping the Enchantments class perfect the spells they
were using on the cloth for the festival and I don’t remember seeing any humans as young as you.”
Prysh leaned closer. “You look really familiar for some reason. Have we ever met before? I rarely
forget a body type, it’s my specialty, and I could swear I’ve seen you somewhere before.”

Kyst hovered closer. “I fear we have not introduced Harry here properly. Prysh, this is Harry, son of
the Doctor, the Lady Wolf, and the Tardis, and under the protection of the Immortal. Harry, this is
Prysh, member of the Hirel Family Unit of the Factrily and officially labeled as the strangest member
to have ever come out of the Factrily.” Kyst looked at Prysh.

Her eyes were bulging out of her body. “Harry? The Harry? And you’re going to be my model? Oh,
Kryill and Marstiik aren’t going to believe me when I tell them!”

“Hold on, hold on, I didn’t come here to be a model. I wanted to see if you could make me a jacket,”
Harry hastily said, hoping to diffuse the situation before he ended up in some unknown clothing and
stood in a window without even having the chance of trying to get his jacket. The fact that his name
was so quickly recognized when put in context was disturbing. “And what do you mean by “The
Harry?” I’m just Harry.”

Kyst swirled, making a soft whoosh noise. “Harry, child, you will never ever be ‘just Harry’. You
live through time itself, such a word will never apply to you.”

“But I am just Harry. I mean, what else could I be? I’m the Doctor’s son, I’m the Tardis’s child, I’m
a magic user, I’m human mostly, I’m a touch empath, but that doesn’t make me a ‘The’. Or it
shouldn’t.” Harry said, trying to think of anything that could possibly contribute to the official sound
Prysh had given his name.

“But, I mean, you’re Harry! The Harry! Oh, everyone knows who you are!” Prysh gushed, and she
looked like she would say more but Kyst hovered a bit closer and she quieted.

“Harry, you live through time itself. You don’t live in linear time, not like we do. So things that have
happened for us haven’t happened for you. Your linear time is literally only applicable within the
Tardis and those that live within her. Outside it, you skip millenia, hundreds of thousands of years,
sitting inside your own personal bubble of Time. For us, you have been to Haleysio before, and you
will likely return again. But for you, this is your first time here. There is a reason you are not allowed
near material that contain any kind of written word. Any foreknowledge of your future and our
history of you would color your perception,” Kyst said.

Harry sighed, nodding. He did realize the importance of timeline preservation, he just wished it
wasn’t so important on such an interesting planet.
Prysh, who had been hovering nearby, her limbs fluttering in anxious anticipation, leaned towards Harry. “If I agree to make your jacket for you, will you be willing to be my model during the next week’s fashion show on the main mall shopping strip? It’s the busiest time of year since it leads up to the festival and everyone is looking for the best festival clothes. It would be an honor and I wouldn’t charge you anything for the jacket! I would have it finished and ready for you by the end of the week!”

Harry’s eyes widened and he momentarily forgot about his dismay at not learning his own history. “Really? You’d make my jacket for me? Just for wearing some clothes?” He grinned. “You’re on! Come on! I need to get the fabric from the Tardis! I picked it out from the Materials section of the Giant Bazaar of 4198 on Europa!” Harry bounced towards the door, then stopped. “Um, Kyst? Can we get to the Tardis? I mean, you said we can’t go into the Fields…”

Kyst swirled, the hand-fan Focus emerging from within the cloudy form, followed by some complex tapping. “I wish to inquire as to the location of the Tardis as of this moment,” Kyst said, and a small silver sphere tinged orange swirled into being, before zooming off at high speeds. “This is the easiest means of communication at the moment, being so far from the main Crystal Lines of the Council. Usually it would require only a quick thought pattern, but the Orange Shops are specially protected at the request of the owners and as such the Lines don’t reach towards this section of Haleysio. My message sphere should return in just a moment.”

Harry stared at the wall where the sphere had disappeared. “That’s fascinating. Does it carry the message within it or does the sphere dissipate and give its message that way?”

“The sphere works as a holder of speech. It disintegrates to give its message, at least in the most basic form, which I used there. More advanced forms can send and retrieve messages, but that’s usually only used with young ones who can’t cast such spells yet, or those who are ill, magic-inhibited, or something similar.” Kyst swirled around as another sphere, this one tinged green, rush through the wall towards them.

“Kyst, the Tardis has been relocated to the Council General Hall. Harry, The Doctor, and Lady Rose can return whenever they would like.” The melodious voice of Shorll emerged as the sphere dissolved.

“We can retrieve your cloth without an issue, young Harry.” Kyst looked at Prysh. “Would you like to remain here Prysh?”

Prysh squeaked. “Oh no no no no no. I’ve just found the best model on the planet! I will be the envy of the whole show! I’m not letting you out of my reach, young Harry! And I would love to see the Tardis! Oh, Marstilk and Kryill are going to be so envious!” She bounced on her limbs, the three of them currently touching the ground. Harry was trying to figure out if she had a set that were standard legs and arms, but it seemed like her appendages served the function she needed them to at the moment, so some were legs and others were arms, and the rotated. It was an interesting method.

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“Alright then! To the Tardis!” Harry grinned at Prysh. “You mind if I give you some designs I’ve come up with? I have an idea for what I want my jacket to look like.”

“Ooooh, that would be perfect! I love it when a client already knows what they want! As much as I like designing, individual requests are much easier if I know what you want!” She rested a couple of her limbs on Harry’s shoulder. “You are amazing! Oh, working for the Harry! What an honor! My Family Unit won’t believe this!” Harry thought he heard hearts in her voice.

~~~~This is a Scene Break~~~~~
The Doctor watched his son stomp out of the shop, irritation and indignation in every line of his body. He looked over at Rose. “Well, at least he can’t get into too much trouble with an escort,” he said.

Rose rolled her eyes. “You’re just hoping he doesn’t blow anything important up or get involved in any interplanetary conflicts or completely change how magic is viewed and thereby causing a riot that spans the entire academic minds of the planet,” she said.

Pryxt looked between the Doctor and Rose, making soft inquiring noises. “Is Harry prone to finding trouble?” he asked.

“It’s less that he finds trouble and more that he stumbles into it, or it finds him,” the Doctor clarified. “Nearly ended up sacrificed on an altar to a God of Destruction as a Prophesied one when he was five. Followed by an attempt to create a multi-dimensional jungle gym that nearly blew up a nearby planet, and he ended up causing a Time Shift when he was around seven. Harry’s never been one for staying out of trouble.”

“Well, Time Lord, the youngling has you as a father. It is easy to see where he gets his adventurous spirit from,” Vanderian said. “You are known throughout the Universe, is it no wonder that the child you call your son is also known?”

The Doctor shifted, mildly discomfited by the thought. Rose sighed. “Doctor, you already knew that would happen. Harry’s not only your son, he’s magically powerful and famous within his own community. Merlin told me he had never seen so much power contained within a single person, that it was a dangerous amount of power to have, especially since Harry hadn’t even started puberty. You’re going to have a dangerous child on your hands when Harry hits twelve or so. You’d better hope Hogwarts has the kind of help he’ll need.”

“Merlin mentioned that to me too. We’ll have to wait and see. But for now,” he said, drawing out the ‘o’ and turning around to Vanderian. “I supposed I have a few questions for you. I’ve been curious about these foci that everyone seems to have. I noticed Shorll with some kind of shaped obsidian, and one of the members of the council carried a twirling ribbon in her hair that looked distinctly out of place and suspiciously loose, especially as a means of tying up ones hair. I only know about human foci and they all seem to have wands, at least those humans on Earth did. But there are clearly more than just wands here. Which makes sense, seeing as there are a diverse number of species here that can use magic, but I was curious, since it seems my son is getting one.” The Doctor paused, looked around. “What can you tell me about the materials that are used? What kind of foci do you make? How individualized is a foci? How do they work? Is there a specific way foci interact with the body’s magical conduits that’s different from nom-foci magical casting? How specific are foci not specially made for a user? How does someone know a focus has chosen them?”

Rose clamped a hand on the Doctor’s shoulder. “While I know you have a special respiratory system and don’t need to breath nearly as often as most people do, you should still take a breath and let people answer your questions before you ask a dozen more.” The Doctor looked back at Rose. “How do you expect anyone to answer anything if you don’t give them time?”

Vanderian chuckled. “I see where your young one gets his curiosity from, Time Lord. I can give you the basics, and even my thoughts on what your son will be receiving. At the moment, I am unsure of it’s final form, as I only have three of the necessary four ingredients, but he leans towards the Natural type, those that have a focus made from either stone or wood. Humans in particular have strong connections to wood.” Vanderian looked at Pryxt. “Your people are very connected to Nature types as well, though you are more Stationary in predilection. I remember your firstborn’s appraisal. She was a difficult child, a strange combination for your people.”
Pryxt nodded. “Indeed. Rrrysial has never been considered normal, but she is doing very well in the Academy. Among the top in her class, despite a few...mishaps along the way. I fear my triplets may make their way here as well. They are an unusual bunch. I was unaware I would be blessed with so many miscreants as kits.” Pryxt twitched his whiskers.

Vanderian smiled. “I would be honored. Triplets are always an unusual case, being so closely tied to each other’s magic.” He looked back at the Doctor. “To continue, your young one has no strong draw towards the three standard sub-types, Stationary, Mobile, or Wild. His inclinations so far with his anchoring material, something only rarely seen outside of Wild-types, and his Core, also a Wild-type, if I recall correctly, leads me to believe just from materials alone he is a Natural Wild Type, which is an odd pairing, but his human ancestry lead me back towards a Mobile type, as that is the most common theme in humans, and the base material, being wood, suggests it as well. But without the fourth element, we cannot know.” Vanderian shrugged large shoulders.

The Doctor brightened, then leaned in conspiratorially. “So, you think you could work with some...unusual material?” he asked, almost dropping into a whisper.

Rose rolled her eyes and looked at Pryxt. “He thinks he’s so sneaky, ’cept he’s got no reason for it. Just likes to make everything dramatic.”

Pryxt purred in amusement. “I think one who lives as adventurous a life as the Time Lord is deserving of adding drama to what he wishes.”

Rose groaned. “Don’t say that, you’ll just encourage him.” She stuck her tongue out at the Doctor, grinned. “Just what himself needs, encouragement.”

“I have worked with many unusual elements before, things specific to someone brought here by family who are unable to find matches elsewhere. Do you have something similar for Harry?” Vanderian wondered if this was the missing element he needed for the focus. Items specific to a person were rare but not unusual in his shop. They often strengthened the bond between the focus and the wielder and made the match perfect.

The Doctor dug into his pocket, rummaging around, before pulling out, triumphantly, four bright stones.

The largest was a pulsing blue, shimmering in the light and sending out a pulse every three seconds. The second was a deep red, steady and fierce in its light. The third shown pure white, almost iridescent. The fourth was a soft purple, steady and gentle.

Vanderian ran his bark-like fingers over them. “What are they? I can feel….something underneath the surface, a raging power contained within the gem, but I have never seen anything like them.”

“They’re stars. Stars caught and captured right at the tipping point between life and death and held within the gem. Harry used to dig these four out of storage chests when he was younger and play with them, I think he based his stars in his little worlds off of these four. Named them all too, though I can’t quite remember what he called them.” The Doctor looked thoughtful, missing the bewildered stare he was getting from Vanderian. “I think one of them was Frio, and maybe another was….he whistled a few tones. “I think.” He looked at Vanderian. “What? What is it?”

“You have stars? Trapped in gems? And you wish to see if I can use them in a focus? Are you completely sure you know just what it is you are asking me to touch with magic and manipulate?” Vanderian looked mildly horrified. The things that could go wrong with such a process were too many for Vanderian to contemplate. The biggest was the obliteration of the planet if such power got out of control, and with magic, being out of control was what most things existed in a perpetual state
of. It was a matter of how well one could impose order onto a chaotic state that made magic users good. Or to work with the chaos in a harmonious accord to allow the magic to happen.

The Doctor looked perplexed. “Well, Harry’s been playing with them with his magic for most of his life, though I confiscated them after the Time Slip incident since he used some of the energy from one of the stars to actually power his secret lab that he hid from me. Decided he didn’t have the presence of mind to hold on to them anymore if he was using them for something as dangerous as unauthorized space and time travel, so I stuck them in my pocket.” The Doctor patted said pocket. “Safest place from the searching eyes of my son.”

This knowledge didn’t seem to ease Vanderian’s worries any. “The power within these...stone-stars is immense. I don’t know if I can shape them to my will…”

“It can’t hurt to try. Can you match them without Harry?”

“I am afraid a true match needs the magical in question to be present, but this particular young magical’s magic lingers, so I can safely, I hope, see if they could possibly match.” Vanderian looked towards the crumpled and slightly smoking door laying on the ground. “As soon as I fix the spells around my chamber wards. I would rather not destroy part of the Orange Street Shops with an ill-advised experiment.”

Prryxt slunk forward, sitting near the door opening. “If you don’t mind, I may be able to help with some of the repairing spells. I was among the Construction Crafters before I joined the council and have ample experience working in highly magical areas.”

Vanderian looked at Prryxt, a few twigs raised in surprise. “I would appreciate the help. I only ever bothered to make a full study on the basics of construction craft, foci crafting was a much more important part of my studies.”

“I shall not touch the wards, I am aware of this particular ward’s reaction to outside magics.”

“You are a bright one. I shall work on the wards themselves and reset them.” Vanderian twisted his upper body to look at the Doctor and Rose. “This will be done faster than I hoped with assistance from Prryxt. I would estimate an hour to make it safe again. If you can find your young magical in that time and bring him here, the appraisal might even be complete and we can start the crafting process. I will be able to determine his type as well.” Vanderian reached into some mysterious cavern on his body and pulled out the intricate flower. “For now, it would be best to not disturb us. These are some rather delicate spells.”

Prryxt had already retrieved his own focus, a tightly whirling blue stone that seemed to spin forever. He held it delicately with his tails, eyes closed.

Rose glanced at the Doctor, nodding towards the door and Vanderian turned away, blocking them out as he set about casting some seriously strong magics towards his currently destroyed room.

“Oh, and Time Lord, I received word from the Council that the Tardis has been relocated to the main Council building, the giant black one we left from. You may return to it whenever you like. The Council would appreciate a notification before you leave though. They have records to keep,” Prryxt said, eyes closing once more as a small sphere fully dissipated, having delivered its message.

Rose grinned. “We can go check the Tardis. She might know where Harry is and we might get to look at those scripts of the original language of this planet. The Council should know how we can get a look.”
The Doctor nodded, rubbing his hands together. There was rarely a mystery he didn’t want to solve, and a mysterious language was up there in the top category. “Probably at the Academy somewhere. So we can get two birds with the same stone and Harry might get to talk with some of the magical experts!”

“Just what we need, the dangerous mix of father and son mired in curiosity. Whole civilizations can fall to that concoction.”

“Oi!”

Rose laughed.

~~~~~This is a Scene Break~~~~

Harry eagerly bounced into the Council building, followed closely by Prysh and Kyst. The Tardis was just within the main entrance and Shorll stood nearby with a few others.

“Prysh,” Shorll said, her musical voice surprised. “I was not aware you were coming. What brings you to the council? I thought you were preparing for the fashion week starting tomorrow.”

Prysh giggled, a few of her limbs flailing around. “Oh, it’s absolutely wonderful! Harry is gonna be my model for one of my pieces! He agreed in exchange for a jacket made by me! We came for the material he wishes to use.”

Shorll looked at Kyst. “Could you not keep your charge away from such an endeavor? I am not sure being a model would be...safe.”

Kyst swirled. “There is no inherent danger in such an endeavor. Harry shall be well protected and it is not for the whole day. All models are on a rotation so he would only be presented for a few hours and the model displays are not near the actual rooms they occupy, not since the Rampage of Gryslof.”

Shorll looked a bit taken aback. “You know quite a bit about the subject,” she said, confused.

“I was raised by a very society conscious Faction Kriss. All young ones in my Faction took weekly lessons on the many aspects of conventional society as a result,” Kyst said, swirling.

“I see,” Shorll said, though she wasn’t certain she did. “Do you know where your father and the Lady Rose is?” she asked, looked at Harry and putting the topic of modeling aside for the moment.

Harry shrugged. “Last I saw, they were at Vanderian’s. I got kicked out though, so they might still be there or somewhere else entirely. If dad’s asking all his questions, they’re probably still at Vanderian’s though.”

“You brought him to Vanderian’s?” a small voice squeaked from behind Shorll. Joffryin, a small shifting figure hovering several feet off the ground, moved closer to Harry.

“IT was a safe place. Vanderian knew not to say anything compromising and young Harry is of age to at least receive an appraisal. Vanderian agreed, though the process is not finished,” Kyst said, swirling.

A small clamor arose, and Joffryin hovered closer, shifting into a frowning mouth. “It was dangerous! Letting one with so much magic near Vanderian’s shop was asking for an explosion!”

“It was only a small one,” Harry said defensively.
Joffryin shifted into an exclamation mark. “See! Dangerous! Already he has not been on Haleysio for more than a couple hours and he has caused damage!”

“The damage was contained and was not extensive. Vanderian will have it fixed soon. And Harry needs a focus, even Vanderian has agreed,” Kyst said.

“Then we shall allow it. A focus may be just what Harry needs to help bring some control to his magic. Only so much can be achieved without a focus, even for the most powerful of magic users. Undirected magic is both powerful and deadly. Young ones are fine with uncontrolled magic as they rarely have enough magic to be dangerous, but all come to an age when a focus is necessary,” Shorll said, stepping forward and looking at Joffryin. “Only the most mentally fortified and powerful magi ever study focus-less magic and it takes many cycles for them to learn anything appreciable.”

Harry tilted his head curiously. “Focus-less magic? That’s doing magic without a focus in a controlled manner, correct? Not just wanting something and that thing appearing.”

“Indeed. Such magic you speak of is ‘wish-magic’ and manifests in the young and is very rarely focused properly enough to do without strong emotions.”

“So, what would you classify this as?” Harry held his hands out and twisted them, focusing on his little solar systems. The stars and planets shimmered into being, rotating lazily around the central point of his creation. He could feel the heat of passing stars and see the currents on planets with waters, watch the rings rotate around their planets, observe comets whiz by.

Around him collective gasps of amazement sounded.

“Harry, you made this?” Shorll asked, voice soft as she leaned in, trying to get as close as possible without actually touching anything.

“Mmmhmm. Dad said I started making these when I was a toddler. After my bout with angry Olympians and until I met Merlin, I couldn’t access my magic except in extremely emotional moments, but after Merlin helped me I could recreate it. I’ve been building it in my free time.” Harry gazed at the systems. “I don’t have any particular bit of magic in mind when I make these, I just sort of picture the planet or sun or comet or meteor or satellite I want and wish it into place. My magic does the rest.”

Kyst looked down on it from above. “I can feel the heat of the stars. Is this also a product of your magic?”

“Yes.”

“This...this is phenomenal. Have you ever been able to do anything else in the same way?” Shorll asked.

Harry pondered. “Not really. Not the same, per say. I apparently had quite a bit of control over what you call wish magic as a child, but most of that was lost the same time I lost access to my magic. Afterwards, this was one of the only things I could create on a whim.” Harry tilted his head, considered. “I have a unique connection with time so I can do a little bit of temporal magic, if I ask the Tardis for help. Though the last time I did that, I turned Wen into a child. Haven’t been allowed to mess with it again. I can also do light if I want it enough.”

“I wonder,” said a deep voice from behind the crowd of onlookers, “if perhaps young Harry’s innate connection to space and his unusual upbringing allows him to make such extravagant pieces of magic so easily. It is a very specific piece of magic, on one specific subject, in such detail I don’t
know if even the most advanced Enchanting or Illusion students at the Academy could recreate it, but it is very reflective of the child who made it.”

The crowd parted for a large, rotund, stone-like figure to enter the circle around Harry. Harry might have mistaken the speaker for a rather large boulder if he hadn’t seen the movement of the mouth midway up the body.

“Hello,” Harry said.

“Hello young one. I am Grand Council Member Bryshl, the most senior member of the Council. This is a remarkable piece of magic.

“I’ve always had it. It’s been my personal project since I was too young to remember.”

Bryshl nodded. “Which is probably why it is so powerful and amazing. Pour years upon years worth of magic and the imagination of a child into anything and it will be fantastic. With the direction of such a gifted magical living in such an unusual place as space and time, such a creation would surely be spectacular.”

A small being who appeared as if a child, if not for a the fully grown features, peered at Harry’s creation. “Yes, such a concentration of magic and thought on one specific project would most certainly be able to make such as this. Though for such a young person, this is a remarkable creation.” Deep blue eyes in a dark brown face peered up at Harry. “Would you mind speaking with a few experts at the Academy? If this is okay with the Grand Council Members,” she said.

“I see no problems with this, as long as all experts are spoken with at length before meeting Harry,” Shorll said.

“I too see no problems given a prior meeting,” Bryshl agreed.

Harry twisted his hands and collapsed the system, mildly peeved by the fact that he couldn’t meet anyone without there being a secret meeting beforehand. He sometimes hated keeping the timeline stable.

Prysh had been containing herself all throughout the meeting, vibrating with energy. She hovered near the Tardis, a few limbs eagerly stroking the hull. “Can we go in now?” she asked, her voice full of longing.

Harry smiled. “Sure, so long as the Council have no problems?” He turned to look at the assembled council members.

“None at all, young one. We will hold a meeting with the Academy members before the day is out and tomorrow you shall be able to speak with whomever you wish,” Bryshl said.

“Alright then. Tomorrow. I can do that. Today seems to be busy anyway.” Harry grinned impishly. “Jacket making, clothes modeling, focus appraisals, not to mention the inevitable explosions.”

Kyst sighed. Following after the most influential yet unpredictable magical the Universe had produced was going to be a difficult challenge, especially since the bet had been for the entire duration of Harry’s stay.

Kyst wasn’t sure if the prestige was going to be worth it after a week.

Harry approached the Tardis, pulling his key out from under his shirt he inserted it into the lock, feeling the warm hum from the Tardis under his hands. The door opened with a smooth motion and
Harry stepped inside.

No one followed him, waiting. This was a momentous occasion. The Tardis was a piece of the Universe, of Time and Space, sitting in the council room. Despite Prysh’s excitement, even she didn’t want to enter without express permission.

Harry poked his head out, a confused look on his face. “What? Are you two coming in or not?” He looked at Prysh and Kyst. “I thought you wanted to see the Tardis, Prysh. You were clinging to her hard enough.”

“Oooh! The Tardis has a gender pronoun?! That’s so exciting!” Prysh squealed. Harry wondered if all of the Factrily had an interest in gender pronouns as pronounced as Prysh’s or if she was just special.

Harry shrugged. “The Tardis prefers the she pronoun, I think she likes the strength of the female sex. Also, the Time Lords were only a two sex species from what I know, and all Tardis’s seem to call each other Sister, or that’s what I understand. The Tardis doesn’t exactly speak in words. They are a mysterious organism, so they could be a single sex species and use the pronouns just because they enjoy it. I’ve never met another Tardis, so I don’t know.”

Prysh grinned in delight. “Such a fascinating creature, the Tardis! She’s beautiful.” Prysh peered around the door frame. “Oh,” she breathed. “Wow, so amazing! I’ve never seen the alternate dimension principle applied so brilliantly!” She looked at Harry. “I may come inside?” she asked.

“Of course, that’s why we came here, right?” He looked at Kyst. “You too. You’ve put up with me for the entire time I’ve been here, so I’m sure dad wouldn’t mind if you came in too.” Harry grinned, opening the door wider.

Prysh bounced inside, giggling and her appendages reaching out to stroke the struts and the railings. Kyst hovered through the door, twisting to see the whole of the space. “She is marvelous, Harry,” Kyst said, wonder in every word.

“She’s home!” Harry said, bouncing around the console. “Only place I’ve ever known. Don’t remember life before I come to live here, too young to have any solid memories and I’ve had no cause to go digging through them.” He rushed around to the door on the far side of the room. “Here, this way. My rooms are over this way. The Tardis won’t let me keep all my materials where my bed is so I’ve got a separate place to keep my experiments and everything.” He raced down the hall.

“We should keep up, lest we get lost,” Kyst said gravely. “The Tardis has an infinite dimension within her, all it would take is one wrong turn and we might wander the halls for days.”

“Nah, the Tardis likes you! Won’t let you get lost, well, not for long! Besides, that’s the best way to find new rooms!” Harry turned around, grinning.

Prysh tumbled after Harry, her body moving in a rapid circle to keep up with the small boy. Kyst followed in their wake, amazed at all that was passing.

The hall twisted a Harry took abrupt turns at seeming random, before skidding to a halt in front of a metallic door that scanned Harry in a vibrant blue light, before hissing and folding into the ceiling. Harry rushed inside and the door folded down behind him, leaving Kyst and Prysh outside it, staring in consternation.

“Um, you think we can get in with the scan?” Prysh asked, already moving to stand in front of the door.
The blue light scanned her, then the door turned black and a soft but perceptible beeping started from the other side of the door.

“Guess that’s a no,” Kyst concluded.

The door opened, changing to silver metal again as Harry stuck his head out. “What’s the...oh, yeah, the security. Sorry. I never managed to fix that. It’s why I like this room, always tells me if someone not me is outside, though dad made me change it so he could get in too.” Harry rubbed his head, sheepish. “You can come in now. I’ve reprogrammed the system, you’re recognized as authorized.”

“Why all the security young magical? Aren’t you and your family the only ones on the Tardis?” Kyst asked, moving into the room.

“Well, you can never be too careful. The Tardis exists through time, you never know what might pop up. I once ran into myself, only the self I ran into was wearing different clothes and looked a bit older. I still haven’t run into my younger self, so I guess it hasn’t happened to me the second time yet.” Harry rummaged through a large desk drawer.

“You ran into yourself? I thought that the Tardis prevented that kind of stuff,” Prysh said. “I mean, wouldn’t it be bad if you caused a paradox inside her?”

Harry grunted. “Normally yeah. Must have been some kind of extenuating circumstance. Still haven’t had it happen to me yet, so I don’t know what happened.” Harry was nearly waist deep in the drawer, which looked like it shouldn’t have been able to fit as much of his body as he had put in.

“You live an exciting life,” Prysh said, a note of envy in her voice.

“That’s why you’re considered so eccentric, Prysh. Nearly all of your people are terrified of leaving the planet, even the act of coming to Haleysio was done under a sleep spell and sustentation charms to stave off the fear and anxiety, yet you’ve left Haleysio to go to Bazaars and Fabric Shows and Enchantment Specialists,” Kyst said.

Prysh giggled. “My Family Unit has always been confused by my desire to leave the planet for events. I remember they took my to a specialist to check and make sure I wasn’t under any enchantment or spell, but they eventually decided I was just eccentric. There have been a few Factrily who didn’t mind leaving the planet. Two of them, a Family Unity in fact, were the ones who lead the Factrily from the persecution pits on our home planet. Jellst and Kurin. I believe Marstiik can trace zju Family Unit line all the way back to them.”

“I see. That begs the question why you are the one considered eccentric yet Marstiik is not. Zjui is practically the baseline for normal amongst the Factrily,” Kyst said.

“Well, one’s Family Unity line is not necessarily a determination of one’s traits,” Prysh said, waving an appendage at Kyst. “Just as a Faction does not determine one’s traits.”

Kyst swirled in acknowledgement.

“Where is it, where is it. I know I put it in here somewhere,” Harry muttered, nearly all the way in the drawer and rummaging through who knows what inside. “I swear I need to reorganize this place. I just shove things in here with no thought to order and I lose everything. Hey! I was looking for this! I needed it to finish the multi-dimensional roller coaster!”

“Oi! What did I tell you about that roller coaster?”

Prysh and Kyst turned around to see the Doctor and Rose standing in the doorway.
Harry jerked. “Owowowow, dad, is that you?”

“Hey Harry!”

~~~~~This is a Scene Break~~~~~

The Doctor and Rose headed back along the Orange path towards the Council, the Doctor still insanely curious about Foci but unable to really get any answers at the moment. He would have to wait until they returned to Vanderian’s shop.

"Doctor, we still have to wait at least an hour for the shop to be repaired, so you're going to have to wait. And we need to find Harry. The Council has someone watching him, they should know a way to get in contact to figure out where he is," Rose said.

The Doctor sighed. "I know, but it's so fascinating! I mean, magic is something the Time Lords mistrusted immensely so we never learned anything about it. Before the advent of the Time Lords, Gallifrey was ruled by the Cult of Pythia, a line of female Seers and Mystics who controlled all of Gallifrey. After the Three brought them down, magic was abandoned and since the female Gallifreyians were cursed with infertility by the Cult as it fell, no magical genes that might have existed on Gallifrey were ever passed down, since the Looms never had that gene included in its base structure. Magic was something I didn't really give much thought to, not until after the Fall of Gallifrey and I stumbled upon the race of Wizards and Witches on Earth. Such a fascinating people, and then I realized that there were magical races all over the Universe. Not as common as sentient species, seeing as they needed a planet located in a special part of space for the species on that planet to develop magic, but there were magical races. And to finally get onto the only purely magical planet is simply amazing! I have so many questions! And I want to know who was here before the first peoples settled."

Rose smiled, enjoying the rambling of the Doctor. Rose had never been the smartest person in the room, especially not at Torchwood where they poached the most intelligent graduates, mostly in science and technology fields, to work for them. Her knowledge was more practical and born from decades of experience. She may have been the sparking idea behind a number of popular inventions at Torchwood, but that was due more to her exciting life and ability to give prototypes a first hand testing without having to worry about permanently dying. Having been on the Tardis for two years gave one a different look on life.

"Doctor, we're almost there," she said, touching the Doctor's shoulder and pointing towards the large building. The Doctor had been lost in his ramble, musing out loud on questions and theories about magic.

"Well, we shouldn't be too far from the Tardis then. Pryxt said she was inside the Council building." The Doctor grinned. "Race you!" he said, before dashing off.

Rose stared at him, eyes wide, before she laughed and raced after him. She felt like a child again.

The stumbled through the entrance and into the Entrance Hall, laughing and out of breath.

"Beat you," Rose panted, smiling. "I had a whole half meter on you!"

"Since when did you get so good at running?" the Doctor asked, perplexed.

"Since I became the head trainer for the new recruits. They were required to run my course every morning, and any who were more than four minutes behind my time had to take the obstacle course. Any who beat me got the privilege of a private self defense course with me. I made them work for
"it," Rose said.

The Doctor snorted. "I'm remembering the girl who panted after ten flights of stairs. You turned into quite the athlete."

"Well, you either stay stuck in the past or grow up and look to the future. I did my moping, then I figured I could train the new recruits, and even the older field operatives would join me on my run. They used to say it was the best way to get a good work out in." Rose shrugged.

"Well, we'll have to do more running then. I love a good run."

"Doctor, Lady Rose, it is so good to meet you." A deep, rumbling voice came from ahead of them.

The Doctor looked up at the speaker. "Oh, wow! You're from Grrryyyckl! You all are such a secretive lot, I never thought you were ever leave your home planet!"

Bryshl laughed. "Yes, our people are notoriously secretive. In fact, only a third of the magical population joined those leaving the planet," Bryshl said. "Now, you are looking for young Harry, are you not?"

"Yeah, have you seen him? Or know where he is?" the Doctor asked. "I know a member of the Marbleous Faction was with him, so it shouldn't be so hard to contact them and figure out where Harry is. Vanderian..." he trailed off as Shorll stepped up.

"Harry is inside the Tardis, along with Kyst, the Mableous Faction member, and Prysh, from the Factrily. I do not know what they are doing though," Shorll informed them.

The Doctor grinned. "Great! Where is the Tardis?"

Rose tapped the Doctor's arm, pointing to an area right behind Shorll and Bryshl, a small smile on her face. "Right there Doctor," she said.

"Perfect! Lovely to see her again! No adverse effects from the Field, yes? I'll check inside, she should be just fine, her shields are top notch. Well, except for the Chameleon Circuit, but I think I rather like the police box."

"I like the blue," Rose said.

"It is a distinct shade of blue, isn't it? Lovely blue! One of my favorite colors!"

Shorll regarded the Doctor and Rose. They were certainly a strange pair. "Well, I do have a question regarding your son Doctor. In particular, his control over his magic. He gave us an...impressive display of controlled illusion and enchantment magic. Something beyond what I believe our best crafters could recreate in a reasonable amount of time."

Rose looked curiously at the Doctor. The Doctor sighed. "He showed you his solar systems, didn't he?"

Bryshl nodded. "Yes. I am Bryshl, Senior Grand Council Member. Your child showed impressive control. He claims he has been doing such magics since he was very young. I was curious as to his claims, since it is such amazing control, focus-less and so young."

the Doctor gave half a smile. "Harry was very closely connected to his magic as a child. He came to me when he was just a bit older than a year, following the deaths of his mother and father. Already he had a strong and impressive aura, I could feel it in my senses. His ability to wish for things was
powerful, and he would summon food, toys, books, whatever he wanted. When he was kidnapped and...altered," he spat the word. "His magic was affected and he couldn't access it with his necklace on. He met Merlin and with his help, Harry expanded his core until it touched his skin and he could access it. Though the only controlled magic he can do without a focus are his solar systems."

Rose interjected, "He can also do some temporal magics. You remember Rowena."

The Doctor laughed. "Oh, yeah, that too, though that’s more due to his connection with the Tardis, I believe."

Bryshl nodded. "This matches some of the information we have on Harry from ancient sources. His innate connection with his magic is extremely rare, with only fifty cases ever being recorded on Haleysio. All but five of them were driven insane when their magical maturity hit, their body unable to handle the amount of magic they had. Of the five who survived, two had their magical pathways burnt to a crisp and spent nearly a decade in intensive care receiving therapy. The remaining three went on to become the most powerful and impressive magicals in history." Bryshl looked at the Doctor, eyes intense. "You know what this means, yes?"

The Doctor nodded, suddenly cold.

Rose frowned. "But, don't we already know Harry survived, if they have records of him from multiple times?" she asked.

"You've forgotten the most important part of Time, Rose. Time can be rewritten. All of this can be altered with just the slightest change, and Harry might not survive, and these records will be erased from history. The fact is, Harry is linearly not magically mature, and the Tardis rarely jumps Time Tracks. He is alive in all possible futures right now because he hasn't died on this Time Track yet, not from the Universe. So all planets we visit up until that moment comes to pass will happen on the Time Track where Harry is presumed to have lived."

Rose shuddered at the implication. Her mind thought of her niece, of her death, and the devastation that wrecked on her, but the absolute demolition of her brother and brother-in-law. Then saw those haunted dead eyes reflected and magnified on the Doctor. "Any information we can get, how to help Harry survive?"

"We can't see anything about Harry's past/future. Any knowledge could alter what we do, what happens to Harry. And I am not putting his life on the line."

"We can allow you to view the records on the fifty recorded magicals who had such a connection with their magic," Bryshl said.

"These are separate from any knowledge about Harry and may help you understand what might happen to Harry. I know for sure one of the fifty was a human, a young girl I believe," Shorll added, trying to help.

The Doctor blinked. "Really?" he said.

"That's safe?" Rose said.

"Yes, it is. Knowledge of the process of magical maturity in the powerful is not restricted knowledge to you. It is merely a process that all know of, and the fact that you do not know what happens during magical maturity may hinder your ability to recognize the signs in Harry. It is an important time in a magical's life, " Bryshl said.

The Doctor's face filled with relief and a sense of hope. Rose grinned hugging the Doctor. She
would be devastated if anything happened to Harry. The Doctor would be destroyed.

"So, you want to go find Harry?" Rose said, grinning. "He's somewhere in the Tardis, should be an adventure."

"Let's go," the Doctor said. They headed to the Tardis, the Doctor opening the door and Rose closed it behind her. The Council was left outside, staring after the two other people the Universe loved.

"Where would he be?" Rose asked.

"Knowing him, if he's brought Kyst and this Prysh from the Factrily, he's probably in his Project Room. The Tardis kept it separate from his bedroom so he can't work through sleep time in his room in secret. Only way we figured out how to keep Harry from constantly tinkering with something, Jack and me. He has a set chime for when he should go to bed, and he actually follows it, with regularity."

Rose laughed. It was almost absurd knowing that an eight year old would be up late working on a science or math project or learning a new language or tinkering with advanced technology. She barely remembered what she was doing at eight, vague images of school friends and park days flitted through her mind.

"So where's his Project Room?" she asked.

"Down this way. It's the opposite direction from his bedroom so he can't take a midnight trip without alerting me or Jack, or you, now. It's important for children to get a good amount of sleep, so every fifteen and a half hours from when he wakes up, the chime goes off so he gets eight hours of sleep every cycle." The Doctor headed off down the hall and Rose followed.

The took several turns in a direction Rose had never seen. The Tardis was so huge there were entire corridors Rose had never seen before, entire sections of the Tardis that were completely unfamiliar to her. It was amazing. Her time in the Tardis as a young girl was imprinted in her memory, times she would recall with fondness as a way of staving off the loneliness of her long life. To see parts of the Tardis she hadn't seen before, well, she felt like her 19 year old self, stepping into the immense maze of corridors and rooms she had first seen with the Doctor who wore a leather jacket and had a northern accent.

"Here we are, just a moment. Need to get through security," the Doctor said, a note of exasperation in his voice.

"Security? Why would he need security on the Tardis?"

"He originally used it to keep me out of his stuff, but after an incident involving a self-made sonic device that blew out the power at the Shadow Proclamation, he didn't get the luxury of keeping me out. So he programmed me in. I have to make sure you can get in too though." The Doctor stepped in front of the door, a blue light scanning him. The door hissed, then retreated upwards. "Wait there a moment," he said, pointing the sonic up at the door. "There, it's stuck for now. Come on."

Rose followed the Doctor into the room, stopping just inside the door.

"...I needed it to finish the multidimensional roller coaster!" Harry muffled voice reached Rose and the Doctor.

The Doctor frowned. "Oi, what did I tell you about that roller coaster?" he said.

The two other figures in the room, turned towards them. The swirling, hovering cloud like being that
Rose knew as Kyst made a small noise of amusement. The other, a nearly translucent being with seven appendages all around the amorphous body and, Rose saw, three deep blue eyes. Rose figured this was Prysh.

"Owowowowowow, dad, is that you?" Harry's voice came from within the drawer he was almost completely inside of, though it looked barely bigger than a normal desk drawer to Rose.

"Hey Harry!" the Doctor said, cheer in his voice. "And what's this about that multidimensional roller coaster? I thought I nixed that idea after you decoupled the gravity simulator in the Tardis and we spent half a cycle floating through the hallways trying to get to the console room."

"Well, I didn't mean to decouple anything! And why didn't reconnecting the connection work? I vaguely remember you saying I overpowered the system and we had to reset from the console, but you should have built some fail safes into the system!" Harry scrambled to pull himself out of his bigger-on-the-inside-smaller-on-the-outside drawer, turning to look at his dad.

"Well, I didn't anticipate an inexperienced engineer trying to hack into the Tardis multidimensional matrix from the subsidiary power system to hook up into a bit of a half-baked amusement park ride," the Doctor replied. "You didn't even ask for my help," he said, sounding genuinely more upset about that then the trouble Harry had caused. Rose secretly figured that was the real reason the Doctor had nixed the idea. Harry had caused so much trouble without asking for his father's help.

Harry sighed. "I said you could help me fix it," he said, morose. "You still wouldn't let me finish working on it."

The Doctor put a considering hand to his chin. "Weeell," he said. "Maybe if you manage to plot out the whole thing and make sure all the properties are valid, I might be up to helping you fix it," he said, a gleam in his eye.

Harry's eyes went wide. "Really? You mean it? Awesome! Next project here I come!" He punched the air.

Rose laughed. Like father like son.

"Harry, don't forget about your jacket! And being my model!" Prysh said, wondering if her fashion show would be put to the side in favor of this strange new project.

Harry grinned. "Of course not. The multidimensional roller coaster can wait, I still need to plan everything and that's going to take some time. I'll do that in my spare time, between modeling and my focus and talking to those at the Academy." Harry looked at his dad and Rose. "Dad, do you remember where I stuck the fabric from the Bazaar I picked up last time we went?"


Harry groaned. "You don't remember. I forgot I didn't tell you. Ugh. I bought fabric so I could find someone eventually to make me a jacket, like yours and Uncle Jack's. Prysh said she would make me one in exchange for modeling for fashion week, which starts tomorrow. I just need to find that fabric!" He dove back into the drawer.

"A model?" the Doctor gasped.

Rose giggled. Harry as a model would be priceless.

"He's the absolute perfect model! I have child clothes for the standard humanoid-esque figure that are amazing! My Family Unit will never believe me when I tell them, and all Harry wants in return is a
"You're from the Factrily, aren't you? Large Family Units that are very inclusive, distinctive body type for a non-standard sex type, the jewel colored eyes. Your name is Prysh, right? What is your place in your Family Unit?" the Doctor asked, grinning. "The Factrily are an amazingly complex social race. They have seven sex types, four standard and three non-standard. And every single gender pronoun is completely individualized. Their language is a very specific one, and their gender pronouns do more than denote their perceived sex. It denotes their place within their Family Unit, their child status, their Personal Unit status, their societal position," the Doctor explained to Rose.

Prysh squeaked in surprise. "You know about the Factrily?! Oh, that is amazing! I am Prysh, Korish-FirstChild-ThreeUnit-OffspringOne-Eccentric!" she said brightly. "My Personal Unit consists of Marstiik, Lefie-ThirdChild-ThreeUnit-OffspringOneSide-Teacher, Kryill, Markl-FirstChild-ThreeUnit-OffspringOneMid-Lead, and Kiarl, Child-FirstChild-Offspring-Student!" She held out three appendages, touching the Doctor's face with gentle touches. "It's nice to meet you! I rarely get to introduce my Personal Unit, few rarely understand the complexity outside the Factrily."

"It's a pleasure to meet you, Prysh, I am the Doctor, Time Lord, Loom Woven, Two Unit, Offspring One Father, and Doctor."

Rose watched the exchange with a raised eyebrow. She knew she only understood Prysh's explanation because of the Tardis Translation Circuits, because the word she thought Prysh said after her name was only five syllables but what she heard was eight distinct words that made little sense all jumbled together. The introduction of her Personal Unit made even less sense.

Kyst had been watching the exchange with interest. "I now see why the Council didn't translate your people's pronouns. Those were very confusing introductions. I barely understood it, even though I knew the individual words. The explanation for the pronoun is too complex to be said simply in Pethi's Tongue," he said. "It is nice to understand though. My people feel that gender pronouns have little use, so to see a culture that uses them so complexly and so thoroughly is...cool." Kyst hesitated on the last word, obviously unable to find a better sounding one that had the same meaning.

The Doctor grinned. "It's a reason I always loved the Factrily. Such a fascinating species, with such specifics in their personal use language."

"You had a very good introduction for a non-Factrily," Prysh said, admiringly.

"I was taught how to by..." he paused, thinking. "By Jaliaks, Markl-FourthChild-FourUnit-OffspringOneOffspringThreeMidOffspringOneSideOffspringTwoLow-President."

Prysh's eyes went wide, spinning around the upper part of her body. "You met Jaliaks?" she said, voice soft and awed. "Jaliaks is the most revered president in Factrily history! The story of Jaliak's presidency came all the way to Haleysio and helped establish how we set up our governing body within the Factrily!"

Rose and Kyst looked at each other, unsure what to add. Rose knew that the introduction the Doctor gave of this Jaliaks was so confusing she didn't know how to make heads or tails of it.

She was prevented from asking as Harry emerged from the drawer, holding aloft a package. "Found it!" he said triumphantly. He coughed, pulling himself out of the drawer. "It was buried in the back corner. I think I shoved it there to hide it, though no idea why I did that. Makes no sense. Why hide fabric?" Harry looked at the package in his hands. "My plans for my jacket is here too." He handed the whole thing to Prysh.
Prysh took it, cautiously holding it between four of her appendages. "Can I open it?" she asked.

"Yeah, sure. I want to make sure there's enough of the fabric. I just took as much as I could afford reasonably."

Prysh gently unfolded the package, revealing a deep green fabric. She lifted it, curious as to its make, then gasped. "This...this is...Oh my stars, I never imagined being able to work with this material! It's so expensive, I could only dream of touching it at a Bazaar! Oh, Harry, this is amazing stuff!" She sprung forward, seizing Harry in one of her appendages, four still holding on the package.

"What is it?" Kyst asked.

"It's Absorption Fabric. It's so malleable that it can be altered beyond belief while still keeping its structure. It's a strong material that I've heard being used in Beyond Light spacecraft and is theoretically able to take an insane amount of magic without dissolving, which is actually a possibility if you put too much magic into fabric. Ooh, this is spectacular!" Prysh hugged the package to her.

"Erm, my plans are inside the fabric. I sketched out a rough idea of what I wanted..." Harry said, reaching to pull out a sheet of paper with doodles on it.

There was a clear design in a hand that was more used to drawing circular figures than straight lines, but it had a definite shape. It was long, hovering around the circular humanoid figure's ankles. Long sleeves and a high collar were both present. Prysh thought she could see faint outlines of pockets on the sides and maybe some on the inside? As well as buttons down the front. She had a good idea of what Harry wanted. With the amount of fabric she had, it would definitely be possible.

"Harry? If there's any fabric after I finish, may I use it for some Enchantments I've been wanting to test?" she asked, hesitant.

Harry shrugged. "Sure. I don't really have any need for the fabric after I have the jacket."

Prysh squealed loudly and restrained herself from rushing Harry into a huge hug. This was the best day ever!

"Well, now that that's sorted, Harry, Vanderian said he wanted to see you again. He should have had some time to sort out the destruction, Prryxt was helping him. We might have found the solution to your focus problem." The Doctor pulled the compressed stars out of his pocket.

Harry leaped towards his father's hand. "Hey, those are mine! I've been looking for those!"

"After the Time Slip, I confiscated them. You used one to hide the lab from me, so I decided you didn't need access to their power until you could use it more responsibly."

Harry deflated. "Frio, Shwwws," he whistled a few notes, "and Mcklck. I missed them." He was morose. Then he blinked, the Doctor's words registering. "A solution to my focus problem? Are you planning on seeing if one of those is the fourth part of my focus?"

The Doctor nodded. "Vanderian agreed to take a look at least. He has used personal items before, and you used to play with these all the time. Your magic coats them, so it's worth a shot."

Harry smiled wide. "Well, what are we waiting for? Let's go!" Harry headed for the door, stopping to look up the the metallic door that wasn't moving. "Dad, did you lock it?"

"Yep. I needed to make sure Rose could come in and you use crappy programming that I don't want
to figure out right now."

"Oi, it's not crappy! It's efficient."

"You can't even explain how something works if it even works. It's too simplistic."

"It works just fine and it's fast. Your code takes hours to input to do simple tasks. The fact that you've condensed it all down into your sonic screwdriver is just cheating."

"If you used better code, you could condense it down into your sonic too. Instead you're stuck using only the most basic programs because you can't code for the sonic."

"At least it doesn't take me three cycles to come up with a simple door opening program."

"I was working around your code, which was so bad that I had to decipher what you wrote to write the proper program to open the door. If you hadn't forgotten the pass-code then you wouldn't have been stuck inside the library for three cycles, and if you hadn't upset the Tardis, she would have let you out. What possessed you to mess with the door code to the Library?"

"I was testing it! The fact that your code messed mine up even after I deactivated it and removed the source code just goes to show how stupidly complex you make your stuff. How do you expect to do anything at any kind of speed when you can't even make sure your code isn't interfering with other programs running?"

"That you can't even dismantle a simple door program properly shows how simple your knowledge of coding is."

"Boys, boys," Rose stepped between the arguing pair, having watched the first few exchanged with amusement before growing exasperated. "You all can argue over which coding language is better later, otherwise we'll be standing here for hours until you two decide to go have a practical demonstration and end up blowing up part of the Tardis and having to apologize for the mess." She looked between Harry and the Doctor. "So, you ready to go back to Vanderian's? It's been over an hour, the repairs should be mostly complete."

Harry and the Doctor exchanged looks that promised said contest later, before turning to the three watching the disagreement. "Alright, everyone ready?" the Doctor said.

"Indeed. I am eager to see the rest of the Focus Appraisal," Kyst said.

"When will you be able to come for the model fitting?" Prysh asked, eager to start Harry's time as a model. "The show starts tomorrow and my window for the clothes you will be modeling is active from the tenth hour in the morning to the first hour in the afternoon every day this upcoming week."

Harry pondered the question. He wasn't sure what modeling required but it would be an interesting experience. "I think after I finish the basic appraisal with Vanderian I should be able to come over to your shop. Vanderian said it would take a while to make the focus, so I can probably spread it over a couple days. Maybe, every day before I go to the modeling window?" He looked at Kyst.

"That would be possible. Vanderian's work is magic intense, so a cool down period for your magic after each portion of the appraisal would be a good idea. Mornings are an ideal time."

Prysh gushed, excited. "Oh, this is amazing! I'll introduce you to Kryill and Marstiik this afternoon when you come over! Kiarl is still in school so won't be able to come, but I'm sure you two will meet at some point. The week leading up to the festival always has free days for young children, those who are only in their first and second cycles of school. The older students have dances and other
preparations for the festival. Kiarl is a second cycle student."

They all trooped out of the Tardis, the Council having dispersed since they had entered. They had spent enough time inside that the council decided they had better things to do than wait outside for the five who had entered to leave.

The trip to Vanderian's was quick, Harry bouncing ahead in excitement and Prysh a bundle of joyful energy. The other three just had to keep up.

They parted at the Orange Street, Prysh heading to her shop to plan out Harry's jacket, the modeling schedule, and to contact her Personal Unit.

The four of them trooped to Vanderian's. The destruction that had been present when Harry had left was now repaired.

"They work quickly," Rose said, amazed.

"Vanderian has much experience fixing damage to his shop. He has explosions at least three times a cycle. Minimum." They all turned to look at Kyst, astonishment on their faces. "He works with very volatile materials. It is only natural that some explosions would occur."

Harry grumbled. "He got so angry at me and he causes explosions all the time," he said under his breath.

Rose ruffled his hair fondly. "Causing explosions yourself is one thing, but having someone who didn't listen to instructions coming in and causing them is a different matter. How would you feel if I walked in on your experiment, deliberately messed with something, and your entire program blew up?"

Harry gaped at her. "That would be horrid!"

"But you mess up your experiments all the time and it blows up in your face. How is that different?"

"Because I know how I screwed up, or I can figure it out. You just...oh. Well, he still didn't have to get so mad at me," Harry grumbled, though his irritation at Vanderian had all but died as he realized what Rose was pointing out.

The Doctor gave Rose a look of admiration. She gave him a smile. "I used to do the same thing with Kelly. It helps children especially make the necessary logic leap from self-thought to thinking from the other person's perspective." She nodded at Harry. "And he is still a child in many ways, despite being highly intelligent. Kelly would often have similar problems, and she was a genius in her own way."

"You have a very good way with children," Kyst said. "You did that admirably."

"Plenty of practice, not just raising my niece but also running Torchwood. Many of the recruits that come to us were barely out of college, and many of them were young geniuses. I think there's an affliction among the highly intelligent that prevents them from always seeing things in proper kinds of context. The Doctor sometimes gets like that too, despite being ancient."

Kyst made soft whooshing noise as the Doctor 'Oi!'d' her. Rose laughed.

Vanderian's door was open when they arrived, Prryxt sitting outside.

"Hello. We have finished the repairs, so Vanderian is ready to test the stone-stars for compatibility."
He has layered a few more protection wards around the room as well. He is still uncertain about using such intense magic on such powerful objects."

Harry grinned, rushing into the shop dragging his dad behind him. Rose, Kyst, and Prryxt followed at a more sedate pace.

"Vanderian! Vanderian! I'm back! I promise I won't touch anything I'm not supposed to so can we finish the appraisal?" Harry yelled, approaching the back door where the room he had previously blown up was.

The door opened, Vanderian poking his twiggy head out. "You do not need to shout, young magical. I can hear you just fine. Your father told me about the stone stars. I have consented to test them, though I am wary. If you would take all four of them and enter the room again, I shall test their connection with your three other materials." He looked past, seeing Prryxt, Kyst, Rose, and the Doctor. "You four will have to remain outside the door. The magics inside will not allow any but myself and the young magical."

They nodded, and Harry turned to the Doctor, hands held out. "Please dad?"

"Be careful with them Harry."

"Of course." The Doctor took out the four compressed stars, laying them in Harry's hands.

Harry grinned, turning and entering the door. It closed behind him.

The Doctor, Rose, Kyst, and Prryxt looked at each other.

"Well, while we wait you can give me a crash course in foci and magic on this planet," the Doctor said, grinning.

Rose sighed.

~~~~This is a Scene Change~~~~

Harry looked around the room that, last time he had been here, had been a smoking collection of crumbling walls and blast marks.

It had been fixed up admiringly well. He couldn't even see the remnants of the scorching.

"I have the stars," Harry said, approaching the altar that had been the only thing besides the two living beings untouched by the blast.

Vanderian, standing behind it, gestured for Harry to place the four stones next to the woods, the anchoring threads, and the Prime Thestral bone.

"Young Magical, you must understand how dangerous using magic on something as strong as stars, especially stars forced into the shape of a stone, is. The amount of power contained within them is immense and I worry that they will not react well to magic."

Harry frowned. "I've been playing with them since I was a child. They've always been exposed to my magic." He tilted his head at Vanderian. "Why would you agree to test them if they are so dangerous?"

"For the simple reason that they have been exposed to your magic, so they should be slightly more accepting of it. I hope." He gestured to the altar. "If you would."
Harry placed the four stars gently on the altar. "What now?"

"Your restrictor needs to be removed for the process." Harry fumbled with the necklace, removing it and shoving it in his pocket. Vanderian made an effort to check how far away Harry was from him and to not move within his personal space. "Now, place your hand over the materials. I shall activate the appraisal wards."

"You don't need to be in the special room to do that?"

"No I don't. Personal items are often introduced after the initial appraisal and they are prone to violent reactions. This room is far more protected from such reactions. The runes I need are carved into the altar. With the presence of the already chosen materials and the outside material, the correct ones will be drawn to each other." Vanderian pulled out his flower-carved focus.

Harry placed his hand over the materials, wondering if this would work.

Vanderian chanted, the runes on the altar lighting up and Harry's magic starting to swirl around, visible once more.

It twisted and curled around the materials on the altar, physically moving various materials around. Two of the woods, the grey and one of the stouter black ones, to the side, followed by the Prime Thesstral bone and one each of the gold and green anchoring threads. Then it turned to the stars. It hovered over it, and Harry felt like it was greeting old friends, before his favorite star, the one he had named following the whistling language tradition and emanated soft purple light, was rolled over to the small collection of materials.

Harry's magic twined around the small collection, and Harry heard a bright chime before it returned to him, twisting around his body as Vanderian stopped chanting and the rune light died.

"Your magic is magnificent, young magical. It not only chose the stone star it felt fit it, it also chose the rest of the materials and collected them." Vanderian looked at Harry, and the boy could see naked amazement in his eyes. "You will be a pleasure to work with. I am eager to see your focus." He looked down at the small pile of materials. "Two woods is unusual, but not unheard of. It is the two anchoring materials that I am concerned with. Having one is rare, to need two..."

"Is it a bad thing?" Harry asked.

"No, not a bad thing, persay. I believe two anchoring materials will help balance out the power from the stone star." Vanderian pointed to the soft purple stone star. "Is there any special significance to this stone star?"

Harry smiled. "That was my favorite star. It's not the most powerful, that Mcklck, the white one, but the color and its soft glow always drew me to it."

Vanderian nodded. "A magical's favorite item is often used when they need personalized foci. I take it that you handled this one with your magic often?"

"Yes. All the time."

"That will make this easier." Vanderian looked at the remaining materials, the two other woods and the remaining anchoring threads. "Let me move these, and we shall see what shape your focus takes. That will help me approach the crafting of the focus this week."

Vanderian collected the woods and threads, moving off to the side of the room and touching a rune on the wall. A small door popped open and he placed the materials inside, closing the door and
etching a rune above the existing one.

"What did you do?" Harry asked.

"I returned the materials to their proper place within the appraisal room. They would only interfere if they stayed in the room." Vanderian took the two woods, moving them into the center of the altar. "Black Kifeern and Smoked Hallow. I have a particular history with these two woods. My Colony inhabits a region of Haleysio that nestsles between the Forest of the Undying and the Forest of the Giant. I have always been drawn to those woods, enough so that my own focus is made from Smoked Hallow from the Mouth of the Giants." He showed the flower again, letting Harry see the ash grey color.

"That's awesome!"

"Indeed. Now, young magical, place your hand over the two woods. Don't touch them, that is important." Vanderian looked at Harry. "I do not what to know what might happen if you touch the woods. The last time a young magical touched the focus during construction, they suffered from severe magical burns along their pathways. Painful and debilitating."

Harry swallowed. "Promise. No touching."

"Very good. Now, please, your hand." Harry moved his hand to hover over the two words. "Concentrate. Your magic will follow the chanting of my spell, since the process is complex. But I need you to cast your mind to channeling your magic, how it happens, all the feelings you have when you have cast magic in a controlled manner."

Harry closed his eyes, blocking out his sight making it easier to delve into his memories.

He thought of his time creating his solar system, his time with Godric, Salazar, Helga, and Rowena, learning from Merlin. The empty focus he used then to cast basic spells. His hours wandering around Camelot levitating fragile glass, testing his control. The light spell he overpowered and nearly drained himself. The joy he felt whenever he performed a bit of magic the way he wanted to. How complex something so adverse to the basic rules of the Universe was, how wishing for something never quite gave the same result as a controlled spell, as light he wished for never managed to be the amount of light he could feasibly use. His magic flowed out of his skin, down his hand and from his palm, towards the two woods laying on the altar.

So much magic, Harry thought. He rarely used so much magic at once, so quickly. But he couldn't think of that.

He thought of how magic was fundamental to the Universe, the Lines of Power that flowed across the Universe and gifted some planets close enough to one with magic. How Haleysio was actually at the center of the intersection of seven lines and so full of magic that nothing here was non magical. How magic fascinated him with its sheer existance and his desire to learn all he could about it. How to use it, spells, enchantments, to make his own creations on grand scales.

His magic flowed out faster and faster, and Harry had to steel himself against the quick loss of his magic.

He thought of Hogwarts and the amount of magic the four magicals who created it shoved into those stones, enough magic to create sentience, true sentience. The lovely, stunning thing that was a sentient magical castle. How he was going to be taught there when he was old enough, how he looked forward to the magical world his birth parents had been part of, to see the world he came from, though one he wasn't truly a part of anymore. Hadn't been since he had been first brought onto
Vanderian had kept his eyes open, needing to see the process to help direct the raw magic.

The flow of magic from the young magical was immense, staggering. How much magic did he have?

A small worry niggled at the back of Vanderian’s mind. He recalled a young one from the Factrily who also had an immense amount of magic, too much magic, it turned out. The young magical had burned out every single magical connection come magical maturity and even after a decade of therapy and healing could only perform the most basic of spells. That was back when he had first opened his shop, nearly 200 cycles ago.

Harry seemed to be amongst those with too much magic.

The young one from the Factrily had also had an unusual focus. Vanderian recalled that the focus had bordered the barrier between a stationary and wild type.

More magic poured from Harry’s hand, shaping the two woods on the alter. They shifted, snuggling up against each other, before twisting around and around, until they formed a long, narrow twist of wood. The black and grey of the woods twined together until they melded and one couldn’t distinguish the seam between each twist. It was ridged, much like a unicorn horn and tapering off on one end. It seemed to be a wand, the most common mobile type amongst humans, but the ridges spoke of a stationary type, or maybe they were grooves for the anchoring thread.

Vanderian was about to slow the chant, but Harry’s magic surged once more and he watched in astonishment as it started to etch...were those runes? It was etching runes, runes Harry couldn’t know but the he knew, and Vanderian knew that Harry’s magic had borrowed the knowledge from his magic to accomplish the feat. Runes on a focus. One the most unstable Wild type ever needed runes. A Mobile Wild type. Vanderian internally shuddered at the power such a focus could wield.

The runes were carved up the length of the focus, opposite the ridges in a spiral pattern that mirrored the wooden spiral. A few moments later, Harry’s magic chimed completion and Vanderian slowed the chant as Harry’s remaining free magic sunk into the focus.

Harry sagged as the spell was ended. Vanderian was unsurprised. There had been a lot of magic shoved into the wood.

“I feel so...empty,” Harry said, voice soft. “I mean, not tired, not like when I used to over practice spells with Merlin, but empty. I can barely feel my magic, it’s simmering deep inside.”

Vanderian huffed. “That is where all magicals magic resides. That you feel empty because you are now just under the normal power level of an average magical speaks to the amount of magic you posses. Any other magical bar a few insanely powerful would have been drained and possibly died if they tried to pour out the same amount of magic you just used.” Vanderian sent Harry a significant look.

“Is it finished?” Harry asked, eyes still closed and hand pressed against his chest.

“Take a look.”

Harry struggled to stand up straighter, opening his eyes. He looked at the altar, and his eyes widened. “Oh wow...it’s beautiful. Can I touch it?” he asked, hand reaching towards it.

“Yes, though it must stay in the room until we have completed the focus.”
Harry picked up the focus. It was just over 38 centimeters or 15 inches, and Harry could feel the ridge winding clockwise and the runes carved counterclockwise. “What type?” he asked.

“A Mobile-Wild type. Mixed type are seen only in the most powerful or the most unusual magicals. I have only made three, and never a mixed Wild type. Wild type are known for being temperamental. I look forward to what you do with that focus. Though we still need to finish it, that will not occur today. You need to rest your magic. Come tomorrow and I will evaluate your levels. If you have recovered enough power, we can move on. If not, we shall wait another day.”

Harry nodded, understanding. His magic still felt strange. He was surprised he didn’t feel tired though. He asked Vanderian about his lack of exhaustion.

“The way you used your magic now didn’t actually strain your magical pathways. You poured raw magic out and it was directed by my spell. So you didn’t do anything. Though you might sleep longer at night to recover your magic quicker. Sleep is the ideal time for magic to recover.”

“Alright, that makes sense. I’ll let my dad know.”

“I shall also be telling him. You need quite a bit of nourishment as well, before you sleep. It is essential you replenish your body’s stores of vitamins and minerals as they help conduct your magic.”

“Which would explain why I love to eat. Have insane amounts of magic, must eat all the things.”

Vanderian furrowed his twigs. “You have strange sayings young magical.”

Harry laughed.

They left the room, Harry reluctantly leaving the focus behind on the altar. He was looking forward to when he could take it with him. He felt like it was a part of him.

His dad, Rose, Kyst, and Prryxt were still outside. The Doctor had engaged Prryxt in a discussion about construction magics and the limits of their ability to expand spaces. Rose and Kyst were involved in discussing the complexities of the government on Haleysio.

They all turned to Harry and Vanderian. “Did it work?” his dad asked.

Harry grinned. “Yep! We managed to shape the woods today, but I’m drained. Vanderian said to come back tomorrow. Morning okay?”

“I rise with the sun, so any time after sunrise is acceptable.”

“Sounds perfect!”

“Also, Time Lord, your young magical will require more than the normal amount of nourishment to help encourage his magic to recover. He will also sleep longer than normal, so I would take that into account when he goes to bed. I understand Pyrsh has vined him into becoming her model, so you shall have to remember when he needs to be at her shop.” Vanderian looked between them. “Now, I require some rest. I used more magic than I expected and will be rooting for the rest of the afternoon. I shall see you tomorrow.”

Vanderian showed them out, then shut the door and they were standing on the Orange Street once again.

“So, to Prysh’s?” Harry said. “I told her I would show up after Vanderian’s, and there’s still a decent
amount of time until sunset.”

Prryxt swished. “I am going to check on some things with the Council. I will leave you here. I shall see you at a later time.” He inclined his head towards the Doctor and Rose. “You have been most enlightening. I enjoyed our time talking. I shall think about what you have proposed, maybe we can advance our construction spells.”

The Doctor grinned. “It was nice talking to you too! It was very informative.”

They waved as Prryxt left, bounding back towards the Council building with strong strides.

Prysh’s shop was just down the Orange Street, and she was waiting outside the door with two more Factrily. They stood, appendages entangled with each others, talking softly. As the group approached, Prysh turned at the sound of their footsteps, bouncing.

“Harry! You’re here! I’d like to introduce you to my Personal Unit! This is Marstiik!” She gestured to the figure on her left, a light yellow shade of opaqueness with jewel red eyes. “And this is Kryill!” The figure behind her, who poked around to wave a light green opaque appendage, jewel purple eyes twirling.

“You are Harry. Prysh has been unable to say anything else than her excitement at working with you. Marstiik and myself were rather skeptical at first, but it is a pleasure to meet you,” Kryill said, soft and musical voice that was several octaves lower than Prysh’s squeal.

“Indeed. I am pleased to see you. Prysh had been worrying about her show, having only four out of five models. She has been looking for a potential child model for weeks,” Marstiik spoke in a high but airy voice.

Harry grinned. “Prysh agreed to make my jacket for me, and being a model sounds interesting. I’ve never done it before, so it should be interesting.”

“Come on come on! I want to see my clothes on you! Oh, I’m so excited!” Prysh disentangled herself from Kryill and Marstiik so she could grip Harry’s arm and pull him into her shop, up the steps in the back of the main room, and all the way up to the top.

Clothes and fabrics and all manner of things flashed by in a whirl of color. Harry’s eyes swam. They came to a halt in a room filled with stands the held fabric draped in strange ways.

Prysh dragged Harry through the different drapey fabrics towards a specific, small, human shaped model doll.

“This is what you want me to model?” Harry asked, seeing the similar dimensions between himself and the model.

“Yes! It’s my masterpiece! I love making clothes for children and this is the ultimate in festival wear for the young humanoid-esque figure!”

Harry looked at it critically.

It was attached at the throat, the upper right arm, the lower left arm and had a small tie around the back, leaving the back portion of the upper body open. A swatch of gold colored fabric twisted around the upper lower body, then fell in a half column on the left leg and a full column on the right leg, attached around the knee and ankle respectively. The upper fabrics were a swirl of reds, oranges, and golds. The whole thing hung rather well from the model doll.
“It’s very colorful,” he said.

“It’s the primary colors of the festival! Every child wears these colors at the Naming Festival. I’ve
designed the colors to twist around like the spells used to maintain the Naming and each clasp as an
enchantment designed to make the child weightless and able to float above the crowd to see the
festivities in a safe manner.” Prysh pointed to the neck, two arm and two leg clasps. “Humanoid-
esque children are at a disadvantage when it comes to such things, they are usually too small to see
everything, and too heavy for guardians to lift them the whole time.”

Harry nodded. “Makes sense. So, how does one put it on?”

~~~~~This is a Scene Break~~~~~

Rose, Kyst, and the Doctor stayed downstairs with Kryill and Marstiik.

“So, you’re a teacher, Marstiik?” the Doctor asked.

Marstiik twitched in surprise. “Did Prysh tell you?”

“Oh, I have a mild fascination with Factrily gender pronouns, so Prysh decided to introduce her
Personal Unit to me. It has been quite a while since I used the format, but I enjoy its complexity and
specificness.” The Doctor grinned.

“Yes, she would enjoy the prospect. Among her many eccentricities is a very obsessive personality,”
Kryill remarked, looking fondly up towards where Prysh had taken Harry.

“You say eccentric, but to my understanding, at least on Earth, it’s never really used in a nice way,”
Rose said, having been curious about it.

Kryill looked at Rose. “I see what you mean. In Prysh’s case, Eccentric is used to describe her Social
Position. Just as I am a Lead and Marstiik is a Teacher, Prysh is an Eccentric. She chose to do
something outside the Factrily society, and our language uses Eccentric to describe that fact. It isn’t a
way to insult or demean an individual, but because Factrily require absolute precision in language,
having a Social Position outside the society means a vast set of words that would be detrimental to
conciseness. Eccentric is the term used for those who choose such lives, and the word invites one to
ask more questions about their Social Position. It is actually rather a good thing, as it is always a
good way to start a conversation as one’s pronoun is one’s complete identity in Factrily society.”

Rose nodded. “That makes more sense. I heard Prysh introduce you, but I must confess it made little
sense to me. The word in your language had five syllables but there were so many words in
translation that I couldn’t make sense of it.”

Marstiik chuckled. “That is often the reaction to our pronouns. It is why there wasn’t much fuss
when the Council gave up on trying to translate them into Pethi’s Tongue. The Factrily member at
the Council working as the representative had spent three weeks trying to explain the words used,
but no other race had near the complexity for just a pronoun that it was decided as an impossible
task.”

Kyst swirled, agreeing. “Especially for those species who use no pronouns, the immensity of Factrily
pronouns was so daunting and foreign an idea that they couldn’t even contribute.”

Marstiik and Kryill nodded.

Rose found the whole thing fascinating.
Just then, Harry and Prysh came down the back stairs, and Rose had to blink.

Harry was dressed in such an array of reds, oranges and golds that it was staggering. The upper fabric, a twisting swirl of the chosen color palates, was a strange, draping shape tied at the neck, the upper right arm and lower left arm, switches of fabric falling in elegant swirls. The lower half was solid gold and fell halfway down the left leg and tied at the knee, then all the way to the ankle on the right leg.

“That’s magnificent,” Rose said.

Prysh squealed. “Oh, thank you Rose! Harry looks amazing in it! And watch!” She gestured at Harry.

Harry pressed a small button on the back of the neck clasp, feeling a tingle spread through the fabric before he felt like he weighed nothing. He gently pushed off the ground, unravelling the swirl of fabric at his waist. Prysh held on it is, stopping Harry’s rise to the ceiling about a meter and a half off the ground.

“Wow, that’s some impressive enchantment,” the Doctor said, eyeing his now floating son. How long will it last?”

“The initial enchantment is built in and it has enough internal magic to start the external power spell, using outside magic to sustain it indefinitely. It pulls free floating magic from the air to power the enchantment so it can’t endanger anyone’s magic by using it as a source.”

Kryill and Marstiik nodded. “We contributed that idea, knowing that such spells can be detrimental if not powered properly. That spell, the external power spell, is actually rather difficult to cast. It’s the main selling point of this outfit.”

The Doctor and Rose watched Harry stretch out in midair, before leaning back. “This is really comfortable,” he said. “Nice and relaxing.”

Prysh giggled. “You are going to be the best model!”

The Doctor looked outside. “Well, we are going to have to relieve you of your model for the moment, Prysh. My son needs to food, then bedtime. You should change out of the clothes for now, Harry. Don’t want to lose them.”

Harry sighed, pressing the button on the back of his neck again and slowly starting to return to the ground. “Alright Prysh. We’ll be back tomorrow. You can tell me all about whatever it is models do!” He trudged back upstairs for his clothes with Prysh.

The Doctor, Rose, Harry, and Kyst were soon on their way back to the Council building, waving goodbye to Prysh, Marstiik, and Kryill.

Harry’s stomach was rumbling loudly and he was yawning. The sky was a brilliant shade of red and orange as Haleysio’s star set.

“Well, Kyst, We’ll see you tomorrow, yeah?” the Doctor said, looking at Kyst.

“Yes, I will see you tomorrow, early in the morning. I shall wait out here for Harry at least. I understand tomorrow you wanted to see the records for the ruins found on Haleysio?”

The Doctor nodded. “Yep.”
“There will be a member of the Academy to take you to the museum then. You and Lady Rose?”

“Yeah, I’ll be going too. Sounds fascinating. Though I want to see Harry’s modeling debut.” She grinned at Harry. She had a feeling Harry wasn’t quite sure what modeling entailed. It would be quite amusing to see when he realized what he would be doing.

“Then tomorrow.”

Tomorrow would be an interesting day. This week would be an interesting week.

~~~~This is an Ending~~~~

Chapter End Notes

Soooooooolllllooo, the end of the first day on Haleysio! I will tell you that the next chapter will be closer to snippets of the week leading up to the festival, rather than a day-by-day account. Hopefully see you soonish! I hope. I’m trying to prep for NaNoWriMo and using a friend as shameless motivation to write every day. Mostly by telling him my word count by the end of the day. It is a motivation of a kind.

Any questions about any of the species/characters introduced, hit me up. I have backstory for practically all of them floating around in my brain. The Factrily, I am declaring now, are my favorite creations of all time. I adore them. I actually borrowed the initial concept from an Isaac Asimov book I read years ago, but now I doubt you could recognize the inspiration in them. If you do, let me know the title! I don’t have access to my book collection and am now sad cause I can’t even quote the book I was inspired by.

Thank you for reading and reviewing and following and favoriting and everything! I love you all and you all are amazing! Thank, you so much!!

Kuroi
In Which There is a Discovery and a Focus

Chapter Summary

The Next Adventure on Haleysio!!

Chapter Notes

Hey All! I’m Back! And so much faster than I normally am! I really wasn’t kidding about writing more often this time! I spent October getting back into the groove of writing so I could be ready for NaNoWriMo, which I have been doing for six years! And guess which story is on my NaNo list this year again? Yep, this one!

So, ahead is a super long chapter (it could have been longer, trust me)! Enjoy and see you at the end!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

~~~~This is a Beginning~~~~

Morning saw Harry stumbling, two hours later than he usually woke, into the kitchen, pulling on what Rose thought might be silver pants but weren’t quite defined enough to be pants. His shirt was some kind of fabric twist of black that she wondered how he managed to put on half asleep.

He hadn’t seen her yet, eyes still half closed. He meandered to the fridge, avoiding various obstacles that had been on the floor for far too long given the ease he stepped around them. A few minutes after opening the door, he emerged with a plate holding some kind of green paste, a piece of bread, and what might be a deformed apple/peach combo. The color was certainly vivid.

Harry ate half the food he had procured before he sat down, reaching blindly for the cup he had left on the table from dinner and draining it.

"Ah, best juice in the Universe...oh, Rose. Hi."

"Hello. I see you’re finally cognizant."
Harry scratched his head. "Well, Vanderian said I'd sleep more than normal and the extra sleep got to me, I think. Not used to it. Still adjusting."

"Don't listen to him, Rose. 6 out of 10 times he doesn't even realize what he's put on his plate." The Doctor walked in, hair more wild than normal and a gleam in his eyes.

His son glared at him. He ignored it.

"So, Doctor, ready for adventure? Harry isn't scheduled for the beginning of his modeling career for another two hours and there's someone from the Academy already outside waiting. Liffra, I believe. Sort of sleek and metallic looking being, almost mercurial I would say. Very lovely." Rose drank the last bit of her orange juice, the only juice she recognized in the fridge, before standing up. "Oh, and Kyst is outside too, Harry."

Harry waved the fruit in his hand in acknowledgement before chomping into the skin and a fountain of purple juice sprayed out, covering his face and getting into his hair.

"You should know better than to bite into a Balveri Grastim without first puncturing it," she could hear the Doctor saying.

"They should come pre-punctured," was the still not quite awake Harry's reply.

Rose laughed. She had missed the Tardis.

~~~~This is a Scene Break - Harry~~~~

Harry, hair wild and newly dried, bounded out the doors and saw Kyst hovering nearby. After his encounter with the Balveri fruit he dripped purple juice all the way to the shower and set them on full power. He had certainly been awake after that.

"Morning, or whatever works here. Never know. Anyway, off to Vanderian's first, yeah? Come on!" Harry headed for the archway leading to the black bridge, feet bare and hair not even beginning to calm. In fact, Kyst believed it to be puffing up more than normal.
Kyst rolled swirls of mist around in amused exasperation. "Yes, to Vanderian's. If I may ask, do you know the type of focus you have?"

That had been the first question that bombarded Kyst the moment the fellow guards had the time. They had all heard about Harry's trip to Vanderian's, it was common knowledge at the Council building by sunset. With no answer, Kyst had been, in turns, groaned at and teased for not being more inquisitive.

Harry smiled. "Yep! Vanderian said it was a Mobile-Wild type. It looked like a really fancy wand, with runes running counterclockwise up the whole length and the Black Kifeern and Smoked Hallow twist together. When it's finished I'll show you." He ran ahead of Kyst, who had halted in mild astonishment.

A mixed-type? Only one magical in the Academy while Kyst had attended had had a mixed type, and it was a heirloom that had fit perfectly. They were rare and unpredictable, since mixed types drew on two fundamentally different ways of controlling magic. Harry would have quite the talk with the Academy teachers, Kyst though, hurrying to keep up with the excited child. Then again, there was no other kind of talk Harry could possibly have, being as curious and knowledge seeking as he was.

Vanderian's shop came into view and Harry didn't even bother with the handle, striding into the main display room and looking around for the focus maker.

"Vanderian? I'm back! Can we make the next part of the focus?" Harry said, trying not to yell but unable to keep too quiet. Excitement brought out the best and worst in him.

Vanderian emerged from a room off to the side, looking at the child who had burst into his complex with fond amusement. "Yes, yes, we shall test your magic levels. I feel like they should be adequate enough but I would rather not leave things to chance and luck. There is much that can go wrong if you are not in proper condition, young magical." Vanderian pulled out his focus, clapping it between his twiggy fingers. "Hold still. This is the most basic diagnostic charm, it will give me a reading of your core."

Harry resisted the urge to twist and scan his body as the wave of magic passed through, tingling as it went. "Well, am I alright? That felt weird."
Vanderian huffed. "Yes, young magical, you are recovered enough. Nearly completely recovered, which is what I felt would happen. Since your magic was only pulled from you and not directed by you, it would recover a tad bit quicker as there were no magical pathways to heal." Vanderian turned, heading towards the main room. "Follow me now. Kyst, please wait outside again. I believe I have a selection of interesting holo-enchants my saplings gave me if you want to peruse them. They are in the holo-room, down the hall and to the left."

Kyst swirled. "Thank you. I should be fine waiting, but I may take advantage of them."

Harry grinned and waved the Kyst as he followed Vanderian into the altar room. His focus lay where he had left it, and he rushed over, stopping himself from touching it centimeters from the surface. "May I?" he asked, recalling his promise to not touch things he didn't have permission to in Vanderian's shop.

"You may, young magical, but then the work needs to start. We will begin the process of inlaying the anchoring thread. You have two of them, and they need to be directed by you. You will have to hold both the main part of the focus and the anchoring materials. It may take some time, as anchoring threads are notoriously difficult to direct."

Harry picked up his focus, marveling at the smoothness of the ridges and the perfect counter-twist the runes made. "Okay, what do I need to do?"

"Today, I need you to think of everything that creates you, who you are, not just your magic, but your father, your home, your friends, how you became you. Open your magic again, and concentrate. Hold the anchoring threads loosely in one hand and your base focus in the other." Harry picked up the gold and green threads. "Yes, like that. Now, think."

Harry closed his eyes once more, feeling the materials in his hands and hearing the chants from Vanderian. His magic surged to the surface of his skin, stopped just at the breaking point. Harry groaned. "Wait, sorry Vanderian, I forgot my restrictor was on." He hurriedly unclasped it as Vanderian stopped the spell. "Sorry."

"If you are ready now, young magical?" Vanderian too had forgotten, so few wore such restrictors constantly, and few continued to wear them after reaching the age of appraisal. Harry nodded. "Alright, now concentrate."

Harry slipped back into the thoughts he had been conjuring before. The chant began again, and his magic slipped through his skin and surrounded his hands.
His father filled his mind. The Time Lord who raised him, who taught him planets and stars and systems and peoples and languages, who shared his own language with the mostly human child and taught him all he could. Who took him on adventures through the Universe and gave him all of it to learn from. Who hugged him every night and took care of him when he felt ill and made sure he ate when he forgot.

The Tardis, his home, his second parent, who scolded him when he had messed up by hiding rooms and playing pranks on his things, who looked after him and made sure he got enough sleep, who gave him access to all the knowledge he could possibly want and the space to experiment. Who would hum soft lullabies through their connection to lull him to sleep and who would gently wake him up whenever he needed to be awake.

Uncle Jack, the Immortal and his companion in outlandish and childish games his father often scoffed at for a few moments before reluctantly joining in. Uncle Jack, the notorious flirt who fell for the moonstone-eyed potions master at Hogwarts and stayed. Uncle Jack, who had helped make sure he didn't get into anything too dangerous but also would let him sneak looks at his wrist device until his dad said Harry still needed a few more lessons in temporal physics before he could even start messing with that kind of technology.

Rose, his dad's mate, he guessed. Wife was such a strange word, and didn't fit Rose, it was too tied down in Earth terms for him to fit it onto the Rose he had come to know. Rose was strong and held her own against his dad and made sure he didn't run off and do stupid things or run his mouth for hours and hours. Rose could beat Uncle Jack in an unarmed spar and taught him how to kick and punch properly. Harry thought what she did looked like dancing, where as Uncle Jack looked too stiff.

Arthur, the child who would be King one day, and who was his first friend. He tried to write to Arthur before he went to bed and Arthur would try and write back when he got up in the morning. His father had made sure the books would be linked in a chronological order so Harry wouldn't suddenly be talking to Old Man Arthur one day and Young Arthur the next. Arthur, who liked Harry's magic and would play tag with him and hide and seek. Who was so full of himself, until Harry laughed at him and dragged him into the muck to play games.

His magic twined around and around and Harry could feel his hands moving. He wasn't sure what they were doing, too focused on his thoughts and his past.

Vanderian watched the process, a slow one by any means, take place. Harry's hands, holding the materials, came together, and his fingers pulled the anchoring threads until they were twice as long as the base. Then, starting from the top, they twined the two colors together until a thin rope formed.
His fingers found the groove between the ridge and, slowly, ever so slowly, started pressing the thin gold/green rope into the space until it sunk in and was level with the lower wood. Around and around, Vanderian watched as Harry's fingers pressed the thread into the wood, easing it in and sealing it with magic. His chant was constant, very aware Harry's magic was taking direction from him.

Finally, the last piece was pressed into the base and the Focus floated to the alter. Vanderian slowed and stopped his chant and watched Harry come out of whatever trance he'd been in.

A shimmering light winked from the focus and Harry grinned in delight. "My magic feels like it did yesterday afternoon," he said. "But my focus looks awesome!"

"It is indeed, awesome, as you say, young magical," Vanderian agreed. "For now, let the rest of your free floating magic do it's work in sealing the anchoring material in. Don't touch it, you can return tomorrow for the next part of the focus. At the moment, I believe you have an appointment with Prysh, do you not?"

Harry blinked. He wasn't the best with time, but it hadn't been that long, had it?

"It has been nearly an hour and half of another. You have half of another hour before Prysh's show starts. I would hurry, young magical." Vanderian smiled as Harry started and waved as the boy ran out the door. He had no doubt Kyst wouldn't be far behind.

~~~~This is a Scene Break - Rose and the Doctor~~~~

True to Rose's words, Liffra the Mercurite was waiting outside the Tardis, speaking to a crystal and making a few gestures through the air with a twirling twist of wood with a slender limb. Kyst hovered nearby and swirled at the Doctor and Rose in greeting. They waved back.

"Indeed. I need access to the Museum records, on the First Documents. Yes, I know they are under protection, I have the permission of the Grand Council Members as a whole to bring the Doctor and Lady Rose to the First Documents. You can send a Thought to their Crystals if you want to verify, just have the Documents ready in half an hour." Liffra tapped the Crystal with her focus and it went dark. “Good Morn to you, Time Lord and Lady Rose.”
"Hello Liffra. Was there a problem with the Museum?" Rose asked, concerned. She had been under the impression that all was well with the proceedings.

Liffra shook her head, a sleek oval with dark patches for a mouth and eyes, the shimmering surface of her body wavering in the light. "Not in particular. Just an overprotective Documents Guardian. Despite the instructions from the Council, I wanted to make sure that they would be ready for viewing. The First Documents are under some extremely protective wards, seeing as they are thousands of years old. They have never been translated before and are regarded as the ultimate goal of linguistics the planet over. Even off-planet magics who specialize in linguistic magics and tongues come to the Museum to try and figure out what language it is, but they've never successfully managed it." Liffra looked at the Doctor and Rose. "Then again, we've never had a Time Lord or someone who has been on the Tardis before take a look at them."

Rose laughed. She had fond memories of her younger years in Pete's World trying to figure out why everyone was speaking English to her, even in places where English wasn't common. It took a conversation with John for her to realize that, if one spent enough time on the Tardis, the Translation Matrix would, rather than constantly translate everything for you, alter part of the brain to allow everything to be perceived in one's native tongue.

She recalled the base with the untranslatable language written on the walls by an archaeologist looking to fill some time, and glanced at the Doctor in worry.

It seemed he had recalled it too. "Unlikely to be something similar. That rock was from ages before this galaxy even formed, the inhabitants who wrote that language weren't alive anymore when the star here began to shine," he said, and Rose relaxed. That adventure was one that was closer than she liked to being deadly and potentially life-altering.

The took a different door out of the council, heading away from the Orange Street Shops and towards, what Rose could see, looked like a city built at different levels. Some buildings resembled what she recognized as buildings, from the ground up and multi-storied, though they were painted in vivid colors and designed in fantastical shapes rather than the drab browns, blacks, beiges, greys, and whites that she knew in major cities. Even in the past fifty years of her life, humans couldn't seem to get away from making giant glass structures with boring paint schemes.

Other buildings were similar to the ones on the ground, just suspended a number of stories in the air. Some, Rose would be hard-pressed to call buildings. There were abstract shapes without concrete forms, some moving with the breeze, some against the breeze, some rooted to a fixed point. Around the buildings, above, below, and through, was a matrix of glowing lines Rose guessed might be transportation points or construction cables of some sort.
A few were whimsical shapes and sort of bent in strange directs, parts of them seeming to flicker in her vision. A few entire buildings seemed to flicker in her vision and were distracting and hard to focus on.

And the hustle of different species, beings, and creatures was very evident. Unlike the Orange Street Shops, which were mostly empty, there was life in the city they were approaching. Fast moving, many shaped, many colored, varied life. A few very tall beings, well over four meters, stood above the main crowd. One was stick thin and spindly with numerous limbs. The rest were bulky and moved in a group.

"This is the main city of Haleysio's North-Western District, Julist. It has the largest fashion center and boasts an incredible number of enchanters and crafters. Being so close to the Orange Street Shops is highly desired, and highly profitable," Liffra said.

"Those shops, the Orange Street Shops, I remember hearing that they were dedicated to the best crafters, but why were they so empty yesterday? We were the only ones there all day," the Doctor said.

Liffra smiled. "This is the week leading up to the Naming Festival. All the owners of Orange Street Shops are also Magi in all but title and usually help at the Academy or with the spells that direct the Festival. Vanderian the Focus Crafter is the only one who declines from the set up as there is little call for his specialty so early. On the Festival Day, he usually assists in the most complex spells necessary since they often deal with the materials he is most used to working with, and he is one of the most proficient Warders. It is he who also Wards the Festival against stray magics," Liffra said.

They stepped off the main road just before they reached the city and took a winding side path through colorful plant life. Above them, a line from the glowing matrix stretched overhead.

"Liffra, what are the lines? I've seen them everywhere, even to the Council, but they weren't at the Orange Street Shops. Are they transportation or something?" Rose asked, pointing upwards.

"Oh, the Crystal Lines? They're they Matrix for the Thought Crystals. Nearly everyone has one, at least those of Academy age. They allow instantaneous communication to anywhere within the Matrix, and it spreads over nearly the whole planet. There are select areas that aren't covered, like the Orange Street Shops, the Fields, the Malspaiin in the Far North, the Haven in the East, and various private residences and areas that request to be Off-Grid."

It sounded a lot like cell service made magical to Rose.
"Oh, that's brilliant! Love the concept, how long does it take to set up?" the Doctor asked. "How does it work? Are the Crystals personalized or are there any specific features?"

Liffra pulled out the small crystal she had been talking to before. "The Matrix is relatively easy to expand from a given Node. Where there is no Node, it takes a small team from the Matrix Regulation a few days to establish a Node before they can connect it to the Matrix." She pulled her focus out, a shiny red swirl of wood, and tapped the Crystal several times. "Each Crystal is tied into the owner's focus, which is why one needs to be of Academy age to have one. Without a Focus you can't use the Crystal."

Rose and the Doctor peered at Liffra's Crystal. It was a pearlescent blue and pulsed soft lights at measured intervals. "It's beautiful," Rose said.

"Thank you. My family works with Crystals, so I was able to personalize mine far more than many that are available for immediate sale. I have a number of Holo-Enchants built in and total compatibility with any holo-enchant. They tend to be very temperamental enchants and don't always work well with others, but the material my Crystal is made from holds large numbers of enchants with ease."

"Brilliant!" the Doctor said, looking closer at the Crystal. Rose could see him restraining from scanning it with his sonic, already knowing the sonic didn't read magical devices.

"Your appointment with the Documents is in five minutes, we need to hurry. The Guardian does not like late comers." Liffra put the Crystal away and ushered them towards an archway in the middle of the path. "Through the Arch, please," she said.

There didn't seem to be anything behind it, or around it. Rose looked and was sure there wasn't anything nearby. "Um, where does it go?" she asked.

Liffra grinned, then gestured upwards. "The Museum circles the planet, a special series of runes, enchants, wards, and constructs keeping it up. The Arches are located all across the planet for ease of access and each Arch is a doorway for the Main Hall of the Museum. Now, through the Arch. The Documents Chamber is just off the Main Hall, not through the Museum at all. Hurry, hurry."

Rose and the Doctor grinned, gripped hands, and stepped through the Arch.
They felt something swirl around their bodies and were weightless for a brief moment, before solid ground was under their feet again.

Solid was what it was, though Rose could see right through it to the clouds and all the way to the waters of Haleysio.

"That is one amazing bit of magic. Technology seems far more jarring in comparison," the Doctor commented.

"That's only because Portals like the Arches are designed for comfort, since even young children use them on a regular basis. Nearly every other major form of magical transportation bar a handful tends to feel like you're being compressed into a very small space very very quickly," Liffra said, coming out of the Arch behind them.

Rose looked behind her, seeing a replica of the Arch she had just stepped through. In fact, she saw the same Arch again and again all around the room. She looked again at the one she had just exited. A small plaque at the top of the Arch read 'Julist Council Arch'. "Well, that's handy," she said. She wouldn’t mind getting lost on a planet as interesting as Haleysio but she really didn’t want to miss Harry’s first day at his new career and ending up on the other side of the planet was not the best way to make it there in time, nor was trying every Arch in this room, over a hundred, by her count, until she found the right one.

"Come this way. The Documents Chamber is over here." Liffra lead them off the main hallway and Rose felt like she was walking in the sky. All around her was the same strange transparent material through which she could see clouds, the strange creatures flying through them, mountains in the distance, possible spells that altered the environment. Or it was some kind of spell cast on the room to allow such sights to be seen from inside.

"Can you tell if this is a spell or natural material?" Rose asked the Doctor in an undertone, pointing at the walls and floor.

"Nope, can't say. It's seamless though isn't it. Absolutely amazing. They do some marvelous things with magic. Brilliant stuff. Never saw anything come close to it on Earth in Harry's birth time."

"You're going to have to keep him from inventing it all to keep himself entertained," she told him.
The Doctor pulled a face. "I'm probably going to have to do a lot of intervention on Harry's part, at least for a little bit. He's prone to getting in the worst sorts of trouble."

"Sorta like you then, huh Doctor?" she teased.

He would have replied, had they not stopped.

"This is the Documents Guardian, known as Guardian," Liffra said, gesturing to the minute figure flying around eye level to the Doctor.

"Hello, Guardian, I am the Doctor, and this is Rose," Rose waved, grinning. "We would like to see the First Documents."

The Guardian hovered close to their faces, each in turned, a tiny sphere of indeterminable color clasped to their body. "I know the Council has given you permission to see the First Documents, but you must know there are some strict guidelines to handling them. First," a small pop, and shimmering light appeared around Rose and the Doctor's hands. "This is a spell that allows you to handle the Documents without contaminating the preservation wards or setting off alarms. Without this spell, you cannot touch any of the Documents within the Chamber. Second," a hum filled the air. "This is the sound of a dangerous ward or other magic that may be triggered. If you hear it, so will I. Stop what you are doing and I will come investigate. You do not want to trigger the full effect of whatever spell or ward you have stumbled upon. Third," a warmth encircled their wrists, solidifying into a grey band. "If you need me for something, tap the band thrice. You don't need a focus, it's calibrated to respond to firm touches from living beings. Do you understand?"

"Yep, crystal clear!" the Doctor said brightly. Guardian buzzed in either agitation or amusement at the cheerful tone.

"Me too," Rose said.

"Good, now follow me. Liffra, I will call you when they are ready to leave," Guardian said. Liffra nodded, waving to Rose and the Doctor before taking her leave.

The Chamber stretched behind Guardian, empty save for a few openings of various sizes and possibly dimensions. The roof was vaulted and huge, so high up Rose wasn’t sure where it stopped.
The chamber itself was lit by small lights floating at intervals, rooms and doors on either side of the wide Chamber. There were various circles marked out on the ground for some reason Rose couldn't quite figure out and words written in silver she didn't slow down enough to decipher.

Guardian led them to a small area in the back of the Chamber, to a round door with a wavering veil around it. Guardian paused, tapping at the stone, until the veil shimmered gold and the door opened.

They entered into a blindingly white room, the lights dimming as it adjusted to their species and reaching a tolerable level.

"This is the room for fragile and heavily warded Documents. I will call the First Documents to here from outside the room. Do not leave the room without having called me. The door is sealed. If you require anything for notation, there is a selection of materials behind the brown door." Rose looked around, spotting said door.

Guardian buzzed out of the room and the door shut. A few moments later, a shimmer of light and a table rose from the center of the room with a few chairs perfectly sized for humans joined it. The center of the table shone for a moment, then a small pile of books of various sizes and a few loose pages appeared.

The Doctor looked gleeful and approached the table, fingers tapping.

He reached for the first book, plopping himself on a chair, before taking a good look at the cover, eager to see what these mysterious Documents actually said.

Then he froze, his body going stiff, and he looked shocked. He sprang up, looked at the next book, then the next, then the next, paging through the loose papers, not saying a word but agitated.

Rose frowned. "Doctor, is something wrong?" She walked to the table, wondering what the book had said, or not said, to worry him. She glanced at the cover, seeing a series of symbols and shapes decorating the top and bottom, but no matter how long she stared at them she couldn't make sense. "Is this also a language the Tardis doesn't know? I can't read it."

"No, no no no no no, this can't be happening! No! This is impossible, I mean literally impossible. All of this stuff was lost, gone, how is it here?" he was muttering.
Obviously he knew what it said, Rose thought. But that was strange, since she couldn't read it. She stared at the books again, maybe it just took a little bit.

Nope. "Doctor, I can't read it," she repeated.

"The Tardis doesn't translate any Gallifreyan language," he said absently.

Rose blinked. Oh, that's not good, she thought.

~~~~~This is a Change of POV - Doctor~~~~~

He had been enjoying the stroll to the Museum. The Matrix that Rose had asked about was a fascinating bit of magical construct, extensive, and reminded him of several different forms of communication non-magicals used. The Arch had been interesting, and then the Main Hall of the Museum was absolutely awe inspiring. The things they managed to accomplish with their power was mind-blowing. A Museum that circled the planet and was accessible via Arches set at strategic points around the planet. A Matrix for easy communication between different species, beings, and locations that didn't rely on individual magics.

The furthest thing from his mind was to worry about the Documents they were going to see. In his lifetime, there had been less than a handful of languages that had been untranslatable when given access to the Tardis Translation Circuits, and those languages had been from civilizations older than it seemed possible. He remembered the encounter on the rock orbiting a black hole that Rose had worried about. That language had been unreadable, but that rock had also been older nearly anything else in the Universe. He had done scans on samples after they had made it safely off.

So when he had sat down in the too white room on a deceptively comfortable chair, expecting to flick through some records from the first peoples on a magical planet, to say he had been shocked when the lettering on the book refused to translate into the Gallifreyan he was more comfortable reading when given the choice and instead remained stubbornly archaic, was an understatement.

The next realization, as he started to understand what was actually written, thanks only to his interest in linguistics that had been thought of as foolish by his teachers, that this was a form of Gallifreyan that had faded out of use except for in the oldest texts and studies in obscure parts of the now lost society, lead to pole-axed disbelief.

This was a form of Gallifreyan that evolved into Old High Gallifreyan, the language of power used
by the Time Lords to shape the Universe. This was the form of Gallifreyan that had been in use at
the height of the Pythia's Reign on Gallifrey, as the arm of Pythia reached across the Universe,
spreading Prophecy and Mysticism and striking down those that disagreed. This was a language that
the only magic to ever exist on Gallifrey was done in, that had fallen out of use and only those who
still clung to the hope that Pythia would return, if only to reverse the Curse, clung to, and only a few
dozen documents ever survived to his time at the Academy.

This should not exist. This could not exist. Pythia had set up colony worlds all over the Universe,
determined to spread as far as she could. There had been rumors about a failed colony, lost to some
cataclysmic event millennia before Pythia had fallen.

But all that was before the Time Lock, before the Fall of Gallifrey.

"Doctor, I can't read it," he heard Rose say, distantly. She had been speaking to him, he knew, but he
had been so lost in his thoughts he had blocked her out.

"The Tardis doesn't translate any Gallifreyan language," he said in reply. All Tardises had been
programmed like that, he recalled. The Translation Circuits were more than capable of translating
Gallifreyan, but there was a fear amongst the Time Lords that if a Tardis ever fell into enemy hands
they didn't want them to have access to their vast collection of knowledge. If a Dalek got their
suckers on a Tardis and could actually read what was inside, that would have spelled doom for the
Time Lords.

Not that it had mattered in the end.

He remembered Guardian saying something about writing materials nearby, and searched for the
aforementioned door, rushing over and pulling out the shelves inside.

He needed a notebook, a pen. Fancy gadgets whirled, quills quivered, ink bottles sat, tablets were
stacked to the side, parchment rolls were hung from a wall hook, higher up were items within reach
for those who were taller or hovered, lower down were smaller materials for smaller beings.

The Doctor grabbed the first Earth-norm pen he could see, used to them and unwilling to rely on
new technologies or magic to take down all he needed to. A simple sheaf of bound paper, or paper
like substance, was next, and he rushed back to the table, ignoring Rose's look of concern.

Everything but the books and papers on the table were irrelevant at the moment.
He needed to translate this. He could read it, but it was slow going, the language old and archaic and nigh impossible for him to read at the speed he was comfortable with. He would put it in Old High Gallifreyan. The languages had enough similarities that there would be little lost in translation.

The book he had first picked up he pulled towards him again, looked more closely at the title now that he knew what he was looking at.

"The Treatise of Pythialgo between the Cult of Pythia and...." he tilted his head at the last word. He wasn't familiar with it, must be a name. He deciphered the individual characters, searching for the common link that would signify the pronunciation. This was the main similarity between Old High Gallifreyan and the language used by the Cult of Pythia, the use of concepts in inscriptions that required a certain mark to give the pronunciation. He found it. "The Treatise of Pythialgo between the Cult of Pythia and Kysh'fryck." He would put whatever amount of currency he could cobble together that the Kysh'fryck were the original inhabitants of Haleysio and that the Cult, with superior technology and mysticism, subjugated them. It would be why only their texts were among the First Documents.

He heard noises from behind him in the manner that his senses registered them but the main part of his brain dismissed them as unimportant.

This was, if he was correct, the Lost Colony of Pythia. They had established a colony somewhere in this region of space, only for it to have vanished from any records that remained just a couple decades later.

The Cult had found the only magical planet around, and it's inhabitants had probably been less than happy that they were there.

He scribbled furiously, translating as many of the relevant passages as he could. He needed to get as much down in a more familiar language so he could peruse at his discretion, take in more of the facts and maybe figure out a bit of Gallifrey's lost history in the process.

Behind him, Rose stared at him with wide eyes, and reached down to tap at the wristband that would summon Guardian.

The Doctor would need more notebooks.
"This is what a model is?"

Kyst hovered near the display cases for models, listening to the shocked and irate voice of Harry as he discovered just exactly what it was he had signed up for.

"Yes, isn't it wonderful? Being on display in the best clothes on the planet, oh it's a dream!" That was Prysh, excited and missing the irateness in her new model.

"But...but...I have to stand here for how long? In this little room? And I can't leave or read or anything?"

"Well, I mean, no. You're a model. You are displaying the clothes and their functionality to those who will be on the Fashion Walk. You have to make sure that you display them appropriately."

"But I don't even know how to do that! Clothes are clothes. I like some better than others, and yours are pretty awesome, but in a tiny room? For hours? And I can't leave?"

Kyst could hear Harry's incredulous-ness. He wondered what exactly Harry thought modeling was.

"Not until the chime rings. It's standard and set for every three hours. Your shift starts in...ten minutes. Now, I need to give you your pointers. You won't physically be on the Walk, no model is. These are Enchant rooms, they project your image to the Walk, and the glass in front of your room projects the Walk to you, so you can see who is outside at a given time."

"Well, at least that's something," Harry muttered.

Kyst hovered over towards the two, Harry dressed in the clothes he would be modeling. "I see you have been briefed on your duties, young Harry."
"Kyst. You have got to...I don't know, do something! I can't even read and I have to show off! I don't know how to show off, or whatever. I mean, that room is tiny, have you seen it?" Harry pointed to the shimmering veil behind him with his thumb.

"I have. They are standard size for beings under two meters in height. Each room is designed to morph to their occupant's standard size. I believe you have a bit more height in your room due to the design of the clothes you will be modeling."

"Floating. I have to float, and I'll be tied down to a handrail on the side of the room," Harry muttered. "Can't even kick around the space."

"What did you think modeling was?" Kyst asked, having been curious.

Harry shrugged. "I suppose I thought it meant wearing the clothes around and telling people who asked where they were from. I mean, that's a logical way of getting a product out there. Or something else. I mean, I know there are window dummy models, but they're dummies. Why would you put people in a window when there are plenty of dummies?"

Prysh laughed. "Fashion Week on Fashion Walk is the most highly acclaimed Model show of the year. It always precedes the Naming Festival and the best designers from the planet over join the show. Every model is live, or at least a life-simulator, so that those on the Walk can see how the clothes move when actually worn. I pride myself on never having to use a life-simulator." Prysh glowed.

Harry sighed. He was getting a jacket out of this. He shouldn't complain, Prysh was one of the best tailors and so long as he wore her clothes in that tiny room for a few hours every day, a time he hoped wasn't long, he would come out of it with a jacket.

And maybe his dad would be too busy to come and laugh at him.

He hoped.

~~~~This is a Scene Break~~~~

Rose waited as the door slid open and Guardian flew in. "Yes, what is it?"
"Well, I think the Doctor's going to need more notebooks, first, and second, I have a question about where those Documents were found."

Guardian looked at the Doctor, buzzing in surprise. "The Time Lord can read the First Documents? Does that mean you can as well, being a passenger of the Tardis?"

Rose shook her head. "No, the Documents are in the Doctor's language, or a version of it. The Tardis doesn't translate Gallifreyan languages. I think he's translating the texts, but he's going through paper quite rapidly, and at this rate he might go through whatever stock he can find in the cabinet."

Guardian made a few lazy circles in the air. "Well, in the name of research, I can spell his notebook to be never ending in terms of pages. He just has to let me cast the spell."

"I'll tell him." Rose approached the Doctor, seeing his hand run across the paper making strange marks that she still couldn't decipher. He must be translating it into another form of Gallifreyan. She laid a hand on his shoulder. "Doctor? Doctor. If you let Guardian cast a spell on the notepad, it won't run out of pages. Also, I'm going to go watch Harry's modeling debut. You going to stay here?"

The Doctor, feeling Rose's hand and slowly registering her words, jerked upright. "Really?" He spun around to look at Guardian. "By all means then. And Harry's what?"

Rose rolled her eyes. "Harry is going to be at whatever fashion event they're hosting this week in Prysh's clothes. I want to go see him."

"Oh, alright. Take some pictures for me, alright? This, this is fascinating. Absolutely impossible, but fascinating."

“What have you learned about that word?” Rose asked, a hint of teasing playfulness in her voice.

The Doctor mock frowned at her, then turned to look at the books and papers on the table. “Really, this is truly an impossibility. Following the Time War and the Lock, nothing that was ever from Gallifrey should have escaped, I only escaped through a crack in the Lock and the help of the Tardis. This stuff, this should have, just, I don’t know, vanished. Disappeared. Poof, gone, never existed.”
“This is the only known Magical Planet, there are bound to be some rules that don’t apply here,” she said. “Maybe you can figure it out, if you stare at the pages long enough.”

The Doctor nodded, turning back to the Documents.

Guardian and buzzed over, casting some quick spells at the notepad and nodded. "That should be never ending. When you are done, let me know. I will cast a permanence charm as well. I would cast it now but I need to know how many pages you are going to write before I do so."

“Thank you Guardian. I’ll let you know if I need you again.” The Doctor turned back to the mathematical and symbol-filled language he was translating into.

Rose turned to Guardian. “I’m gonna head out now, I’m no use here and I did tell Harry I would see him at his modeling debut. Can you show me back to the Arch room?”

Guardian flew ahead of Rose, beckoning her to follow. “I shall call Liffra. She can escort you.”

“Oh, no, no escort needed, thanks. I can figure it out on my own, the Julist Council Arch isn’t far from the city and I’m sure as big an event as Fashion Week is it shouldn’t be hard to miss. Liffra has other things to attend to, I’m sure. I rather like exploring,” she said, grinning.

Guardian turned, buzzing closer to Rose’s face. “It is your decision. I am only responsible for those within the Documents Chamber. I know nothing about Fashion Week, or much else. I care for the Documents.”

Rose nodded. Sounded like a couple librarians and hoarders she had known.

~~~~~This is a Scene Break~~~~~

The sensation of floating, weightless, was losing it's appeal, Harry thought, drifting between the walls of the tiny modeling room he occupied. The window showing Fashion Walk was packed with so many different kinds of magical beings Harry had entertained himself for the first hour (marked by a short ting of a bell) by trying to name as many as he could (not as many as he had thought he would be able). After he had exhausted his knowledge of different species, he began trying to figure out the composition of each species.
There were the humans, carbon-based lifeforms sustained through caloric intake and oxygen.

He knew the people Kyst hailed from were Hydrogen-based, with a silicon-oxygen superstructure to keep their form stable. They were sustained through the hydrogen levels in the air and silicon-based smaller life-forms.

He saw a couple other humanoid-like beings in the crowds and took a guess at their composition. Most were probably carbon-based, that being one of the more common elements to base life on, but at least one was a silicon based being; Harry recognized the form from a planet he and his father and Uncle Jack had been unceremoniously imprisoned on, for a short time. They had easily escaped and thrown the entire government into chaos and fueled the revolution, hastily making their way into the Tardis as the dust settled and the usurping party had been exiled to the furthest habitable planet in the galaxy with only the bare minimum in supplies.

Oh, Harry thought, that's a Mercurite! Rare beings, Mercury wasn't a completely stable element to handle, with melting temperatures much too low to normally sustain life in the kind of atmosphere Haleysio had.

Then again, Haleysio was a magical planet. There might be some kind of instinctive magic the planet wielded to protect its inhabitants.

He pondered that question, flipping upside down in the room to better get a perspective on the matter. He often ended up upside down on a couch or bed when he needed to do some theoretical thinking. This weightless thing was not too bad, he conceded. He could move about the third dimension much more easily than he normally managed it.

He was deep enough in thought that he failed to notice Rose outside his window, her camera out and photos being taken. He spun in a slow circle, thinking.

Haleysio was, he understood, at the center of multiple nexus points for magical energies. Every other planet that hosted a magical species was, of course, slightly magical, needing the environment to foster the growth of magicals on the planet, but that magic was pulled from a nexus line that ran close to the planet, or several. Rarely, as was the case with several planets, a nexus line ran partially through it and there tended to be more magical races than non magical on those planets.

To be at the crossroads of multiple nexus lines, a hub of nexus points, meant that non magicals could have never naturally evolved on Haleysio, every single being that ever evolved on the planet would have been magical in some way. It also meant life would form from much different compositions.
than conventional life.

Now he wanted to know more about the first peoples of the planet. They must have been something special.

A small bell rang twice, signaling the start of his final hour. Harry sighed.

He had signed up for this all week. He was starting to wonder if the jacket was worth it. Right now it certainly wasn't looking like it.

~~~~~This is a Scene Break~~~~~

Harry stretched, glad to feel the ground under his bare feet once more. His shift in the tiny box had ended and Prysh had squealed the moment he stepped out.

"Oh, Harry, we had so many orders come in for the clothes! It's one of the best first days I've ever had at Fashion Week! And everyone is dying to know who my new model is! The Council forbade me from putting your name up with the other models in the Fashion Week Lists, saying it was too dangerous, but you're the talk of the whole Show!" Harry wasn't sure if he would ever be extricated from Prysh's limbs, feeling himself squished to her pliant yet solid body.

"Prysh, your next model is here! You had that outfit for the near-giant class up next, yes?" Kryll's voice called out from the depths of the model-room maze, and Harry was released from Prysh's grip as she hurried about, making herself busy with setting up the next set of clothes.

"So, here again tomorrow, same time?" she said to Harry, turning imploring blue eyes on him.

"Yeah, tomorrow, same place, same time." Harry grinned. He couldn't back out now. He would figure out something to keep him entertained.

He hoped.

For now, though, he had an appointment with the Academy.
Kyst had been hovering nearby, keeping busy with some business with the council that was falling behind while Harry was on planet. Harry stood just under Kyst, waiting, and as soon as the most recent conversation ended (something about the Council Shifts and Festival Ward Stones), Kyst swirled the crystal back into whatever pocket of reality everything was kept in.

"Ready to go, young Harry?"

"Oh yes, most definitely. Academic conversation, just what I need right now." Kyst had never heard such a longing for study in a young one's voice.

Harry, it seems, wasn't sure he liked his new modeling career.

The Academy was much further away than Harry had originally believed. Or at least, the Entrance Gate they needed to reach was much further away than he had thought. From the Entrance Gate, they could reach any of the main schools, special Portals or other various methods of transport located at the Gate to the different schools on the planet.

Kyst had managed to get a hold of a transport disk, used for those too young or unstable to transport via the normal methods. Kyst believed Harry to be among the latter group and didn't want to press luck trying to Slide him to the Gate.

So the transport disc would be the easiest and quickest method of arriving. Kyst released the disc to hover just above the ground and moved to float above it, motioning Harry to climb on. The disc was a couple feet in diameter, comfortable enough for two human sized passengers, or four Sylvan, or two of Kyst's people, or numerous of any of the Miniature races, and not even close to being big enough for one of the near Giant races. There were large discs for either more numerous parties or larger species.

Harry stepped on, seeing symbols etched around the edge of the disc light up as his feet touched the surface.

"Wow, cool," he said. He would love to learn how to make these. He wondered what kind of magics were used, since it couldn't pull magic from it's occupants.

"These are Discs, used by families with children under a certain age or by those with magics too
unstable for a second party to transport them, or in severe cases of magical injuries or physical injuries needed special attentions. I don't want to risk your magic or your restrictor interfering with me transporting you to the Gate," Kyst said.

The Disc began moving, and Harry wondered for a second how, until he say Kyst's focus glowing.

"So it's activated by one's focus," Harry said.

"Yes. Most magical items, especially ones used by a diverse number of species, are Focus activated, such as the Crystals, what you saw me speaking to, and Discs. On a magical planet, the number of non-magical species here is next to zero. There is the occasional visitor coming with a family member or friend who wants to see the planet, but Halyesio isn't conducive to non-magical living. Magic tends to have a negative impact on certain kinds of technology, and they usually request to return to their home world quickly. There aren't any rules here against peaceful non-magicals living on Halyesio," Kyst said, seeing Harry's incredulous and questioning look. "In fact, any non-magical seeking refuge from war or violence can cross the barrier, there are specialized wards to detect intent. But nearly all don't wish to stay on Halyesio, unused to life without technology and limited in what they can access or do."

Harry nodded. It made sense. He would certainly say that he had grown reliant on various bits of technology he had created or used from the Tardis that tended to not function properly around magic, such as potions with his sonic screwdriver. To never be able to use technology again and to not have magic, he supposed Halyesio would not be the first place he would choose to live.

They were out of the small, warded sector of the city the model-rooms were located at, a specially protected location, Harry had learned from Kyst. It seems that nearly three decades ago, model rooms were on Fashion Walk, but a magical tailor whose entrances had been denied had rampaged the Walk and killed a number of models and visitors. After that, strict measures had been put into place and now only those who were modeling or the chosen creators knew where the model rooms were located.

Instead of heading towards the city Kyst said was called Juliest, they were heading further away from most of any building or structure or floating construct. In fact, the only thing accompanying them out here were the glowing lines Kyst called the Crystal Lines, or the Matrix.

"I would think the Gate for the Academy would be closer to the main population center," Harry commented.
Kyst swooshed. "It would be more efficient, but the amount of magic done at the Academy is so strong that they would disrupt any personal wards set up by individuals. Every Academy building is located far away from major population centers so there won't be any interference."

"So is the Gate the actual entrance to the Academy or just another form of transportation to get to the Academy? Cause if it’s only transport it’s a bit far out."

"The Gate leads to the main Academy building for this sector of Haleysio, which focuses on Artistic Magics and Enchants. Just inside the Gate is the Portal Room, which leads to the twenty other building for the Academy, all located in isolated areas. One, I believe, is underwater, though my people need open air to live and cannot go there. It hardly matters since the subjects that building focuses on deal with body manipulation and aquatic magics, neither of which my people can do."

Harry blinked. "Is this common, for some buildings to be inaccessible by certain species?" he asked.

Kyst swirled. "Yes, it is. Magic is a very powerful tool, but it also manifests itself within each race in a way to give it natural advantages on their planet. While things like Transfiguration, Enchants, Charms, Potions, Alchemy, Alkhestery, Runes, Warding, Arthro-Magics, and General Spells are nearly universal and limitations are specific to certain spells, there are areas that become species specific. For instance, Elemental Manipulation. My people are rather good with Air, given our natures. Humans excel at Body Manipulation, Factrily are especially good with Artistic Magics and Crafting. Those magics are taught much later at the Academy though, after nearly all the basics are learned."

They soared over an expanse of plant life, though Harry would bet much of the "plant life" wasn't actually plants. "Where are we now?"

"Now?" Kyst looked around. "Ah, yes, the MC Ranges. Areas set aside for the Magical Creatures. Exclusive areas for them to live and create societies. They are much more Nature oriented than nearly all Magical Beings and find our need to to create monuments and constructs to be silly. They have massive communities in various places around the planet, all warded and protected from harm. While they allow the visit of Magical Beings, such as we allow them to visit our societies, Magical Beings don't live in Magical Creature territory without special permission from their Council, and are passed through wards determinining intent before being allowed to visit. It's been an established Law after the deliberate decimation of a Range in the Northern regions of Haleysio by a magical who took offense to Magical Creatures being given the same rights and treatment as Magical Beings. Such magicals are not the norm on Haleysio, but new arrivals to the planet sometimes are confused by the respect shown to them, and they have to have it explained by the Council upon arrival. Most take it just fine, but there are a few that do not. Such is the need for the protections." Kyst looked down at Harry. "Magicals are touchy creatures. It is in the nature of magic, but that doesn’t mean we have to stand for close-minded bigotry. Ah, here we are."
Harry looked ahead, and saw a looming arch of colorful material soaring above his head, despite the fact that they were above even the highest trees. Though there was nothing else in view at the moment, Harry figured that was part of the warding on the Academy.

"Wow, that's one tall archway."

"Indeed. Much of the protective warding for the Academy is set into the Entrance Gates. Alright, down we go. Discs cannot fly above the Gate." They descended into the clearing in front of the massive construct.

"It's bigger than I thought, from the ground," Harry said.

"All the Entrance Gates are the same, it's the one thing tying the Academy together. With such diverse locations, the Gate is the Academy's symbol." Kyst approached the Gate, Focus facing the construct. A few moments later, there was a shimmer and some veil must have been lifted because the view beyond the Gate was much different.

Harry had expected there to be a drastic change, the Academy must be huge to support an entire planet with only twenty locations. He wasn't expecting the entire scenery beyond the Gate to shift and shimmer into view, the veil lifting and the humming, buzzing, throbbing feel of life emanated from beyond the colorful arch.

"Kyst, Wild-type, Jewel based, core of an Ash-Wind, Created by Vanderian, Graduate. Your guest has not been registered and is not a student. Is this a school evaluation? It's a little early for Evaluation, that doesn't take place for a number of weeks." Harry turned at the sound of the voice.

The speaker was, Harry was nearly sure, human. Or a being of very close physical appearance. An older man, with wrinkled skin and deep black eyes that might or might not have a pupil, was just inside the gate, hovering in a sitting position and waving their focus, a wand, around in a series of complicated loops.

"Hello," Harry said, stepping forward. "I'm Harry. Er, no focus just yet. Still being crafted."

He was looked down on by the speaker. "I see. So, are you here for an Evaluation? It's usually done after the Focus is received so proper placement can be made."
"Um, no, not an Evaluation. At least, I don't think so. I was told I could talk with some of the theorists at the Academy," Harry replied.

The speaker looked puzzled. "Why would you want to do that? You are not a student, not even of age to attend."

"This is Harry, Olierest. He won't be attending the Academy, he's just visiting Haleysio with his father and...is Lady Rose your mother Harry?" Kyst asked.

Harry shrugged. "They haven't signed any papers just yet, though they seem to exist by now, so they've signed them somewhere. But Rose is Rose. She's dad's mate, if that helps."

"It matters little. Olierest, this is Harry, son the the Doctor, Time Lord, and the Tardis." Kyst peered at the spell Olierest was using. "You really need to check the spell you use. It should read the magical core of a person and match it against those known. Harry's is already on file."

Olierest grumped. "His core isn't showing up, I can't read it because something's blocking the spell."

Harry sighed. "Yeah, I know why that's happening. Sorry. Is it important the spell read my core before we enter?"

"Everyone has their core read and checked. It's the only fail safe we have against certain unwanted individuals entering the Academy," Olierest said.

Harry reached up to his necklace and unclasped it, feeling the rush as his magic spread around his body and reach to play with the abundance of natural magics.

Olierest looked at the spell working away in front of him, eyes widening.

"Harry, can you control your magic? It's beginning to upset the ward-stones," Kyst said, watching the Gate vibrate slightly.
Harry reigned his errant power in, grinning. His magic, only freed from the restrictor for certain tasks, was enjoying the abundance of energy around them.

"This is Harry? The Harry?" came the voice of the stunned Olierest. "I mean, you said Doctor and Tardis and Lady Rose, but I thought you were playing. Harry, here, at the Academy." Olierest beamed. "I have instructions to let you pass to the Portal Room and to head to the Theory and Research division of the Academy. It was an honor to see you." Olierest reached out an equally wrinkled hand to shake Harry's hand.

Harry backed up, shoving his hands behind his back, face apologetic. "Er, sorry. I...I can't touch anyone without my restrictor on. Is it alright if I replace it?" he asked.

Olierest frowned, pulling his hand back. "Um, well, I suppose. Your core's been read and stored, so you can replace your restrictor, but it's highly unusual practice within the Academy grounds. There's very little that can be harmed by your magic once you are past the Gate."

"Oh, no, it's not for my magic," Harry said, replacing the necklace and breathing a small sigh at the loss of the freedom he had briefly enjoyed. "I'm a touch empath. It's for my sanity."

Olierest's eyes went wide. "Oh, yes, I'm...I'm sorry. I didn't know...." Harry waved his hands. "Well, you can go to the Portal Room. Kyst knows the right Portal to use, should be a quick trip. Not too many over at the Theory and Research department today, or this week at all. Too busy with the Festival." Olierest looked at Harry. "It was nice meeting you, young Harry."

Harry grinned, stuck his hand out for Olierest to shake, and shook it firmly when it was given. "Nice meeting you too!"

They left the bewildered and half-smiling Olierest behind as Kyst led the way to the Portal Room.

The Portal to the Research and Theory wings of the Academy were located somewhere in a mountain range, if Harry had judged the altitude correctly. The cloud coverage made seeing anything beyond the bounds of the Academy impossible, but the air felt a bit thinner and to be high enough to be swamped by clouds meant some serious elevation.

They were met just outside the Portal Room by a slender being with large, pearlescent wings. "Good Day, young Harry, Kyst. It has been many a cycle since you have graced our fair cloud banks, Kyst. It is a pleasure to see you."
Harry thought the voice was a virtual harmony of different tones blending together to create this magical voice.

"Hello, High Theorist Kyialla. It is refreshing returning to the CloudLands. I feel as if I have returned home," Kyst replied.

"Oh, yes, your people do live somewhere in the nearby area, do they not? The Marbleous Faction sends all their youngest through CloudLands to enter the Academy. We are expecting several new young ones to join us, come Evaluation Day," Kyialla said, wings fluttering. "And you, young Harry. We have heard much about you and it is an honor to welcome you to CloudLands, the Research and Theory wings of Emerald Academy." Kyialla bowed slightly.

Harry returned the gesture. "It's amazing up here. Where is CloudLands?"

"We are in the highest mountain ranges on Haleysio, wrapped inside a perpetual cloud bank. We also offer some of the best locations for young Air Manipulators, such as the Curio's eldest and those from the Marbleous Faction that show the most potential. The Council contacted us yesterday evening to inform us of your desire to speak with us about magic. We set up an appropriate place for such a forum to take place. If you would follow me?" Kyialla turned around and glided away from the Portal Room and towards a large white dome.

A few minutes of near silent walking through an endless expanse of white (wasn't sure if they were clouds or not, or if clouds had been magically turned into buildings, or something else entirely), Kyialla turned and they entered the large room that formed the white dome Harry had seen outside.

~~~~~This is a Scene Break~~~~~

"So, young Harry, I have heard tell of your strange focus. Are you to be schooled at Emerald Academy? If so, I would like at least a full cycle's notice before you attend. Strange foci often cause problems if not handled with care," Memchark said.

Harry and Memchark had retreated to a corner of the white dome after Harry expressed an avid interest in foci and their natures. Memchark was the lead theorist on foci and always performed the Evaluation of the Foci at the Welcoming Ceremony at the start of every school term for the new students. All older students were required to have their foci checked before attending some of the
more rigorous magical classes and all went to Memchark for it.

"I'm not going to be at Emerald Academy, at least not for the main part of my schooling. I have to return to my birth time line to attend Hogwarts and make sure I don't mess up causality too much," Harry replied. Memchark was a being Harry had never seen before, made of of entirely too many optical orbs and with their words being projected magically into the air rather than being spoken. Memchark had no vocalization organ that Harry could see, though there wasn't such a thing as discretely scanning someone's body.

Memchark made a strange monotone noise. "That might be a problem. Your birth time line is somewhere in the late 20th century CE Earth time, is it not? Yes, it is, I remember. This is a dilemma."

"Huh? Why?"

"Well, it wasn't until humanity stumbled upon another magical race that they realized that there were other ways to cast controlled magic. Humans have used staves and staffs and wands throughout their history, though wands prove most effective for the majority of humans. Magic does develop to the species and humans have rather complicated wrists that allow the tiny movements that create the spells that wands require. A number of other species with similar dexterity have Mobile Type foci as well. But, as I was saying, magical humans use mainly wands and staffs for controlled magic, amplified for power by magical stones in some cases. Very powerful magical humans could achieve some control over wand-less, or focus-less, magic."

"Lady Shorll said something about that," Harry said. "In children it's called wish-magic."

"Yes. First bouts of wish-magic often occur when children are emotionally unstable. Extremely happy, extremely sad, extremely frightened, anytime they are not in a general state of wellness, whether positive or negative. With shy children such magics are often more self focused, while outgoing children present more vivaciously. There was a report of a child from the Sylvan transporting themselves halfway around the planet because they wanted to see the Wings of Fire and their Guardians wouldn't let them. I believe the child grew up with a very strong grasp on their magic."

"So what's so bad about me having a non-standard human focus and going to Hogwarts? Will something bad happen?"

Memchark made that monotone noise again. "Bad is maybe not the correct term for it. What is your
Type, young Harry? You should surely know that by now if rumors have reached CloudLands."

"Vanderian said it was a Wild-Mobile Type, mixed. It looks like a long wand, but it has anchoring threads and runes running counterclockwise to the thread."

Memcharck hummed louder, the pitch warbling. "Really now. A mixed type. They are rare and usually inherited if used at all. Did you say anchoring threads? As in more than one?" Memchark's voice went high.

"Two, yeah. Why?"

"Well, young Harry, you must first understand the three types. I know you were told the basics, Vanderian always explains for the curious ones, but there are deeper reasons for having only three Types." Memcharck paused. "First, you must know that within the three Types are sub-groups based on the base material. Most common base materials are Natural, such as woods, stones, plants. Then are Gems, various jewels gathered by crafters. Fabrics and threads are third, followed by Elemental, foci crafted directly for an Elemental magical. They are exclusive to those magicals. There are also Animal foci, using bone, skin, or other pieces of an animal, always naturally deceased or willingly given in the case of horns, scales, fangs, shed skin, feathers, any other numerous materials. There are a few more esoteric cases but they tend to be individualized and Crafters study them. Now, so I shall be covering new ground rather than treading old paths, what do you know of the three Types?"

Harry looked up at the ceiling. "Mobile Types are those that require precise moments to activate magic, with the magic following the path given to instigate the spell. Stationary Types rely on patterns within the focus, like Vanderian's really intricate flower, to create different pathways for magic to travel. I only know Wild Types bond with the mental state of the magical and if done properly it is near instinctive magic."

Memcharck hummed that monotone note again. "Well, you have the basics of the idea at least. Bare basics. Let me expand on it with some history. Foci are an important part of every mortal magical's study. There are some immortal beings that don't interact much with those of us who have limited life-spans or who live on a different plane of existence who don't use Foci, but they are a different area of study."

Harry was getting the impression that Memcharck was one of those who said whatever was on their mind at the moment, however tangentially it related to the conversation, sort of like him and his dad. He enjoyed it since he got more information, but he recalled Arthur telling him to get to the point once or twice. "I met the Olympians," Harry said. "They were functionally Immortal and didn't need Foci."
"Yes, they are in various texts as an example. Now, Foci. The type of focus one used depended on how one's species developed magic and the physicality of the species. Those with dexterous limbs, such as Humans, Sylvan, Factrily, Morrwylwyn, Shriflie, Marklestians, and about seven dozen more species on Haleysio, are naturally drawn to the Mobile Type because their magic has adapted to the flexibility of their form and flows in a way that encourages mobile Casting. One other thing every species who is drawn to a Mobile Type has is an ability to project sounds vocally. As you may have noticed, my species projects their words magically into the air, meaning Vocal Casting isn't quite the same. There are a number of other species who are Telepathic, something that is a species-inherent ability and not related to magic, as the non-magical members of their species are also Telepathic. They can project thoughts into the minds of those with a 50% similarity in structure to their own, but magical vocal projection is much easier for them since they don't have to adjust their Telepathic ability to factor in different mental make ups."

"So, are they Stationary Types or Wild Types?" Harry asked.

"We will get to them in a moment. I wanted to cover the Types in a Simple to Difficult manner first, though there is hardly any difference in challenge between Stationary and Mobile. Stationary Foci channel magic through patterns, as you said, but there are more than just cuts on stone or wood or gems. Another common stationary type is Weave, where special threads are woven into a pattern and magic flows through the fabric. Different thread patterns create different spells. Stationary types are most common in those who have limited limb dexterity, a particular attachment to a shape or structure, or a physicality that empowers it. Vanderian and his species are the most well known users of Stationary Types, mostly through Vanderian's own Focus. Another common user of Stationary types are the Marbleous Faction, where your friend Kyst is from. There are another six dozen species mostly drawn to Stationary Types."

"Alright, that makes sense. Mobile Foci are more often used with vocalizing, dexterous magicals, Stationary Types are often used by those with limited dexterity, attachment, or the proper kind of physique. Is vocalization important with Stationary Types?"

"Yes, in many spells, this is also something that is more likely to be used by those who can vocalize spells. And we come to the final Type. Wild Types. The Type that is often seen as the most volatile to train and the most beneficial if successful. It does provide an immediacy to spells that isn't seen in Mobile or Stationary casting, but more magicals have BurnOut with Wild Types than any other type."

"That has to do with the Magical Pathways, yes?"

Memchark made a high hum sound. "Yes, it does indeed. I am impressed. Yes, Wild Types are not the easiest to master, they have a will of their own that the magical must work alongside rather than
fight. Fighting one's focus is never a good idea," Memchark warned.

Harry grinned. "I'll keep that in mind. So, why is there a Wild Type? For those who can't vocalize without magic?"

"Originally that was why they were created by their first crafters. The need for a focus was great and they realized combining powerful magical compounds together allowed them direct thought-access to their magic. It took many trials before a functioning Focus was created but it was an achievement like no other. Wild Types are used by those who are naturally Telepathic rather than verbal, are much more instinctual based and need the immediacy that Mobile and Stationary Types don't offer, or don't have a solid form. There are only 36 species drawn naturally to Wild Types, though Wild Types are also the most common Type seen in those who don't match with their initial Natural Type. Kyst is such an example."

"Is there anything else? I mean, a mixed type seems to be sort of counterproductive in that light. If a Focus is just how you access your magic, why would there be a mixed type at all?" Harry asked, now curious. Each type seemed distinctive and it didn't make sense for them to mix types together based on the background he had just heard, yet he had a mixed type focus.

Memchark hmmmm'd a high pitched tone. "That is a good question, one that has been asked and to which an answer has been attempted. A full explanation, however, is not quite possible." Memchark settled, shifting around the multitude of eyes and using all of them to peer at Harry. "Since a Focus is used to access one's magic, magic is developed around the way a magical is raised, their physical form, and their personality. Any of these things can affect how a focus responds to someone. Those who match outside their natural Type are often orphans, somehow not physically normal for their species, or they have an extreme personality for their species. Mixed Types, however," and Harry could hear the stress on the words. "They are often unique in their magic and their raising. The two I have seen in recent years with a mixed type have been unusually strong and both lost their guardians in tragic ways to magic at a young age, left in the care of another. One was well treated, one was not, but both came out of the experience with a unique grasp on their magic."

"That's rather similar to me," Harry said.

"Yes. I have combed through many records. Mixed Types are often either left guardian-less or otherwise affected by strong magic as a young child. This shock to their system at a young and malleable age affects their core and a Mixed Type is the way they balance it out."

"Alright. Makes sense. But they seem somehow unfair, like there are more advantages to Mixed Types. I mean, in a way. You have two different ways to cast a spell so if one way is easier, you can use that way," he said.
Memchark hmm'd again. "Not quite, young Harry. Mixed Types are some of the most challenging Foci to work with. You cannot just use one half of a Focus, your magic will never work properly. You must channel your magic through your focus as a whole, which means blending the two sides together, as they were blended in the Focus. It requires an intimate understanding of your Focus and what you can do with it. And this is where your problems will come in, young Harry. You will not be taught at Emerald Academy where there are precedents for these things. Hogwarts in your Birth Time has never seen the Type you have, and if it appears to be a wand, they will think it so. An unusual wand, since it will look nothing like the standard Mobile Type Wand those who use them have, but a wand nonetheless."

"This is starting to sound more impossible by the word, Memchark. What's the advantage to having a Mixed Type if it's so difficult to use?"

"Mixed Types are some of the most powerful, if the magical can fully utilize all it's skills. Being able to cast multiple spells at the same instant is the most known, though there is little known to the general populace about Mixed Types since they are so rare. On all of Haleysio no more than two dozen are in active use."

Harry blinked. He had expected far more than that number. "Only 24?" he repeated.

"Yes. They are not a common Type. They are powerful tools when used properly. And since you are not coming to Emerald Academy, I shall have to find some way of informing you about your Focus. You cannot attend a school for magic and not know how to use the Focus you will depend on. And yours will be particularly stubborn."

"Why?"

"Mobile Types need quite a bit of precision in movement. Their power is amplified by the preciseness of the movement through the spell. Wild Types are temperamental and require a deep and instant connection with clear thought and desire. Mix the two together and you get a veritable cocktail of precision and instant need, a verbal spell and an inner desire, the perfectionist vs the instinct-ionist. It may not start pretty, but the end result could be well worth the creation. You could, at some point, create the Mobile spell for tickling, while casting the Wild spell for stunning, simultaneously. It is a powerful creation."

Harry grinned. "So, how could I learn it? Would I have to go to Emerald Academy before Hogwarts?"
"No, that is not an option I am afraid. Keeping your timeline intact is important. No. I was thinking I would write a book for you myself on the subject as a guide for your studies. As long as I write it now and submit it to the Council, it should be a perfect way for you to learn."

"You can make me a book? That's allowed?"

"If I write it and submit it to the Council before hand, they can approve it. You will need far more support to master your focus young one. The hardships facing a two-Type focus are immense. That you must also do this while learning at an institution that cannot teach you the second type will be difficult."

Harry hummed. This was becoming quite the challenge to overcome. Hogwarts was seeming less and less like an ideal place to learn magic, what with his odd focus. "Will I even be able to learn magic at Hogwarts?" He asked, looking over at Memchark. "You're making it sound like this will be an impossible endeavor, to figure out how to use the Wild Type half of my focus while only being trained in the Mobile Type half."

"Your focus will not be the easiest to work with, I conceded. In fact, it will be likely that some of the first spells you do will either go horribly wrong or horribly right. Your teachers will not be able to help you figure out what has gone wrong either. Mix Types who enter the Academy are always given private lessons by myself and the individual experts in their Focus's Type for the first term. They need to understand their Focus intimately. It is tantamount to their success. I shall have to replace this with a book for you."

Harry nodded. It wasn't going to be easy, but this whole thing was sounding more and more interesting.

~~~This is a Scene Change~~~

Rose had been on her own for the first full day they enjoyed on Haleysio. The Doctor was deep in whatever the Documents were, entirely enthralled by their apparent impossibility and unable to be pulled away.

Harry was occupied with being a model for at least part of the day, then he would no doubt be off to the Academy later to discuss magic with the thinkers and educators of the planet.
Which left Rose with the exploring end of the deal. She didn't mind in the least. It had been ages since she'd freely explored a foreign place on her own, long enough that it was as exciting to her as first stepping on the Tardis had been.

Being over a century old put things in perspective, for sure.

She wandered out from the portal, intent on finding Harry's little modeling window to grab some pictures. She wasn't about to miss the littlest Tardis inhabitant's first day at his new job. One he took for, of all things, a jacket.

She rolled her eyes. He had grown up with the strangest of people, to be obsessed with a jacket of all things. The Doctor and Jack did unhealthy things for a person.

The nature walk that had been the path from the Arch way back towards the city Julist ended and she felt the ground shift under her feet and a prompt fly up in front of her face.

Welcome to the Fastest, Quickest, Easiest Transportation Julist Can Offer! Where would you like to go?

She reared back, shocked. "Um, excuse me?" she said, hoping it spoke.

"Welcome to the Fastest, Quickest, Easiest Transportation Julist Can Offer! Where would you like to go?" it said in a happy, chipper voice.

"Quick question, I'm not magical, so I can't really use a focus, is that a problem?"

"Julist's FQET is designed for the comfort of any who need transportation! Please, state your destination and FQET will take you there with no trouble!" Rose was certain she could hear the exclamation points.

"Well, if that's the case, I'm trying to find Fashion Walk," she said, hoping that whatever she had stepped on didn't need money either.
"Fashion Walk, a popular destination. FQET will be happy to transport you. Please, remain immobile while in motion. Any motion outside the limits of FQET may cause unnecessary discomfort." A bubble sprang up around Rose's feet and she felt the ground under her feet spin as the bubble became opaque.

"Uh-huh," she said. Then her body compressed very quickly, without actually changing size, squishing all her internal organs together and feeling a step beyond very uncomfortable. Then she decompressed just as fast. She felt like her lungs were still half there size when the motion under her feet stopped. She coughed.

"Thank you for using FQET! Julist is happy to provide all transportation services within city limits! Please use FQET again!" Rose stumbled off the transport, coughing and hoping her inner organs would realign themselves soon.

"Oh, you poor dear! Those transports are so uncomfortable, Julist is the only city on the whole planet who still uses those outdated bits of Crafting. Are you okay?" a high pitched voice asked.

Rose shook her head to clear her vision, looking for the source of the voice. "I didn't realize they would be so...squishy," she said in a slightly breathless tone.

"No one who visits Julist for the first time does, and they're placed in such a way that if you aren't paying attention you step on one."

Rose, feeling a bit more like her normal self, peered around. The voice was coming from one of the two figures standing over her, both brightly multi-colored and taller than her by a good half meter. Their eyes, four orbs, shifted position as they looked around, from Rose on the ground to each other, to their surroundings.

"Yeah, I'd rather not take that one again, if I can help it. Thank you, though. I'm Rose. First time on Haleysio, really. Didn't know what I stepped on, to be honest."

"Oh, a first timer! How charming! And here just in time for the Naming Festival! Even better! You've arrived at the most exciting point in Haleysio's cycle! I'm Gelfecri and this is Julcista. We're taking in Fashion Walk! They have some of the most amazing accessories and such! Are you looking into getting festival clothes? I've had mine for nearly a full month!"
Rose grinned. She liked these two. "I don't know about my clothes, but my..." she thought about the Doctor, tried to figure out a word for his and her relationship. "My mate," she settled on, feeling it was safe. "His son is a model for Prysh this week."

Gelfecri and Julcista's eyes made wide circles. "Oh, really?! Prysh? The Prysh? Oh this is delightful! She always has the best ideas! And you know her model, oh that's brilliant! We must go see her window! It's just down the Walk, she gets the best spot every cycle!"

Gelfecri helped Rose to her feet, long finger like protrusions gripping Rose's arm until she was steady.

Then they set off. It wasn't long, after pushing through the crowd of many-shaped bodies and avoiding the low flying beings above them, before the trio stood in front of Prysh's window.

And Rose got her first glimpse of Harry as a model.

He did look astonishingly good in the clothes, she had to admit, even if he didn't exactly look like he was interested in being there. His inky black hair and light skin set the colors of the clothes off well, and when he was facing the street, his bright green eyes, a shade Rose had never seen on a human being, matched spectacularly.

He was hanging upside down, rotating in place and obviously thinking hard. Rose wondered how long it would take before he tried doing some possibly unauthorized things within the modeling chamber.

"Oh, is that your mate's son? He looks stunning in Prysh's clothes! It's a marvel she always manages to find the best live models. I heard her next model is Lyfrr'si. Zhir is so hard to get a contract with! Prysh is so lucky!" Gelfecri turned to Rose. "So who is he? Prysh's new model?"

"That's Harry. Didn't know what a model was, really. He just wanted a jacket, and Prysh agreed to make one for him if he modeled for the week. He agreed before he even knew what it was he had to do."

Julcista laughed. "Oh, that is brilliant! I could never get any of my younglings to stay still so long as to model. Gelfecri and I try everything yet they refuse to listen. Having such a brood is sometimes so
much trouble, but they are amazing."

Rose grinned. "They are indeed. Though I couldn't imagine more than one young one running
around. Harry is a handful enough as it is." She slipped her phone out, making sure she had a good
view of Harry before taking several pictures of the still upside down youngster. "So, what next? As
much as I would like to stand here and gossip about the exploits of the young, I've never been to
Julist and would love to see some more of it!"

Gelfecri and Julcista looked at each other, then back at Rose. "Well, have we got the adventure for
you!"

They grabbed her arm and tugged her off, Rose laughing the whole way. She always knew how to
find adventure.

~~~~This is a Scene Change~~~~

It was the third morning of their stay on Haleysio and Harry was once more at Vanderian's shop.
This time Rose trailed him, keeping him company now that his dad was wrapped up in some
business with documents and ancient Gallifreyan history. He would get the story later, seeing and
Rose didn’t know much more beyond that and he wasn’t allowed anywhere near the Museum on
orders from Kyst about keeping timelines intact.

"So, you ready for the next step?" Rose asked.

Harry grinned. "Oh yes! Just two more steps left! Then I'll have my focus! I didn't realize it took so
long."

"It depends on the wielder. A focus takes as long as it needs to be crafted, and yours is taking longer
than most. Mine took two days," Kyst said.

Harry sighed. Everything about his focus was going to cause problems, he could already tell.
Memchark was writing a book so he could learn how to use it properly, the Council wanted to have
more information on it before he left, Vanderian was staring at him longer than normal. He wondered
how Hogwarts in his own time would react to his focus.
"Young magical, if you would come back please? Your magical levels are appropriate for today's excursion." Vanderian's voice rang out from the back room where the large chamber they made the focus was located.

Harry grinned at Rose and Kyst. "See you later!"

"Bye Harry. See you soon."

Kyst swirled.

Harry skipped down the hall and the door slid shut behind him.

Vanderian stood at the altar, Harry's unfinished focus lying on top alongside the two remaining pieces.

"Today we will be setting in the core. The core is the entirety of the magical, how magic is accessed and the most direct way of connecting to your being. Everything that makes up who you are goes into the setting of your core." Vanderian looked at Harry. "Take off your limiter, young magical, and we shall begin. You will need to hold your focus, unfinished as it is, but do not touch the core. It shall be guided by magic alone." Harry slid the necklace into a pocket before reaching over and picking up the long focus that had been halfway completed. "Think of you. Everything that is you, what you like, what you dislike, what you want in life, what you want to achieve, your goals, dreams, desires, hopes, fears. Everything that makes you, you. And release your magic."

Harry closed his eyes once more, hearing a slow chant from Vanderian as he delved into himself.

His home on the Tardis, since we was too young to remember. The walls that cradled him and cared for him and loved him. His love for the Tardis. His wish to always live there, to never have to leave, to never be forced to leave by circumstance.

His father, the one who shaped him. He loved his dad, loved him more than he could possible quantify. His dad taught him everything, let him explore, make mistakes, learn from them. Adventure, just outside the door. His whole world encompassed within the form of the slight Time Lord who raised him. He wished with all his might he would always be able to be there for his dad, to not have to leave him, to never grow old and die, succumbing to that human weakness that left his father alone so many other times. His fear that his dad would one day look back at him and see an old man and not want to be near him.
His fear of being alone, in a strange place with strangers. Being unable to move and tied down, as he was when the Olympians kidnapped him. His fear that his magic would once again be beyond his reach, as it was after the incident. If he couldn't touch his magic, what was he? His magic was so much a part of him, he didn't know what he could do without it.

His dream to help his dad save the Universe. His dad and Rose and Uncle Jack, whenever Uncle Jack made it back. He wanted to be by their side forever. He was the only one on the Tardis who didn't have an unusually long lifespan. Both Rose and Jack were immortal and the Tardis was near enough to being so, as was his dad.

He wanted to learn, learn as much as he could about everything that he could. Magic, math, science, languages, culture, whatever there was to learn, he wanted to learn it. He might never know as much as his dad did, there was a limit to how much information a human memory could recall, but he could get as closed as possible.

Vanderian watched the spectacle folding out in front of him. He always enjoyed watching the process of a Focus being made, it was such a rewarding process and so interesting.

The Prime Thestral bone, still encased in a ball of magic, rolled to the edge of the altar before stopping, hovering, then Harry's magic swept around it, encasing it, and the sphere of magic that kept it imprisoned released and the fine, shining silver powder floated over to the focus laying in Harry's hands.

It wound around the human child, twining and feeling the magic and the emotions, before twisting around the focus, then settling into the runic grooves and sinking into the shaft of the focus.

A bright flash of light, startling in its sudden appearance, flashed and the focus began to glow a low silver color.

The core, the Prime Thestral bone, was etching a small pattern into the focus at the base of the wood, where Harry's hand would grasp, hidden from view except for the wielder.

Vanderian felt his roots tingle. Harry's magic was more than just a part of him, it cared for him, in a way that was touching and slightly scary. Powerful magic was, in it's own way, a sentient being.
With the light dying down and Harry's magic swirling back into the child's body, Vanderian slowed the chant and finally ended it.

Harry opened his eyes, feeling as drained as he did the previous two days. He looked down at his focus, still lying in his open palms.

It looked the same, except, no, wait, there was something at the bottom, the base, of the focus. Some etching...

Harry peered closer.

It was in High Gallifreyan! 'Child of the Stars, Your Dreams are Never Far From Reach'.

Harry grinned, looking up at Vanderian. "My focus..."

"I saw, young magical. Keep that message close. Your magic made it especially for you. You will always know it is there, whatever it may be."

Harry tilted his head, curious. "You don't want to know what it is?"

Vanderian shook his head. "No, young magical. Such messages are for you, and you alone. You need not tell another soul if you so wish."

Harry grinned all the fiercer. "So, after next sunrise, that's the last time? I can take my focus with me after that?"

Vanderian looked at Harry, then at the focus, the powerful focus, laying in the boy's hands. "Yes, tomorrow, and you may take your focus with you so long as you take a special means of holding it with you too. If an appropriate one for you is not among those I have in my collection, I am sure Prysh will be up to the challenge. It is too dangerous to leave just laying about or in a pocket, and humans do not store their foci in a special personal magical pocket."

Harry nodded. At this point, anything that would give him his focus that much quicker was worth it
in his mind.


~~~This is a Scene Change~~~

The Doctor was on his third day holed up in the Documents Chambers, pouring over the First Documents with eyes now strained from reading the same symbols over and over again.

This really was the Lost Colony of Pythia. It had be a legend that echoed all the way into the Era of the Time Lords, after the Fall of Pythia and the last remnants of magic squished out on Gallifrey for good. A legend that told of a colony being established on a special planet at a special nexus in the universe that would help fuel Pythia's rise to power.

Well, Haleysio would surely have done that, if they had been successful in creating a colony here. But the people on this planet were far and beyond anything the Cult could have possibly dealt with.

The First Documents had, surprisingly, quite a bit of useful information. All of it was in Pythia's language, which meant none of the writings of the original peoples, who may or may not have been the Kysh'fryck as the Treatise had implied, survived in a written form. The Kysh'fryck were only the members the peoples in the area the Cult had settled on, the Cult had decided eventually, somewhat unsure of what they were talking about half the time. The planet itself was named in a way that the Cult couldn't decipher. In fact, much about the planet eluded the Cult members who settled the area these Documents were found. They had stumbled across the planet by accident, it having never shown up on their scans, and after sending work back to the Home Temple, Pythia herself had given them the order to make a colony and discover the secrets of the planet.

The beings they encountered on this planet were strange. They spoke the Cult's language, which surprised them. (The Doctor knew now that they had used a translation spell of some sort to communicate). They had no particular shape, but they had a form that was solid and could not be passed through. Each individual was a swirl of color, each one different and unique. Sometimes, the color swirls would blend together, sometimes only parts would blend. It was somewhat disconcerting, as the Cult couldn't identify them as being made of any particular composition or structure.

Also, things moved without any indication that they should, things happened, strange things that would have take Pythia herself chanting with all her power to cause. The Cult turned the might of the engineering they knew on the members of the planet and forced them into a Treaty while they were still confused and uncertain as to what these strangers could do.
That Treaty didn't last long.

Within a handful of years, a good number of the Cult who had settled on the planet had been driven to insanity. The Dome they had built as a temple to Pythia became their safehouse. As soon as the inhabitants of the planet knew they could overpower the Cult, they did, at least from the Cult’s perspective.

And then they studied them, as one might study a particularly intelligent ant farm. They cared not for reports or paperwork, but those still mentally stable sent back missives filled with rambling, until they too succumbed to the curse that had befallen the Cult.

The inhabitants had no use for the mentally frail and weak.

This the Doctor had from the memoirs of the only child born on the planet, who had lived out their life and had been the only one spared by the planet's locals.

They had watched their parents go insane then die, before being consigned to living the rest of their life, alone but for the locals, on the planet that they had been unwillingly brought to. The ship that had taken them there was torn to pieces and destroyed long before the writer could have ever learned how to fly it.

It sounded like a less than idea life for a long-lived child of the Cult of Pythia.

The child, alone on a planet they didn't understand and surrounded by the dead of those who had any kind of remote idea on how to get back to Gallifrey, spent some time circling the planet, eating what seemed to be safe (watching the local wildlife, strange creatures but creatures that ate nonetheless) and avoiding any areas that might be inhabited.

They died a long way away from where they were born after eating some ill-chosen food. They knew little about the planet they lived on and far less about Gallifrey. They had only barely been taught the language and how to write it, which meant much of the journal was written in progressively neater but childish writing. They never included their name.

Which, the Doctor considered, wasn't an unusual thing. Even during the Cult's time, Names were powerful things and given with care.
He leaned back in the chair he had occupied for near on three days. His suit had been unbuttoned and the cuffs rolled back, his hair was a mess from constant tugging and frustrated pulling. The old language was harder than he had anticipated, but he had made it through the various manuscripts and turned them into Old High Gallifreyan.

The various books had been rather useful. The first had been the attempt at the Treatise with the locals, one that hadn't turned out well. The second was a short account of the discovery of the planet and a list of the reports and dates that the reports had been sent back to Pythia on Gallifrey. Pythia had been very interested in this planet, if the nearly monthly reports were accurate. Rarely was a colony world, once established, required to contact more than once every sixth months. At least not until the proper inter-stellar communication equipment was installed and on planets so far from Gallifrey such communication was hardly a priority.

The third had been notes on the planet itself written by a cultist who had an extreme interest in science, especially considering the Cult did not encourage such studies.

The fourth had been the diary of the child, started when they had been young and following them until their death, written in tiny script and requiring a keen eye to translate.

The loose papers were rather pointless in the whole of the matter. They were scattered missives and reports, pieces of messages or letters to distant family. Interesting in an anthropological sense but for the mystery of the Lost Colony, not that important.

No, the important things were written in the large notebook he had on the table. It had been a rather normal sized notebook when he started with it just a few days ago (it was only a few days, his brain had calculated it out exactly. 35 hours and 54 minutes). Now it was bulging, nearly his hand's width in depth. He wondered how heavy it would be.

Astonishing that it had taken just three days to get all of this translated. He must have zoned in. He hadn't slept in all that time, and he barely remembered eating whatever must have been put in front of his face. It was a disconcerting feeling. He hadn't done something like that since before Harry had come into his life.

Harry...he wondered how his son was doing. Relatively speaking, Harry was probably having quite an interesting time on Haleysio. He recalled a Focus being crafted, something about Harry modelling for the week (he needed to see that. His son as a window model was a priceless sight), and a trip to the Academy.
He was missing out on a lot.

But this was also important. Gallifrey's past had been on this planet, at least a part of it. While the original inhabitants might have been lost to some magical cataclysm, seeing as no one had found any evidence of their continued existence, he expected there was some form of their civilization alive and thriving somewhere. They probably used something else to communicate. Being created from magic would make them a singularly unique species and they might have had no need for tools the rest of the universe created. Writing, or some form of scripture, was a nearly universal trait for species with language. There were a few who passed down genetic memory to their offspring that had no need for keeping history on paper, but they were not the majority.

There was some form of communication on this planet that the original inhabitants had left behind, the diary of the Pythian Child had confirmed something odd lingering around the base that had been set up. But no word about what it was ever made it onto paper.

The Doctor needed to find more.

He wondered if Harry and Rose would be up for the adventure.

The Doctor, notebook in hand, turned to leave the white room he had sequestered himself in, only to discover the door wouldn't budge. He pushed on it, frustrated.

"Oi, let me out of here!" He reached for the sonic screwdriver, intending to try and see how far he could influence the spells with technology, when his jacket caught on something around his wrist.

The bracelet Guardian had given him. Wasn't it supposed to summon Guardian again when he wanted to leave?

How did he do that again?

He shook his wrist, jangling it up and down in an effort to do something. He pointed the sonic at it, nothing.

His fingers brushed against it, he tapped at it in an attempt to think, when the door slid open.
"Have you another request for me Doctor?" Guardian buzzed in, hovering just within the Doctor's vision.

"Um, yes, yes I do. I'm finished. Done. I've gone through the whole pile and I think a visit to the site the documents were discovered wouldn't go amiss," he said.

Guardian buzzed, flying in loops. "I am not the one you should consult with on such a matter, that would be the Council. They control the various historical excursions on Haleysio." Guardian buzzed closer to the Doctor. "I would be very much interested in your translation of the Documents. No one in all the years those Documents have been with us has ever been able to understand them, much less translate them."

The Doctor held the notebook close to his chest. "Weeeell, about that, see. Those Documents are rather closely tied to my own peoples history. I need some more information before I'm willing to share it with you lot."

Guardian's buzz changed just a bit. "I see. Well, when you change your mind, your work will be much welcomed within the Documents Hall. I will call Liffra. She will escort you back to the Council, who I am told are anxious to speak with you. They have been informed that you have been here for three days and are curious as to what you have discovered."

The Doctor followed Guardian back through the still pristine but empty Documents Hall. Guardian buzzed off, coming back moments later.

"Liffra on her way?" he asked.

"She will be here shortly. Please wait."

"I can find my way back, you know," the Doctor pointed out.

"That is not advisable. Having you wandering around Haleysio unescorted is not the desire of the council. You are far too volatile a being to be unwatched. This is the same reason your child is followed by Kyst, and your partner also has an eye on her, though she is only kept monitored from a distance."
"Underestimate Rose at your own cost," the Doctor said with a grin. Though it did concern him just a bit to know the observation was more than just for safety.

Liffra walked through the door from the Main Hall just then. "Doctor, the Council is expecting you."

"Great, I've got a few words I would like to have with them as well."

The notebook tight in his grip, the need to see what his people had left on Haleysio long long before any one of these beings had ever set foot on the planet strong in his mind, he set off for the Council, Liffra trailing after him.

~~~~This is a Scene Break~~~~

Liffra led the Doctor into the Council Hall, where he was met by the four Grand Council members, three of whom he had met before. Shorll, Prryxt, and Bryshl. The fourth, a small being the Doctor hadn't seen before, was a deep purple and slender, though coming up no higher than his hip in height with three slender stalks supporting eyes and two arms, or what would be arms in relative location.

"Time Lord, we have been given word that you can read the First Documents," Shorll said in her musical voice.

"They're written in an ancient language from my planet," he said. "Though how they even survived the Time Lock, I don't know. One of the things I was hoping to find out, actually. I want to visit the site of their discovery."

"I am afraid that site is under historical preservation. Entry is strictly monitored," Prryxt said.

"This isn't a matter of protecting your history. This isn't even your history. There were no documents from the people native to this planet among the records, all of them were from my people. I, out of all of you, have a right to see what's been left," the Doctor argued back.

The four traded looks, surprise evident. "You mean to say, none of the First Documents are from the natives of Haleysio?" the small, unnamed being said. "Not a single one?"

"No, none of them. From what I gather, the peoples who evolved naturally on this planet didn't use a written means to transfer information. The Cult had no idea how to describe them, no knowledge of their composition or anything. On a purely magical planet, the natives would have evolved from pure magic. They could have been nothing but magic given solidity and forms, rather than beings being gifted magic. They would have used wildly different means to leave records than symbols scribbled on a convenient surface." The Doctor rolled his eyes. "Really, this should have been a little more obvious. Why would a species that wasn't just gifted magic but evolved from magic require something as mundane as writing tools to pass down knowledge?"
"We have nothing but our own histories to base our assumptions on, and no race on this planet doesn't keep some kind of record written on a permeable surface. We could not read the First Documents, there was no way we could not have known they weren't from the first inhabitants," Prryxt pointed out, quite reasonably.

The Doctor sighed. He couldn't fault them, he had thought the same thing. Only a few species in the Universe among those who dwelt on this plane of existence didn't keep written records and they were often gifted with inherited memories. "That might be true, but that doesn't mean I don't need to see that site. I need to know what happened to the Cult. The records only say the natives drove them insane and left them for dead, all except one child, who was barely out of childhood when most of the Cult became insensate. This colony was passed down in legends on Gallifrey even in my time, long after the Cult of Pythia was wiped out. This is History!"

"You speak of this Cult of Pythia. What were they? These people who came to Haleysio and so provoked the natives?" Bryshl asked, deep voice rumbling.

The Doctor paced. "The Cult was an ancient order of power on Gallifrey, run exclusively by female seers. The closest my people ever came to magic. They were wiped out by a movement towards rationality and logic over mysticism, lead by the Three, Rassilon, Omega, and the Other, but before that they were a powerful force in the Universe, spreading across the stars. This was the Lost Colony, a legend about a colony Pythia had established that would lead the Cult into power greater than they could have imagined, and it might have happened, if the Cult hadn't angered the natives." He simplified most of the history down, no need to give hours long lectures on Gallifreyan history to those who really didn't need to know it.

"So, this site. What could possibly be there that isn't in the First Documents? It's ancient and nearly taken over by nature. There isn't much left of it," Shorll said, curious.

"The Cult not only landed near where the native people had settled, they landed almost on top of it. There's bound to be more information that is triggered, and I might be able to figure it all out. But I need to see it. Soon."

They traded looks. "The soonest you would be able to visit would be tomorrow afternoon. It is on the other side of the planet and in an isolated location. A member of the Grand Council will need to go with you," Bryshl said.

"I wouldn't mind stretching my limbs, and it has been a while since I have seen the ancient site. It always seemed so peaceful," Prryxt said.

"Alright, Prryxt, you will accompany the Doctor tomorrow. I shall send a Thought to the Head Historian and let them know."

"Oh, um, make sure you include Harry and Rose in that. I'm sure they would be interested in it as well," the Doctor added.

"Is it safe to let Harry near such a place?" Shorll asked.

The Doctor huffed. "He's been in far worse places than an old archaeological dig. And he would moan for ages if I left him behind."

Prrxyt shrugged one giant paw. "I do not mind the boy accompanying us. He is capable of taking
care of himself, from what I have seen. Though he might have to discuss his modeling schedule with Prysh," he said.

"So that is settled. Now, Doctor, may we see the First Documents? I heard you translated them," Shorll said.

The Doctor raised an eyebrow. "I translated them into another form of Gallifreyan. You wouldn't be able to read it in any case. It's not exactly easy to translate."

"Is there any way you could translate it into a language we could read?" Shorll asked. "I only say this because those Documents have remained unread and unknown for centuries and it would be valuable to our historians to understand what transpired at the oldest known site on the planet."

The Doctor considered. On the one hand, letting anyone have a readable copy of anything from Gallifrey while not on the Tardis was against his nature, this was also from their planet. "Let me see what I find at the site tomorrow, then we'll discuss the translation," he said finally. It would give him time to think.

~~~~This is a Scene Break~~~~

Harry was an excited, nervous ball of energy bouncing in front of Vanderian’s shop. It was the final day and he was going to finish his focus! Finish it! For real! And be able to leave with it! He jittered.

Rose set a hand on his shoulder. "Calm down, Harry. If you vibrate any faster you'll end up shaking your clothes off."

"But this is so amazing! I get my focus today! I finish it and everything and I get to leave with it! I can't wait to tell Arthur about this too! And Uncle Jack, when he gets back. And dad, whenever he digs his nose out of his translations. He brought that giant notebook back with him yesterday and wouldn’t even let me have a glimpse. Did he go to bed?" Harry looked at Rose.

"No, but this is hardly the first time he hasn’t. He doesn’t need as much sleep. Besides, he’s been concerned. The Documents he was reading the past few days were written in some form of Gallifreyan even he had a hard time reading. Do you know what it could be?"

Harry shook his head. "I can speak and understand Old High and High Gallifreyan and I can sort of write it, it’s a hard language to get your head around at first. Modern Gallifreyan I'm native at, I think dad taught me that language first, really, out of all the languages I know. It’s the one he feels is closest to home, for him and one of the ones I’m prone to using when I need something to take notes in."

Rose looked at the young boy. "Just how many languages are you fluent it? I recall your dad telling me you preferred to learn a language somewhere rather than let the Tardis translate for you, but that
would take far too long considering the number of places and times you go to." She gave him a good once over. "And you aren't quite as old as the Doctor to be saying things like that and getting away with it."

Harry stuck his tongue out at her. "I know several Earth languages, Chinese, English, Latin, Arabic, and Japanese, and I can fumble through most of the rest of them with just a bit of help from the Tardis. I'm fluent in a dozen of the primary languages spoken throughout the galaxy and I can reasonably convince my way out of prison time in three dozen more. I only use the Tardis’s interference if I really have no idea where we've ended up and I don't recognize the dialect."

Rose raised an eyebrow. And here she was thinking her successful completion of the French exam in high school was impressive. Then again, she doubted she had needed language abilities like Harry’s as a child. One of Kelly’s friend’s grew up bilingual, mother from Japan and father from London. She spoke Japanese and English interchangeably and well. She guessed it was similar for Harry.

"Young magical, I am ready. I layered on a few more protection charms just in case. I don't want a catastrophic explosion to be the final thing I see before I am obliterated." Vanderian’s leafy head poked out from the door Rose had watched Harry go into the day before.

Harry gulped. "Wish me luck," he whispered to Rose before walking into the chamber.

Rose sent him on with a silent wish for his safety as she stayed outside with Kyst. "He’s a remarkable child," she said.

"Indeed, Lady Rose, though he doesn't yet know it. He still sees himself as just a boy, the son of the Doctor and the Tardis, neither of which he sees as extraordinary. But he is remarkable. He makes a difference wherever he goes and touches the lives and souls of species the Universe over."

Rose looked up at Kyst, a small smile on her face. "He’s left that special mark on you now, hasn't he?" she asked, her tongue sticking out the side of her mouth.

Kyst made a soft whooshing noise. "I believe such a fate is inescapable. We are all doomed to it," Kyst said, and Rose laughed. Truer words had rarely been spoken.

~~~~~This is a Scene Break~~~~~

Harry stood just inside the doors, looked at the altar where his focus, almost complete, lay waiting for
him. Vanderian in all his glory stood behind the plinth, waiting.

"This is the final piece," Harry whispered. It felt monumental.

"Hurry, young magical. I do not have the entire Sun to complete this and neither do you."

Harry scooted over quickly. "What do I do?" he asked, slipping his necklace into his pocket. He doubted that part of the process had changed.

"The star-stone is the last remaining piece of your focus, and arguably the most dangerous. You will need to have contact with it and your focus to allow the two to merge as I hope they will, and not blow my store and half the Orange Street Shops into oblivion."

Harry grinned, nervous. "Alright, so one in each hand. Does the hand matter?"

"Whichever feels best is usually the right way to go. Now, hold on, close your eyes, and think about your star-stone. Everything you have ever done to it, all the magic you have poured into it, the way you feel holding it. Your mind must be focused on how it is important to you, to your magic."

Harry closed his eyes, sinking into his magic. Each day he did this it got easier and easier to let it flow out of him.

His star, the one he named in the whistling language to mean 'beautiful'. Well, he wasn't exactly the most creative namer as a three year old, one couldn't blame young Harry for the poor name.

His solar system was created on the basis of that compressed star, the way he felt holding it. The heat and power it generated. He used to float the four compressed stars he found in circles, playing with them the way another child might play with colored balls or string or anything else bright and shiny.

But 'beautiful' he especially liked. The soft color and the glow was comforting and he would bring it with him to bed whenever he went to sleep, setting it on his dresser for light. Soft enough that he wasn't disturbed but bright enough that he could enjoy the glow when he woke up.
He remembered taking the stars and starting to fashion the rough solar system he would eventually create, levitating them around his form as he tried to plan out how he would create it. The center, he recalled eventually was placed where 'beautiful' hung.

His magic felt out the star laying in his left palm and he could feel it whooshing through, refamiliarizing itself with the star and greeting it as if an old friend.

Vanderian watched the spectacle unfold, immensely curious as to how this would turn out. Rarely did he ever get to see something so powerful used in a focus. A compressed star, a star-stone, was certainly something powerful.

Harry's magic, as energetic as ever, swirled around the small purple stone and lifted it up, caressing it. A friend, Vanderian thought. The two of them were friends, in a strange way.

The focus, nearly finished, joined the two in the air and Harry's hands began to trace out shapes beneath them. Vanderian tilted his head.

What were those? Was Harry following his chant with sigils? It certainly looked like it. The child was in a league of his own, Vanderian thought. Creating sigils by relying on his magic to interpret Vanderian's meaning. It would certainly strengthen the bond with his focus.

He watched, waiting. The bonding of the two parts would be the most important point of the ritual. Harry's magic would have to come through and do something Vanderian wasn't sure was possible.

The two pieces approached, then a bright light flashed, obscuring Vanderian's vision and he nearly stopped the chant, only cycles and cycles of creating foci keeping him on track.

The light died down and the focus, complete now with a soft purple gem, the star-stone, set in the very tip of the focus.

Vanderian slowed the chant, stopped it, and the focus, fell into Harry's hands.

Harry staggered. His focus, which had left his hands some time ago, suddenly landed in his open palms and his mind began to sing.
Harry buckled under the pressure from the voices twining in his mind. "Vanderian," he asked. "Am I supposed to hear voices from my focus?"

Vanderian snorted a laugh. "With you, anything is possible young magical, but I will say it is not impossible for those with unusual Wild Types to hear something from their focus. It makes it easier to communicate with."

"So, it's normal to hear voices?"

"I didn't say normal young magical, I said it wasn't impossible. I have long since learned the value of not using the word impossible."

"Oh good. Alright." 'Hello' he responded to the voices. 'I'm Harry.'

We have no name, not as you do
We are your magic
We act with you
'Oh, so I can ask you to help me with magic?'
Not yet My Child. You must learn. We are Strength. We are not Knowledge.
'Ah, I see.'

"Young Magical? If you would come with me? There are a few things I must caution you about with your new focus. I would first say do not let another magical handle your focus. It is particularly tied to you, and it would be dangerous to let someone else touch it. For them, mostly. I do not know what kind of power your focus may contain, I would not want to touch it, that is for certain."
Harry stuttered a bit at that warning. "Um, alright. Sounds doable...ish. What do I say to my professors at Hogwarts when they want to see my focus?"

Vanderian turned to look at Harry. "I recommend discouraging them however you may. That would be the safest path."

Harry followed Vanderian, holding onto his new focus tightly, unwilling to let it go for any reason. And if Vanderian's advise was right, he shouldn't let anyone else hold it anyway.

Which might cause a problem in the future, Harry thought. He didn't know how Hogwarts operated but not relinquishing one's focus might be a bad thing under certain circumstances.

They exited through a side door Harry hadn't noticed before. It had probably been blended into the wall and only revealed by some spell of Vanderian's.

They wandered through a tightly winding passageway, wide enough for Vanderian and, by virtue that Harry was smaller than Vanderian, for Harry.

"Here we are, young magical. I keep a series of specially designed focus holders made by Prysh here. Your focus should fit into one of them."


The room was a maze of low tables and plinths with all sorts of colored fabric and materials on it. He couldn't make out the shape of any of them.

"Vanderian, how am I supposed to find anything in this room? It would take me forever!"

"I doubt forever, but yet, there are a lot of holders. I would ask your focus, young magical. Or your magic."

Harry groaned at the obvious answer. He turned to his focus.
'Can you help me?'

Indeed Child. Follow us, your magic will allow us to find a proper fit.

We want to be close to you, Child. Our desire will fuel the magic.

'That sounds helpful.'

It is how we can perform simple magics without the proper spell.

Harry held his focus out in front of him, and followed the prompting of his Core, whose voices guided him left and right and through the maze of holders.

Vanderian watched in quiet amusement. Harry would have it both easier and harder than many with a Wild Type. Easier, because his focus was intent on protecting him, but harder because it was so strong and getting it to do what he wanted to do and not what it wanted to do would be a challenge.

"Vanderian, I think I found it!" Harry's voice called out.

Harry held a slender fold of fabric with two long straps up. It was dark green, nearly black, and was the perfect size for his focus.

"Bring it over here, young magical, and I will help you figure out how to use it."

Harry made his way back through the maze of materials over to Vanderian and together they figured out that Harry's leg would probably be the best place to keep it. His focus was much too long for his arm and on his leg it would be easiest to reach when necessary.

Harry felt the snug weight of his focus settle against his skin. He slipped his necklace out and on, wondering if it would interfere with his connection with his focus.

Child, we are your magic. We cannot be broken by a limiter.

'Oh, that's good to know. I would hate to have to take this off to work with you.'

We are part of you, if separate.
"Young Magical, are you ready to go to Prysh's? it is nearly time."

Harry jumped, startled. He never realized how long these sessions took. "Is this the last time I'll see you Vanderian?" he asked, saddened.

Vanderian chuckled. "For your focus, I suspect so. But you shall see me at the festival. I believe you will still be on Haleysio for that at least?"

Harry nodded. "Rose and I agreed that we would convince dad if he wanted to leave early. I want to see it!"

"Very good then, child. I shall see you there."

Harry grinned. "But, wait, how much do I owe you for the focus? I mean, you can't work for free. I don't think I have Haleysion currency on me, I don't know what kind of currency you use, but we should be able to get some somewhere..."

Vanderian held up a twiggy hand. "Young magical, your accounts on Haleysio have been held in reserve for you. Your balance with me has been paid already. It is not the first time you have been on this planet," he said, smiling.

Harry nodded. Made sense, really, for a future him to set up accounts in the past for his future-past endeavors. "Alright, so how do I get back to Rose and Kyst? Prysh will be upset if I don't show up on time. It's so irritating, having to be on time to everything."

Vanderian chuckled. "This way, young magical. I shall take you back to them." He led the way out of a door Harry hadn't seen once again.

~~~~In Which This is an Ending~~~~

Chapter End Notes
SO HEY! End of the next chapter! I had some problems deciding where to end this as I have 40,000 words written just to finish this bit of the story up. Believe me, I was not expecting that many words either. So as soon as I run my editor’s fingers over the next 20,000-ish words and fix up some small discrepancies and flesh out a few more things, hey, chapter! If you have anything in mind you want to see in particular before they leave Haleysio (the next chapter will be the last one on Haleysio in this story, Side Alongs is still an option) LET ME KNOW ASAP!

To all of you who read this, review, favorite, follow, I love you. Thank you so much and all your kind words and reviews and support means a lot to me. It’s NaNoWriMo and I’ve been on a writing kick. So Hey, I’m churning out more and more of this story! Yay! We’re getting the ball rolling!

As Always, Thank you for being awesome.

Kuroi
In Which There are Strange Things Afoot

Chapter Summary

Haleysio is coming to an end, but there are still a couple more surprises to be discovered!

Chapter Notes

So, THE LAST ARC FOR HALEYSIO IS HERE! And some fun surprises await! And yes, this should probably have been up a while ago but I got swamped by various things. Good news, I finished NaNo! Sad news, I screwed up my 750dotcom 63 day streak. Also google drive has been giving me issues. GRRRRRRR

SO, enjoy the last arc in Haleysio for probably a long time (not leaving it behind permanently, it's far too fascinating a place to do that, but it's not coming back for a while.)

ONTO THE CHAPTER!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

~~~~~This is a Beginning~~~~~

The second day in the modeling window was, Harry had to admit, just as boring as the first.

The third was worse. People did this for a living? Like, they wanted to do this? He didn't understand. There were far more interesting things to be doing than standing (or floating, in his case) in a window for hours while people gawked at you. Rose even showed up more than once in front of his window the past two days, alongside an increasing variety of beings. She was having fun, Harry knew, and he was stuck here, waiting.

His jacket had better be so worth it.

The fourth day, with his focus in his possession, was much different. He had something to think about that wasn't just staring out at the crowd and playing guessing games.

Hello my child.

'Hello. I wanted to see if I could get to know you all better, since we have to work together.'

We are more than pleased to talk with you. There is much you can learn from us. We are a part of you, though separate. We exist to lend you strength and to give you direction.

'You're the core of my Focus? There two of you, right?'

Yes. We are two who have become one through your magic. One of us was once the Prime Thestral of the ancient herd of Haleysio, brought here unknowingly by the first Human Magicals centuries
ago. They lived many thousands of years, from times long before humans on Earth ever reached the stars.

'So, one of you is the Prime Thstral that makes up the core of my focus. Is the other 'beautiful'?'

One of us was also once a star, taken at the point between life and death and preserved within a compression field. You took us and played with us and called us such lovely names and we loved you.

'Well, that's good to know. I missed you. Dad said I needed to understand how to properly use my resources before he would let me have you back.'

We understand. That time is not as important as this time. We are now part of you. We will be here to lend you strength and help you.

'So, I have to go to Hogwarts in a little while to learn magic there. I can't stay on Haleysio. Is that going to be alright?'

Wherever you gain knowledge is acceptable. Strength must be used to be useful. We have no knowledge of the magic we use, you must provide that. You must teach us as you learn, or we cannot lend you our strength.

'That's interesting. I wonder what Memchark will have to say about that.'

Memcharck? We know no Memchark.

'Memchark is a theorist and a specialist in Foci at Emerald Academy on Haleysio. Very smart, very interested in my focus.'

We are different to many Foci, my child. We are not just a focus of power, we are a focus born from your magic, your thoughts, your intent, your desires, your fears. We exist to lend you strength and guidance and to give you direction. Listen, and we shall tell you a little about us. Knowing about us will allow you to teach us when you learn.

Harry agreed. And he stayed in that meditative pose for the entire three hours as his focus took him into their history, hinted at a shared past beyond just his relationship with beautiful as a toddler, and he learned just a smidgen about what his focus was.

Prysh had been ecstatic when Harry left the room. Harry had been such a sight, so focused and intense and glowing just a little, her clothing sales had been enormous. Harry was just reeling from the little bit he had learned about his focus, experienced as if he had been there himself.

His focus really was an interesting and strange design.

~~~~This is a Scene Break~~~~

Harry sat in front of Memchark, his focus held lightly in his hands.

"Are you sure I can't touch it? That is a most unusual restriction, foci are rarely so picky that they disallow some harmless handling."

Harry shook his head. "I would rather not risk it. Not only is my focus rather oddly balanced, it has the power of an entire star in it, tied up with the core and sentient. If you make them angry I fear for what might happen to you. It would be...unpleasant I'm sure."
Memchark looked at Harry's focus in speculation. "Hmmm, well, in that case, to complete my book for you, I need a thorough verbal description of your focus. Not the specifics of its creation, that is a private thing between crafter and magical, but how your focus functions and what you have managed to clean from it in the time you've had it."

Harry tilted his head, thoughts heading for his focus.

'Is there anything you would like him to know? He is creating a book for me so I can learn how to work with you better, Anything to his advantage as it pertains to us would be helpful.'

We are your focus, Harry. You have permission to tell anyone of us, as much as you wish.

'But is touching out of the equation?'

We cannot say. That particular restriction is based more on how we contain power and utilize it than anything directly malicious. Because you have such an intimate connection with your magic and have so much of it in reserve, I act as a balance, a rudimentary one, to help your magic heal some.

'Heal? I didn't know my magic was injured. I'm not injured, am I?'

Our Child, you have gone through much in your short life, and your magic weathers it as well. Your alteration into a touch empath struck your magic hard, and then being sealed away only made it worse. That you have so much magic also means you have so much more to hurt.

'How did I not know this? I mean, it's my magic, how could the fact that it's injured escape my notice? I've been able to use it just fine.'

The use of your magic and its injury are not the same thing. Your magic is injured on a deeper level, on a manifestational level rather than a functional level. How it creates itself, replenishes itself, and interacts with the world beyond your body. Now that we are here, we are able to heal some of the damage and allow it access to some of the world beyond your limiter.

'Okay, but what does that mean for me and our ability to do magic?'

You ability to use your magic and us will not be restricted by your magic, only by your knowledge. Rather, your injured magic, if it is not healed by the time you begin to learn magic, will occasionally affect your spells, your recovery time, and your magical pathways. When your magic reaches maturity, it may become more volatile if it is not healed.

Harry panicked just a bit. 'How can I heal it?'

Harry thought he heard his focus chuckle. Your magic will heal with time, focus, freedom, and meditation. We can help the process, having a connection between you and your magic.

'Oh, alright. Um, well, I guess we'll have to start on some of that then.'

Indeed, our Harry.

Harry pulled his focus back and focused on Memchark, who had been staring at him with all of the many eyes. "Is something wrong, young Harry?"

Harry grimaced. "Depends on what you mean by wrong. I was just talking with my focus, and they said that the touching thing is more of a 'my magic is volatile and they act as a balance' rather than anything malicious. Oh, also, my magic is injured."
"Wait, wait, you said you talked to your focus? Can you clarify?"

Harry furrowed his brow. "I talked to them. My focus, it has two cores, sort of, and they talk to me."

"When you say talk, you mean you feel emotions from your focus due to your empathic abilities?"

"No, I talk to them. We speak, exchange words, communicate. I ask questions, they answer, or they ask a question and I answer. Speech."

Memchark made that high pitched noise Harry was beginning to associate with either confusion or excitement. "You are saying you can exchange words with your focus through your magic," Memchark said.

Harry nodded. "Yep, that's the whole of it."

"This is...this is unprecedented. To have a focus intimately tied to you and being able to feel the intentions, that is what the basis of a Wild Type is, but being able to speak with your focus, talk and negotiate through words, that is unheard of!"

Harry groaned. "I thought Vanderian just meant it was rare and not common, not that it had never happened before," he said. "Really, really? I am not the only person to have ever had a focus that can communicate with them."

Memchark made a lower pitched hum. "You, Harry, are a unique being. There are few like you in the universe in all of time. To be a passenger of the Tardis is one thing, there are a number, though it is a small one, that have been part of such a group. But you are not just a passenger, a companion, you are the son of the Time Lord, and a child of the Tardis. You are a magic user whose name, I can say, travels not just through the times you visit, but echoes from your birth time forward. You will be forever followed by this uniqueness and you won't ever be able to run from it. Only your personal timeline will tell you how much of your future will be written into history books, but your name will not be forgotten."

Harry slumped back against the chair, slinking lower into the seat. "Great, just brilliant. What I always wanted, fame and notoriety. Wonderful."

Memchark chuckled. "You are the son of the Time Lord, if only for that will your name never be forgotten by those who meet you, and by the Universe. Now, we must turn our attention to your focus and everything you can tell me about it. The materials, and since you can talk with your cores, anything pertaining to them they believe is relevant to their use. I do not want to mess with the balance of your magic, that may lead to some negative consequences, but since I cannot examine your focus directly, and indirect assessment will have to do."

Harry looked down at his focus, then up at Memchark. "I did ask them if they had anything specific they wanted to tell you, and they said that they were my focus and anything I wished to tell you was fine. So Where do you want to start?"

"I remember you saying your magic was injured; I was too busy concentrating on the fact that you talk to your focus directly but that information concerns me. What do you mean exactly?"

Harry shrugged. "I'm not entirely sure. They sort of explained that some of the things that had happened to me have damaged my magic in some form or other, most notably the time I was kidnapped. They said right now the only things it affects are some of my spells and when I take my limiter off my magic sometimes gets a little out of hand, which I've attributed to the fact that it doesn't like being locked away. But when my magical maturity hits is when they say it'll be the most
dangerous. So I have something else to look forward to."

Memchark's humming noise returned. "Well, young Harry, this is rather critical information. I shall take it to some of the experts we have on Haleysio and see if they have any advice for you. For now, let us talk about your focus. You say you have two cores?"

"In a sense. My primary core is the powdered bone of the Prime Thestral, who actually came here from Earth along with the first human settlers. I take it Thestrals are native to Earth's magic?"

"Indeed, though magical creatures viewable only by viewing death are not unique to Earth. Thestrals are the largest of the type and often take charge of the wandering souls of the dead. A Prime Thestral. They often have a mark on their forehead denoting their status." Memchark's eyes darted up to Harry's own forehead, where Harry's long hair hid the lightning bolt scar.

Harry looked up cross eyed at the mark. "Yeah, I was told something like that by my Focus. There is some kind of connection between us that hasn't happened yet to me, I've been told."

"And your second core?"

Harry grinned, tapping the purple star-stone at the end of the focus. "One of the four compressed stars I played with as a child. I named this one," Harry whistled a three part tune, one long, one short, one stuttered. "It means 'Beautiful'. I always liked the color and feel of this star."

Memchark resisted the urge to shift back. There had been the knowledge that Harry had a star incorporated into his Focus, but the actual truth of the matter was not the simple version Memchark had believed, but rather the disastrous version. A compressed star, so much energy, taken at the tipping point between life and death, and compressed into a single point infinitesimally small. Such a power had been used on Germlackrex, the home from which they had fled a civil war.

Germlackrex was now nothing more than a rather large asteroid in orbit. Nothing supporting life remained.

This was hundreds of cycles ago, but the story was passed down and Memchark's people were long lived. It was only two generations ago that Memchark's own family came to Haleysio, the last of the refugees.

"A compressed star..." Memchark said, proud of the clear tone.

Harry nodded. "Yeah. I was drawn to the energy from them and pulled them out of the storage dad had put them into. There were four of them and I would play with them all the time. They helped me create my personal galaxies."

"That is...quite a bit of power in that Focus then. I can understand why there are multiple anchoring threads." Privately Memchark wondered if two anchoring threads were enough.

"Well, there's those, and the woods are Black Kifeern and Smoked Hallow. They twine together until you can't tell them apart except for the color. There are runes, whose meaning I don't know, running a counter spiral to the anchoring threads."

Memchark leaned as close as was deemed safe, using all those eyes to peer at the focus laying in the young, powerful, magical's hands. "Indeed. Well, I have a basic concept for your focus. You will learn much of the necessary Mobile movements when you head to Hogwarts, it will be the Wild side of your Focus I will need to concentrate on. I shall send a Thought to Kyst if I need to speak with you again before I am finished with the book. I have most of what I need. Though the idea of someone with a Focus as powerful as yours is scares me just a little bit." Even knowing the history
that Harry creates in his personal future doesn't negate the fear that Memchark conceals. There are so many other times and places Harry goes, some so far in the future that Memchark can't even imagine them.

But knowing Harry possessed such a Focus, it brought both comfort and uncertainty. So much of the past and the future hangs on the shoulders of such a young, powerful, intelligent, and somewhat naive, young human boy.

Memchark wondered if Harry was up to such a challenge.

~~~This is a Scene Break~~~

"Do you know how long it took me to convince Prysh to let me come with you?" Harry said, a note of mild panic on his voice. "It took me forever! And she made me promise to wear her clothes at the Festival since I wasn't sure I was going to be back in time for my modeling tomorrow and it took Kryill prying her off me to let me leave. And I still have to go see Memchark."

Rose laughed. "The busy life of the young today. If only I had so much to do when I was your age, I probably wouldn't have gotten in so much trouble."

"You'd probably have been driven mental. This is insane! Prysh is insane! Is it something about clothes that makes people insane? I don't understand it."

"And yet you agreed to do all this for a jacket," Rose reminded him.

"My point stands. Clothes make you insane."

They were on a larger version of the transport disc Harry had ridden with Kyst earlier in the week. Pryxt said it was a special version that would allow for quicker travel and more beings, leased specially by the Council for this occasion. At the moment, it held Harry, his dad, Rose, and Pryxt, though there was room for at least two more reasonably medium sized beings to fit.

"So how far away is this site?" Rose asked. "We've been on this disc for at least half an hour."

"It is nearly on the opposite side of the planet, Lady Rose. It sits in the middle of unoccupied territory and is protected by numerous wards," Pryxt replied.

"So, how long are we gonna be on this disc?" Harry asked. "As an estimate. I've been getting better at figuring out how long hours are supposed to be, though modeling does skew my perception. It seems to take forever in there."

Pryxt glanced over at Harry, tails twitching in amusement. "Another hour, young Harry. And it fascinates me that you cannot tell time in the proper manner. At least, not without assistance. Being the son of a Time Lord, even by adoption, one would have thought a good sense of time would be instilled."

"Never need conventional time on the Tardis. Time is what you make of it. Don't need conventional time to work out an experiment, personal units work well there and the Tardis helps keep an eye on certain delicate experiments, and using it to play games where there isn't a star and planet is sort of useless. I mean, you could literally base time off of anything, yet you go for how long it takes to make a rotation, first one full rotation of the planet, then the rotation around the star of your system. It seems so...distant. Why not use something else? Like, how long it takes a particular plant to grow, or base it off the various satellites you have. I know Earth has a natural satellite, and Haleysio has two."

"The planet's rotation is a far more stable way of measuring time than most other ways, though if you
want the most specific way time is measured, it wouldn't be based off of the planet or the sun. The first super accurate clocks were based off of the structure and reaction of atoms, most notably Cesium-133, and it's radiation frequency, which was the most accurate replication of a second in perfect repetition they could produce, and it remained the most accurate way of telling time for quite a while," Pryxtyt said.

Harry raised an eyebrow. "But that's still a replication. They could have chosen a simpler particle and used that radiation frequency as a second. They wanted to match what they already had and make it infallible. Not a bad thing to do, really, especially in societies that value time so much," he said.

Rose rolled her eyes. "Don't get him started on time Pryxtyt. He'll chatter your ear off the rest of the ride on the perplexities and misconceptions about it, and then he'll drag the Doctor in and you'll not get a word in edgewise when they go at it."

Pryxtyt looked between the tiny child and the Time Lord. "I see. I shall refrain then. Doctor, I must ask, what are you looking for at the site? It's been scoured by historians and scientific magic for cycles."

The Doctor, who had been pouring over the notebook again, looked up. "Hmm? Oh, yes. Well, I was hoping a more thorough search with an eye for what might have been left behind by the Cult would be far more revealing than a simple magical search. Also, I bet Harry here will be able to have a go at messing about with things."

"Are you sure letting Harry mess about with anything at such an ancient site is a good idea?" Pryxtyt said, a note of concern in his voice.

The Doctor looked up, brow furrowed. "Why not? If he can figure out something let him at it. He's rather more sensitive to magic than most I've met."

"We've had some of the best magic sensors at that site before to make sure nothing dangerous was left behind and they didn't find anything. What could a child do that they could not?"

The Doctor looked at Harry, eyebrow raised. Harry sighed. "Do you know why I wear this necklace, Pryxtyt?" Harry asked, touching the golden loops resting at his collarbone.

Pryxtyt looked at the necklace closely, then at Harry, before shaking his head. "I am afraid I do not. Is there a special significance to it? It's very pretty," he added.

"It's a limiter. It traps my magic inside my body, not letting me directly interfere with magic outside my skin, though I have been assured my magic will work through my focus without needing to take it off. But I don't wear it because I have too much magic, though apparently some do. I wear it because some not very nice beings decided to alter my nervous system and their signals and tie them into my magic directly. Which means if I touch you, my magic allows my nerves and brain to feel exactly what you're feeling, no matter what it is. No thoughts, I can't mind read with a touch, but I can't touch anyone without feeling every one of their emotions, until they overwhelm my own. I wear this so I can interact without having to fear skin contact."

"Okay, so I can interact without skin contact, but what does that have to do with your magic?" Pryxtyt asked.

Harry fingered his necklace, feeling the intricate series of swirls and loops that let him keep his sanity. Pryxtyt's whole body shuddered, tails twitching in shock and anger. "Who would do such a thing to a child? You said this was done to you," he said.

Harry nodded. "Yes, though their end goal was probably not making me a touch empath, they were interrupted before they could finish whatever they started. And then they weren't able to give an answer after dad was finished with them," Harry looked at his father, whose face was hard.
"They deserved nothing less than what I did to them. I won't regret it," the Doctor said firmly. "Letting themselves be lulled into such a state that they let their ruler kidnap and experiment on a child out of spite."

Rose had heard most of the story from Jack, and wondered if the Doctor truly didn't regret his actions, sentencing an entire planet into oblivion. But the anger of a parent is truly unmatched when their child is hurt and Harry had been well and truly hurt.

"So, a touch empath. While a horrifying thing to be when unrestrained, does it allow any specific magic to occur?" Prryxt asked, trying to move past the thought that someone did this to Harry, kidnapping and changing and creating someone unable to physically stand to touch another living being without immense mental pain.

Harry shrugged. "It's what allows me to communicate with sentient if seemingly inanimate items. Hogwarts for one, and the Tardis and I have a special connection. Being a touch empath both strengthened and changed our bond. I'm sure there will be something left around that site I can interact with. At the very least I can give it a try."

Rose recalled Harry being able to soothe with that talent. A touch empath strong enough can send emotions back through touch as well, a useful if dangerous skill to have.

They were silent for most of the rest of the trip, Prryxt trying to assimilate his knowledge of Harry and this new information of him as a touch empath, Harry contemplating what he could find at the sight, the Doctor going over his translations, and Rose watching the scenery whiz by at rather astonishing speeds.

Knowledge, while important, also changes, and Prryxt wasn't sure he had wanted to know such a young child had had something so horrific done to them.

~~~This is a Scene Change~~~~

"Well, this is Cult architecture. Time Lords were never extraordinarily original when it came to building things, preferring to take bits and pieces of various cultures they observed and transplanting what they liked back on Gallifrey. Large spherical domes were a specialty of Pythia's temples and they lasted into the era of Rassilon and the Looms."

The Doctor, Rose, Harry and Prryxt had arrived at the site. The most notable thing about it was a large, metallic dome that stretched above them for a good fifty meters and nearly double that in width. While parts of it looked as if time and elements had gotten to them, the basic structure remained and looked quite impressive against the greenery and the sky.

Greenery that had taken over much of the area, in fact.

There were some basic outlines indicating where civilization had once made it's mark, but very little remained besides the giant dome that itself was falling to pieces.

Rose bent down to examine the greenery, wondering what kind of plants would grow on a magical planet. She was ready for just about anything to happen and wouldn't have been surprised if she touched the plants only for them to rear up, gain voice boxes, and demand she wash her hands before stroking them.

So when the most the odd, spherical leaf-type planets did was change colors abruptly and flutter around, she felt somewhat disappointed.

"I was expecting more of a reaction," she said, gesturing towards the plants. "I mean, the color
change is cool, I haven't really seen that particular shade of blue before, but it was rather tame."

Prryxt wandered over. "Well, you were touching a FlutterShie Tendril. I'm sure the main body would give you quite the pause for thought, but the tendrils are rather tame in comparison to the core. But you'd have to make quite the journey, tendrils can grow half a territory away from the core. A good three day's walk at human speed." Prryxt motioned towards where the tendril disappeared outside the dome.

Rose blinked. "Well, it's far more impressive now."

Prryxt purred a laugh.

Harry had distanced himself from everyone before slipping off his necklace and heading off to see what sort of magical disturbances he could find. There were bound to be plenty, this was a magical planet, but whether they were useful was a whole different thing.

He started at the edge of the dome's inner circumference, placing his hand on the lifeless wall and starting a circuit of the space.

If he walked all the way around it, he might find something of interest at least.

Maybe.

He walked further and further from the group, wondering what had happened here so long ago with the Time Lord's predecessors, the Cult. He knew little about anything from Gallifrey that wasn't available in the Library or the Tardis herself, and the Library was very very limited. His knowledge of the language was only made up of what his dad taught him and what he could get his hands on. He knew the three main scripts Time Lords used, at various levels of proficiency, but anything substantial about his dad's people, he knew very little.

It was somewhat frustrating.

He had made it almost halfway around the dome when something sparked at his magic, and he felt a tug pulling him outside.

"Um...hey, something's over he..." he tried to call back, hoping the acoustics would carry his voice, but he was cut off before he could finish by a thread of magic winding it's way around his voice and shutting it off.

"Young magical being, we have no wish to disturb the others. We sensed your presence and wished to speak with you." Harry turned wide green eyes towards the space he could clearly hear words, though he couldn't hear anything, really. Not with his ears.

"How can I hear you, but not hear you?" Harry mouthed, wondering if whoever was speaking could read lips.

"You need only project your magic with your desired thoughts, it will do the rest for you."

"Is that why I can hear you without hearing you?" Harry said, doing as asked. With his magic floating freely about him, he fumbled with the concept presented and compromised with using the same method he used to 'talk' with the Tardis.

"Indeed, though your speech is odd. Are you using pictures? You need only use words. Magic ensures our understanding."
"Where are you? I can't see you."

"We are here, all around you. We shall find our forms. It has been many many long eons since we used a physical form, but we understand it is easier for those confined within forms to converse with forms."

Harry felt the magic in the air saturate and condense and waited with curious eyes as he saw colors begin to fill the air and take a vague, blobby appearance. "Hello then. I'm Harry," he said as the four shapes solidified into concrete color blobs. There was a bright yellow one, a deep green one, one whose color hovered between pink and purple, and one who shone a deep red.

"Hello, Harry. We are the Kysh'fryck. We call this place home. We are those who dwell in the Heart of Magic."

Harry blinked. "Heart of Magic? Is that what this place is called?"

"No. That is the name of this world. Heart of Magic. We dwell here, we are those who exist in the Heart of Magic."

"How many of you are there?"

"Do you count how many cells you have in your form? There are as many as need be at any given time. We do not...live in the same sense as you do. We do not have forms that give up the sustenance you call life. We are the beings who dwell in the Heart of Magic, we are not confined to forms unless we wish it."

Harry slowly nodded. "I think I understand. You are pure magic, given thought and will. Beings of pure magic, rather than beings who possess magic, as all others on Heart of Magic are. Do you have a language?"

"No, Harry. We do not have a language as you see it. We require only our magic to communicate with other beings. We can only partially communicate with those who have no magic, as our ability to understand them is limited since we cannot taste how their form has shaped their magic and their thought. We speak to you through magic, so our communication takes the form of thought you are most comfortable with, in this case language. With the animals on Heart of Magic, they think instinctively and our communication takes the same form."

"So how did you communicate with those who built this dome so long ago?"

"They possessed a hint of magic, just a touch, and we were able to communicate with them through that magic, though they knew not how we spoke to them. They were not magically strong and eventually our communication with them grew strained and they could not sustain it any longer, their minds unable to handle the differences. I believe the only one who survived was a child who had been given form on this planet and thus was born with an adequate amount of magic to survive prolonged communication."

Harry was taken aback. This was a very different account from what he had been given by his father. "They believed that you have driven them insane on purpose," he told them.

"It is not unlikely. They were not kind when they arrived and we did not know what they could do. They used strange items to do things and they were unable to connect to Heart of Magic as all those who live on this planet can. We were frightened of them initially and agreed to leave them in peace, but after a time, they began to injure Heart of Magic and we tried to intervene. Our persuasions were gentle at first, then harsher as they did not understand. This had a negative effect on their minds."
"I see. What did you want to talk with me about? And why did you not want me to call my dad and Rose and Pryxt over?"

Harry could see the blobs shift around and merge partially together and change colors. "You are a unique magical being, Harry. We have long wondered who you are, as you have been on Heart of Magic before, and you have spoken with us as if you knew us, but your form was older then, while it is younger now. And you possess so much magic, we were surprised you had a form and were not just pure magic. We did not know a form could contain so much magic."

Harry looked down at his body, then up at the magical beings that were part of Haleysio/Heart of Magic. "I'm a special case," he told them. "I wasn't really supposed to have so much magic, but an incident as a baby and then some ill-intentioned messing around had my magical core overreacting and producing too much magic. I've been told it's bad for a form to have so much magic."

"We can understand this. A form is only meant to hold so much magic, and you are overflowing. One day your form may burst and your magic may be released. We do not know what this would do to your form." They shifted around again, merging and changing colors. "We wish to know why an older form of you has spoken with us before the younger form spoke with us. It is a most unusual phenomena and we don't know what to make of it."

Harry grinned. "I'm the son of a Time Lord and the Tardis. That's all we do, travel through time and space and do things out of order."

"We know of Time Magics, it is how we exist at multiple points, but such magics that allow a form to travel through time to such great extents much be powerful magics."

"It's not magic, not in the same sense as this kind of magic. It's technology, a connection of various materials in a specific way that produces an effect. The Tardis is a living being who feeds off of time energy at rifts in space and time, using that energy to fuel travel into the temporal plane."

"Such strange words, technology and Tardis and rifts. You have a strange life, young Harry."

"That's what's fun about being me."

"Harry, we wish to know more about the forms who wander on Heart of Magic, but they do not know we exist. They have a finite concept of existence and since they have not seen any obvious evidence of us, they believe we...died out...many many eons ago. We have not spoken with many of the forms, and those we have spoken to do not quite understand that we are those who dwell here and not just Heart of Magic speaking to them. It is as if they cannot believe what they cannot understand, which makes little sense to us, as they possess magic as well, and magic at its core is unexplainable."

Harry laughed silently. He wasn't surprised that those who lived on Haleysio now were unaware of the beings who lived alongside them. They were remarkably inventive with the magic they possessed, but they were also tied down to the same theories they had learned and lived with. Only a few every broke those barriers.

He lived in a world most would call impossible anyway. The Tardis wasn't something one could explain, not without spending a lifetime at it.

"Impossibility begets impossibility. I've grown up in a world that doesn't exist on this plane of reality, except for in the form of a large blue box. I've met the rulers of nations and galaxies, and I've met those who make sure those nations and galaxies run smoothly. It isn't magic that allows me to believe in what you say, it's more of a mental acknowledgement that I will never know everything that exists..."
in the universe and even pretending I might one day is silly and pointless. Who wants to close their minds off like that?"

The Kysh'fryck swirled around. "That is indeed a novel mindset for a form who possesses magic."

"Also, it helps that my magic and I are more companions than wielder and tool. Asking for something always works out better than forcing. I'm sure a proper education will manage to confound even me when it comes to forcing spells I don't wish to perform."

"We also find it strange that you learn magic, rather than wield it naturally. None of the magical forms on Heart of Magic can instinctively use their magic, not as we are used to amongst ourselves. The restrictions you have placed on you...is that due to you being a form rather than being magic?"

Harry nodded. "Our magic as a form is restricted to an inner core that we must access in some way to perform any feasible magic. Children are capable of instinctual magic, though it isn't directed, and those who are powerful and smart enough can train themselves to perform magic without a focus. But most magical forms need something to help direct the magic contained within them. It is a limitation."

"That is so strange. We desire something and we are able to achieve it, within reason. We are only granted a limited access to the magic of Heart of Magic, so as not to drain Heart of Magic before the Lines can replenish the supply. We do not want to use personal magics that fuel the consciousness we possess as that would be detrimental to our existence. That is one of the few ways we may fade from existence, to use the magics that contain our being."

"So you can die, in a sense?"

"Yes. But it is not a quick or painless method. Those that have done such a thing have often described the sensations as they faded and their magic dispersed back into the environment. All descriptions were filled with words of agony and despair."

Harry shuddered. Since he was constrained to a form, he did not have the possibility of literally using his consciousness as part of a spell. Such a risk was frightening.

"You are a fascinating species. This is such an amazing discovery. Am I allowed to tell my dad and Rose of this talk?"

"You may tell whomever you wish. There are no restrictions placed upon you. Our existence cannot be threatened by those who live on Heart of Magic, there is nothing they can do so long as they wish to live on Heart of Magic. In fact, their external protections have made Heart of Magic safer for anything with magic, and we are untouchable by almost any real threat. We can observe and live in peace here."

"Where do you live? And how do you live? I mean, if you don't have a form without having to create one, how do you create societies?"

"Young curious one. We have lived on Heart of Magic since a time when magic sprang from the cracks of the surface. We live among you, yet since our existence is purely magical except when we wish it otherwise, our society and existence is often mistaken for extreme concentrations of magic and protected with magic. It is quite astonishing how protective these forms are of magical concentrations."

Harry giggled. He wasn't surprised. "That's the way forms work. We see something that we value and decide we must protect it at all costs."
"Well, we have benefitted from it immensely. We shall release your vocal cords and take our leave. Your companions are searching for you and we do not wish to cause you inconvenience. We shall see you again, Harry. Good Bye."

Harry felt his voice release and grinned, watching the Kyrsh'fryck vanish once again.

"Harry, there you are! I was wondering where you had gotten off to. Come on, there's some interesting writing on a wall!" The Doctor looked at his wayward son with a grin. "They thought it was just natural erosion or something, but it's clearly not. Wait, what's wrong? Did something happen?" The Doctor noticed Harry's quietness and his grin of amusement.

"Not something, so much as someone. Several."

"What? Who? There's been nobody through the wards, Prryxt said. We have the site to ourselves today."

"The Kysh'fryck," Harry said, and watching his dad's mouth drop open in surprise. He rarely got the pleasure, and he was going to enjoy it now.

"You did what?" his dad said, eyes wide.

"I was talking to the Kysh'fryck. The same ones from those documents, truth be told. They were very interested in me. Couldn't figure out why I seemed to be older before I was younger. I've talked to them on this planet before, when I'm older." Harry was enjoying watching his father's astonishment. "They're really rather fascinating beings. They only have a solid form if they wish it, otherwise they don't exist on a plane of reality we can see on."

The Doctor was trying to find the proper words for his astonishment. "But...but...aren't they...dead by this time?" he asked. "I mean, there have been no real sightings of them and nothing of theirs has ever been found on Haleysio."

Harry shrugged. "They are beings of pure magic. They exist on a plane of reality where magic is visible and thus they only interact on this plane when they wish to. I'm sure they can see this plane, they know everything about it, and they are curious about the inhabitants of Halyesio, but they don't feel the need to interfere. They've tried talking to various beings on the planet, but no one they talk to believes that they are independent beings."

"Are they? I mean, if they're part of the magic on Haleysio, then are they truly independent from that magic?"

"They seemed like it to me. They never spoke individually, more as a harmony, but that's probably a quirk of biology. They have consciousness and desires and they communicate with others. They just don't have a form, as they called it. A body, as we see it. They can create one, but they don't need one to exist." Harry smiled. "They're nice too. Gentle. If a little strange."

The Doctor was pacing. "But they drove the Cult into insanity, bare one child. How is that gentle or kind?"

Harry shook his head. "They require magic to communicate, on both sides of the communication. They don't speak, not how we do, creating sounds and projecting them into the air. Rather they speak through a magical connection, allowing their magic to feel how we are most comfortable communicating then using that to let their thoughts speak to us. The Cult didn't have enough magic to have sustained communication with the Kysh'fryck and their insanity was a byproduct of the communication, though they did hint that the Cult was hurting the planet and they needed to
"Interfere."

"How did one child survive that? If an adult couldn't survive the communication, then how could a child?"

"The child was born on this planet, there was enough magic in them that they could withstand the communication."

The Doctor paced faster and faster. This was changing everything about what he thought he knew. This planet was still home to the original inhabitants, they just existed on a plane that wasn't visible to the naked eye. He wondered if there were beings who could see magic, and if they could see the Kysh'fryck.

It would be worth looking into.

"They said I could tell whomever I wanted about them. They didn't particularly mind, they were rather impressed with the protections that the inhabitants of Haleysio put around the planet, and around their own society."

The Doctor turned to look at Harry sharply. "What do you mean?"

"Well, they said that those on Haleysio would put protections on areas of high magical concentration, most of which protects their society. Which they find pleasant."

The Doctor laughed. That was brilliant. "Come on! Let's go see how Pryxxt likes knowing about that! It's brilliant, I say, brilliant." The Doctor held his hand out to Harry, and they ran back towards Pryxxt and Rose, laughing.

"Pryxxt, you'll never believe what I've found!" Harry shouted, coming to a halt, grinning.

"And what is it you have found, young Harry, that is so unbelievable?" Pryxxt had wondered where the young boy had wandered off to, seeing as he had disappeared for a good twenty minutes.

"I found the original inhabitants of Haleysio."

Well, he had expected quite a bit, but that was not among them. "You what? You found their bodies?"

Harry shook his head. "No, no, they're not dead. They can't really die, per say. They can use their consciousness up with magic and fade away, but they can't die. They wanted to talk to me, so they pulled me aside and we had a decent conversation. They're very nice, really. Not crazy at all, which I wasn't expecting from the amount of magic on this planet."

Pryxxt was reeling. He sat back on his haunches, tails twitching, trying to fully process what Harry was saying.

It was hard to believe.

"What you're saying is that the original inhabitants of Haleysio are still here, and that they cannot die, and we cannot see them."

Harry nodded. "Yeah. They've tried talking to some of the other inhabitants, those with a lot of magic specifically, but they've never really believed that they were actually beings and not just Haleysio using magic to talk to them. But really, they don't mind you being here, you don't harm the planet and you actually do a lot of protecting, so they're rather grateful. I don't know what could
possibly hurt them, but the fact that you've gone out of your way to protect them, even if you didn't really know it at the time, does mean they appreciate your efforts." Harry turned to his dad. "So, what was this writing you found?"

Rose laughed. The Doctor and Pryx had given Harry a look that said 'You're interested in writing on a wall when you've just told us you've met with a species no one knew existed on this planet?' and Harry just rolled his eyes. "Harry, I'll show you where it is while they try and get over your shocking revelations."

Harry skipped over to Rose. "You aren't shocked?" he asked. "I mean, I was a bit surprised, but not really. This is the magical planet, the only one. I wouldn't expect the inhabitants to die out without leaving a mark. I don't think they can die out at all, not until Haleysio no longer exists."

Rose shrugged. "I've seen the wonders of the Universe from the Tardis, and been stuck on Earth for over a century after being turned immortal. There's very little I'm unwilling to believe. And you, little magical imp, are more likely than not to run into such unbelievable events. You found a way to get to my universe, didn't you?"

Harry shrugged, grinning.

Rose led Harry over to a section of the Dome that was still relatively intact. "Here it is. They didn't think anything of it, being unable to distinguish it as letters, but the Doctor said it was the same form of writing on the First Documents."

Harry leaned closer, squinting at the scratches. He could tell it was writing, it shared some similarities in basic form with Old High Gallifreyan, but he couldn't read it at all. "I can't read it. It isn't a form of Gallifreyan I know."

"I expected as much. The Doctor had to translate the First Documents to read them easier, and he told us it was the language the Cult used, so it's old."

Harry nodded, touching his fingers to the metallic scratchings.

He wasn't expecting the flood of emotions that followed, and his eyes rolled into the back of his head and he collapsed.

Rose rushed forward, catching him as he fell, and the touch of her hands on his arms made his body jerk as her emotions tangled up with his and the ones from the scratchings.

He pulled himself out of her arms. "Don't...don't touch me. I haven't put on my limiter. I took it off when we got here, and I hadn't put it back on yet. Just...just give me some space."

"Oh god, I'm so sorry," Rose said, realizing what had happened.

"I know, it's alright, just don't touch me yet."

"What happened? Was it magic or something?"

"No, no, just, whoever carved those markings into the wall, they transferred their emotions into them. It must have been in desperation, they were very very scared when they wrote those words. Scared and desperate and hopeless." Harry shuddered. He hadn't had such a visceral response to emotional markings in a while. He usually wore his limiter at all times, so he rarely had to deal with emotion backlash, but the etchings on the wall and Rose's concern and confusion washed through his mind. He had to sort them out.
"You can feel emotions left behind by people thousands of years ago?" Rose asked, awed.

Harry nodded. "If the emotions are strong enough, they linger. The words gave them shape and held on to them. Dad'll probably confirm that the message is something related to desperation or panic. I'm going to go sit over there, I need to sort everything out. It's been a while since something like that happened unexpectedly."

Harry walked a little ways away and sat, touching only the ground, closing his eyes and pulling out his focus.

Rose hoped he would be okay. He had used his abilities on her once before, in the elevator, but it had been done on purpose. Accidental emotional overload, that sounded unpleasant.

It was only a few moments later that the Doctor and Prryxt joined them.

"What happened?" the Doctor asked, gesturing at Harry, who was sitting still and breathing deeply.

"There's emotions in the writing. I wanted to see if Harry knew what was written, since he knows Gallifreyan, but he said he didn't know the script, but he touched it, and he wasn't wearing the necklace. He said there were so many emotions in the writing it overwhelmed him. I'm afraid my attempts to catch him also meant I touched him in the process. It's hard to remember that he can feel your emotions, he always has that necklace on." Rose rubbed her hands on her arms.

The Doctor laid a hand on Rose's cheek. "It's alright. Harry'll be fine. He's probably been more affected by the emotions within the writing than whatever he got from you. I'll check on him in a minute. Did he tell you what emotions he got from the writing?"

Rose nodded, leaning towards the Doctor. "He said there were written in desperation, very afraid and scared and hopeless. He said you would probably figure out that whatever is written there is most likely panicked or desperate."

The Doctor frowned, then leaned in closer to the walls, letting his fingers brush the etchings. "Give me a few minutes. I've gotten better after three days of staring at the Cult's writing, but this handwriting is very messy. I need to decipher it."

Rose joined Prryxt, giving the Doctor some space.

"This is a most unusual trip. I was not expecting so much to be happening here," Prryxt said to Rose. "Harry meeting with the first beings on magic on Haleysio, the finding of writings we had not seen before, Harry's reaction to them. I was thinking this would be no more than a fun wander around an old historical site."

Rose grinned at Prryxt. "You brought the two most troublesome beings in existence here, I wouldn't have expected anything less. You're lucky Jack isn't here or he'd be flirting with you while we do all this."

Prryxt blinked in shock. "But, this Jack, from what records we have, he is human yes? Immortal but human otherwise."

Rose laughed loudly. "Oh, that wouldn't stop him. 51st century human, he flirts with anything that moves. Maybe a few things that don't move too. He's a more opportunity oriented kind of person. Species, gender or lack thereof, sex, physicality, whatever, matters little to him. He's drawn more to whomever's willing." She could see the trouble now, if Jack showed up on Haleysio. He'd get kicked out the Council and possibly banned from returning.
She hoped, at least. Who knew how long Jack was staying with Salazar. If he waited out all of Salazar's life with him, that could be for quite a while.

She wondered if he would be the same when he came back.

She hoped so.

"This Jack sounds very intriguing. While it is true that most species who have sex or mate for pleasure as well as breeding and can do so with most other species, it is not often there is a being who is so openly uncaring of species. There are a few inter-species relationships on Haleysio, such is what happens when there are so many different kinds of beings here, but many are naturally childless, their genetics unable to mix to create offspring, and those that want a child go to the main Child Home for those with no Guardian or Parent located in Harsephis. Those that do have children are usually so closely related genetics wise that they can trace to a common ancestor on the species map."

Rose shrugged. "Jack isn't one for wanting children, though I have been told he has had a number of them."

Prryxt nodded.

"I got it!" the Doctor exclaimed, breaking the silence Rose and Prryxt had lapsed into. "And Harry was right. These were very desperate words, written by someone very very scared and in a lot of pain."

Rose moved in, hovering over the Doctor's shoulder. "What does it say?"

The Doctor looked at Rose, eyes grim. "They have come again. They speak, and our minds burn. They say we are hurting something, hurting the Heart. They are coming. They are hurting us. They are saying we are hurting them. We do not know what we are doing. We do not know what they mean. They are hurting us. They are hurting us. They are hurting us. Help Us. Help Us. My mind is burning, it is burning, it is burning, it is burning."

The Doctor might have spoken in a flat tone, not adding intonation, but Rose could hear the pleas.

"What Harry said was true," Rose breathed. "That does sound desperate."

"He was also right about something else, regarding why the Cult went insane," the Doctor said.

Prryxt tilted his head. "What do you mean? I was under the impression that the original inhabitants did so because they were invaders."

The Doctor shook his head. "Not entirely because of that reason. It seems that the Kysh'fryck require magic on both ends for ease of communication, and while the Cult did have some magic, there wasn't enough for the communication between them to be easy. Just the act of talking to the Kysh'fryck started hurting the minds of the Cult and while some action the Cult took sped the insanity, because they were doing something to the planet, it would have happened eventually. The child who survived did so because they were born on the planet and had enough ambient magic to withstand the communication."

"So you and I, we couldn't talk to the Kysh'fryck without risking our own sanity," Rose said.

The Doctor nodded. "Indeed."

"That is a troubling notion. Though it pales in comparison to the fact that we have never seen them
before, ever. Or at least not knowingly seen them," Prryxt said.

"That's because you all don't want to believe that they're separate from the magic of the planet, those
that have seen them," Harry said. "I finally got all the emotions sorted out and restored back where
they need to be in my mind. That was a mess. So, how desperate was the writing?"

The Doctor looked at his son. Harry had put the golden loops back on, which he was glad for.
"Very. I believe it was one of the last things someone wrote before the Kysh'fryck drove them
insane. They were saying something about the natives saying they were hurting the Heart. Do you
know what that means?"

Harry snapped, slapping his fist into his hand. "Oh, yeah, I forgot to tell you. The Kysh'fryck do
have a name for the planet. They call it Heart of Magic. So literally, whatever the Cult was doing,
was hurting the entire planet. I'm curious, just what was the Cult doing here?"

The Doctor frowned, pulling the large notebook from his rather small pocket (Harry heard Prryxt
gasp in astonishment) and flipped through the pages, reading over them. "I'm not entirely sure. They
were ordered to figure out as much about the planet as they could and why it was so unusual and
why it didn't show up on a scan, even a deep scan. There are all sorts of things they could have done
in the process that would have messed with the energy all around the planet. If they were injuring it,
I'm not surprised that the Kysh'fryck tried to get them to stop. The inability to communicate clearly
would not have helped."

Prryxt padded a bit closer. "Well, we have quite a bit more to tell the Council then I thought we
would. So, I would like to take my leave before the stars come out, the Historians here have
requested we don't camp out on site. And you would be on time for your modeling session
tomorrow, Harry," he said, looking at Harry's shoulder slump.

"Alright. We can go now. I've seen as much as I think we will see here. And Harry's discovery was
quite useful. You'll have to tell me more about it when you can. For now, we can leave. It is nearing
nightfall and the stars will be coming out soon. We might even see them on the disc heading back."

Harry grinned. "That'll be fun. Might make up for having to sit in a window for three hours again
tomorrow. Three hours. Feels like three days," Harry muttered. "Measured time is so weird."

Rose laughed. She would show the Doctor the pictures she had taken of Harry tonight, as the Doctor
still hadn't made it down to Fashion Walk yet.

~~~~This is a Scene Break~~~~

Harry was so glad it was the day of the Festival. His sentence in the Modeling Room was over, and
while he did have to wear the clothes to the Festival itself, he didn't mind that so much, and Prysh
said she would have his jacket ready for him by tomorrow, so there was that! He was looking
forward to that. All that time in a stupid narrow room finally being paid off in an awesome jacket.

The Festival wouldn't be taking place for a while yet. It was to start as this system's star reached it's
apex in the sky and would last until the two moons reached theirs, so they were being called to the
Council during the morning hours. The really early morning hours.

Harry was following his dad, Rose, and Kyst, who had met them outside the Tardis doors that
morning, to the Council Hall, where Prryxt had reported on their findings and the Council had spent
the previous day in discussions about what to do, on top of their duties to the Festival.

It seems they had reached some kind of conclusion about the information and had requested all of
them, including Kyst, though Kyst hadn't been with them at the site, being given leave to remain
behind because Prryxt would be accompanying them.

"Do you know what they've been talking about?" Harry asked Kyst.

"No I do not. I have not been given the privilege of sitting in on Council Meetings. There is little
need for it, given the lack of threat."

Harry sighed. "I was hoping you would know why they want all of us. Guess we'll have to wait."

"Being impatient will only lead to disappointment, Harry," Rose chided.

Harry scowled at her. "If things would happen quicker then I wouldn't need to be so impatient.
Things here have happened so slowly most of the time. It's mind-boggling how people can live like
this!"

"You've done it before, with Arthur and Merlin, and at Hogwarts with Rowena and Helga and them.
What's so different?" Rose asked.

"I was at least doing things there. Something was always happening. I was learning something or
playing with Arthur or running away from Godric or trying not to blow up a potion. Something.
Here, I've sat in a room for three hours, which I swear is not really three hours, it can't be, and that
was so boring I couldn't even think straight!" Harry groaned.

"You're forgetting your focus, and your visit to the Academy, and the historical site," Kyst pointed
out.

Harry sighed, running a hand through his hair. "Yeah, but those things stopped. I spent yesterday
kicking around in Justia trying to figure out what to do until it got too dark for me to see anything
and I headed back."

"Wonder you didn't get lost," the Doctor commented.

Harry stuck his tongue out at his dad.

They passed through the veil leading to the Council Hall to see the entire assembly in attendance.

Harry's eyes went wide. "Wow," he whistled, spinning around.

There were so many beings, so many colors, and shapes and even dimensions, he struggled to take
them all in.

"There are so many different species here," Rose said, awed. "Is this the whole Council?"

"It is indeed, Lady Rose," Bryshl said, deep voice echoing off the walls. "We have convened to
discuss what to do about the information that has been presented to us in recent days."

The Doctor raised an eyebrow. "Really? It's that important? What's so important that it takes the
whole Council to discuss?"

Lady Shorll stepped up. "You not only translated the First Documents and gave us permission to
copy them for our records, you also made the startling discovery that the native inhabitants of
Haleysio are still alive. Something none of us knew about. You have a renowned scholar of the
Academy petitioning us to release to you, Harry, a book for you to study, one I have read over and
am immensely curious about. There are plenty of reasons for the Council to convene."
Harry rolled his eyes, groaning. "The Kysh'fryck actually like you, why are you so concerned? They only interact with those they wish to, and you can't change it. What will more information give you? And I wasn't aware that the process for allowing Memchark to give me a book was for the whole Council to read it," Harry said, frowning.

"Only the Grand Council Members have read it, Harry. We had to make sure all the information contained couldn't be compromising. The book is specialized for you, there is little we could do with the information, other than silently marvel at the kind of focus that needs such a special touch." Pryxt gave Harry a pointed look.

Harry shrugged. It had been expecting some sort of discussion over his odd Focus after the fuss Memchark had made over it, so this rather tame reply was received with little concern. "I'm still concerned as to why you need so much information on the Kysh'fryk. They aren't concerned with you all that much, they like you, and they don't even live on this plane of existence unless they wish to. It's not like you can go to their civilizations, or whatever they have."

"I'm rather shocked that one of those who lives on the Tardis doesn't feel the need to know any more about this fascinating species. Beings of pure magic, who wouldn't want to know more about them?" a rumbling voice that sounded sort of like a storm brewing shouted.

The Doctor turned towards the voice. "Just because we have the ability to travel through time and space and see all these different species doesn't mean we need to. And the Kysh'fryk are peaceful, they appreciate the efforts for protection done by those who live on Haleysio."

"Besides, you can't talk to them without risking your own sanity," Rose muttered.

The Doctor shot her a look.

"They aren't trying to do anything nefarious to Haleysio, they rather enjoy the peaceful existence they have. Why would you want to go disturbing them? Besides, you could communicate with them if you wished to try. You all have enough magic that it wouldn't be a problem," Harry said, eyeing his dad and Rose.

"But none of those who have lived on Haleysio have ever reported meeting them before. This is the first case of it's kind," Joffryn squeaked out.

"It's not," Harry said. "It's just the first time someone's believed the Kysh'fryk were actually a magical being and not just magic from Haleysio speaking to them. That does make a difference."

"What do they look like, Young Harry?" Shorll asked. "We may be able to identify those who have met them before."

Harry shrugged. "Sort of colorful shapes. No distinctive shape or pattern because they don't need a form to exist, that's what they said. They can have a form, because it's easier to communicate to those who have a body, but it's uncomfortable for them to do for long periods of time."

"That is rather imprecise," Bryshl rumbled.

"Sorry, can't give you much more than that. Oh, and they froze my vocal chords, since I didn't need them to communicate with them and they didn't want me to alert anyone nearby. Not sure why, they didn't seem to mind me telling anyone about them, but I guess it was a curiosity thing. They didn't want to be interrupted." Harry laced his fingers behind his head, grinning.

"You have a strange way of reacting to being forcibly silenced and abducted, young magical," a soft voice said. Harry turned to the speaker, a being who sort of fuzzed in his vision and flickered. "I
believe this discovery of yours may help my people understand what it is that we sometimes see at areas of high magic concentrations. We have wondered if we possess a kind of second sight for historical events, seeing strange monoliths and beings floating around that don't interact with anything around them. This might in fact be the plane of the Kysh'fryk. It is worth looking into."

Harry grinned. "Wow, cool! You can see the magical plane?"

"That may be an explanation for what we observe, yes. Though we have a more intrinsic connection with magic in relation to our senses. We exist on two further planes of existence, so interacting with those who only exist on this plane requires utmost concentration. Maybe we are also seeing those who exist on the magical plane as magical echos, impressions left around high magic concentration areas."

"That sounds awesome! I wasn't aware of any being who existed on multiple planes of reality at once. Dad?" Harry turned to the Doctor.

His dad looked at Harry. "It isn't a common phenomena but it is known to happen. I take it the flickering and fuzzed outlines are due to your need to concentrate to remain able to interact on this plane of existence?"

"Indeed. We have been called Flickers by the majority of the others on Haleysio, something that has, rather irritably, grown on us," they said in a resigned tone.

"What's your proper designation then?" Harry asked.

"On this plane of existence, we have had to supply the word from a jumble of others, since our native tongue is spoken in three planes of existence at once and unable to be heard by the majority of those who dwell here. We are called 'Fifth Walkers'. Individual names mean little to us since our own language takes everything into account, though our Focus, being a Wild Type, often comes with a title that we use. I was given 'Weaver of Light'."

Harry grinned, bounding closer to Weaver of Light, eager to talk more, but the Grand Council Members, notably Shorll, interrupted.

"I am aware of how interesting you find all of this, young Harry, but right now we need to go over a few more things. We can discuss the Kysh'fryk at a later time, we have as much pertinent information as possible at the moment. But there is still the book from Memchark that is meant for you."

Harry turned back to the four members of the Grand Council. "Yes. Well, Memchark said that since I wasn't going to be taught at the Academy on Haleysio, I would need some guidance in how to use my Focus. I have a mixed type, and one half of my Focus isn't taught at Hogwarts because they don't know it exists. So Memchark figured a book could at least give me an outline on how to use my Focus. Which I appreciate. Letting those who exist at Hogwarts in my birth timeline figure out that I'm not exactly a resident of their timeline is not my goal."

The Doctor turned to Harry, eyebrows raised. "You plan you go to Hogwarts for something like seven years and you hope to keep the fact that you live in a multi-dimensional, time-travelling home a secret? How good are you at keeping secrets and are you forgetting that Jack is there as well?"

Harry huffed. "Oi, I'm perfectly capable of keeping a secret and Uncle Jack can probably manage it just as well. I'm worried you'll blab something inane to you that might give the whole thing away."

"Now, see here, I'm capable of keeping my mouth shut..." Rose laughed at that. "But you, on the
other hand, don't know when mixing technology and magic is a bad thing. You nearly blew up the
potions rooms at Hogwarts with Salazar and then you went and tried an ancient language of power
with magic and almost killed yourself. So this plan of yours is going to take some serious work."

Rose snorted. "It's arguments like this that's gonna ruin the whole thing. You two can't help but bring
up whatever point is relevant even if it's something better kept a secret. I mean, did you intend to tell
the Council any of that Doctor?" Rose gestured around at their silent and interested audience.

The Doctor twitched a half frown, sighing. "I guess we'll both need to work on some sort of story to
keep all of this covered." He shot a look at his son. "We aren't used to sticking around places for
long periods of time, not more than a few weeks at most, and telling them isn't such an issue because
we probably won't be back to that place and time again."

Harry agreed with a grin. "We can come up with an awesome story!"

"Oi, you two will pass it through me before you decide anything. Who's the one who's lived the
longest in one timeline?" Rose shot a look at the two of them.

"As fascinating as this is, we need to move on to the discussion about your Focus, young Harry. You
are certain you must receive all of your schooling at Hogwarts?" Shorll said, stepping forward.

Harry shrugged. "I mean, most of it I'm sure. You all would be able to tell me more about that
particular subject. I wouldn't be opposed to learning at the Academy, it is a fascinating place. But I
don't know if I could do that and keep the timeline intact, at least not until I've finished whatever it is
I need to do in my birth timeline." Harry looked up at the Council. "I don't suppose you can tell me
what it is and when it happens? That would save a lot of time."

Pryxt laughed. "Nice attempt, but no. We are not allowed to give you any information about your
personal future. But I don't see what a few lessons at the Academy would harm, especially if it is
during a time when the Academy is mostly out of session. A couple short lessons here and there
might be able to supplement the teaching Hogwarts gives."

The Council twittered about this, voices rising and falling as various colored lights signaled a request
to speak.

Harry, Rose, and the Doctor watched as the Council buzzed over this, and Rose turned to the two of
them, concern on her face. "Is this really necessary? I mean, I know this is a rather important moment
for them, Harry is an important figure in their history, and he's rather important to me as well, but this
fuss over his schooling seems too intense. He's not even at an age where he can be schooled."

The Doctor frowned. "I can understand why they are so interested in Harry. I mean, they wouldn't
go to so much trouble if they didn't know so much about him, which is why I'm letting them go on so
long. While they are too careful to let anything important slip, this frenzy about Harry shows me that
they are very very concerned with everything he does. And that concerns me."

The Doctor looked at Harry, the small child who was his son. Green eyes filled with so much
knowledge and curiosity and that he wanted to show the Universe to while also keeping him safe
and making sure he never got hurt. Just the thought of his little Harry coming to harm because of
something that happened to him before the Doctor adopted him was unnerving and made his hearts
beat a bit faster.

"Well, we don't need to worry about it, they don't want me to attend a school of any sort until I'm a
bit older. Something about making sure my magic settled properly or something. I have enough
magic and enough control over it that the usual reasons for the delay until I'm of proper schooling
age isn't applicable, but my magic has so much chaotic energy and they hope that it settles some so I can use spells without having to worry about a power flux. Or at least that's what Memchark told me." Harry grimaced. "All this fuss now is rather silly."

"Your thinking about this fuss from the point of view of someone who still has personal time before schooling starts. They don't know when you might show up again or how old you'll be, so they would rather worry now than later, when you show up and are old enough. Be prepared," Rose said, a wry grin on her face.

Kyst hovered on the fringe of the small group discussing the Council's actions, wondering if all this fuss was really necessary. Harry wasn't exactly someone you could pin down or order around. There was little the Council could do in relation to someone like Harry, the Doctor, and Lady Rose. They lived in a world that was outside of conventional time. What did the Council think they could accomplish with this?

The past five days Kyst had spent with Harry was a journey into the world of a being who didn't view the world with any of the regular viewpoints Kyst knew. There was no blase acceptance of someone who lived on a planet populated by hundreds of different species, or the casual arrogance that your species was better than any other. None of the general indifference to the massive amount of magic that went into everything on Haleysio, the ignorance of the power that held everything together and the uncaring attitude of someone who decided they really didn't need to know more than they remembered from the Academy about magic.

Really, for an entire planet that ran on magic, the lack of interest in new magics by almost everyone on the planet was astonishing. Kyst had been among their numbers before Harry bounded on to the planet with bare feet and a grin, full of questions and more questions and intriguing ideas and thoughts. It did a soul good, Kyst thought, to have such a fresh viewpoint.

"I believe the Council is worried more about how they will ever be able to deal with Harry, when he should show up again in their future. They don't know what to do about the child and they know they can't influence any of his decisions directly, and it concerns them, frightens them," Kyst said in a low voice to the Doctor, Rose and Harry.

The Doctor looked up, surprise on his face. "Really? But it isn't there concern, not really. Harry doesn't pose a threat to them and we're never in one place very long so it shouldn't be something that they need to worry about."

Kyst swirled a bit faster. "That is not their concern. At least the Grand Council is now aware of the amount of power Harry possesses and an idea on what his Focus can do. They are, in a sense, frightened of the potential he presents, a potential they cannot control.

Rose hmm'd, turning this over in her mind. It made sense, really. Harry was an interesting and unique child. The son of a Time Lord and a magical. To have someone so important to your history, able to travel through time, yet forever out of your reach was a frightening prospect.

Harry, it seemed, was not quite sure of what to make of this. "They're scared that I might become too strong or something?" he asked, eyebrow raised.

"In essence, they are worried you will not just become too strong, you know you are magically powerful. They are worried you will become too strong and they will be unable to help direct it. You are important to the history of many magical populations. To know that, and to be able to support you, yet be unable to direct you, is a strange concept they are trying to understand."

Harry snorted. "Time travel can't be a foreign concept to so many species with magic. I mean, sure,
the Tardis is a level above, but you all have to have some sort of time travel magics."

The Doctor narrowed his eyes at Harry. "Why do you say that?"

Harry gave his dad an incredulous look. "You mean, aside from Rowena trying to come up with some sort of time travel thing? Because it is a dream of nearly any sentient species to travel through time. Give that species magic and what do you think they'll do?" Harry gestured at his dad. "Look what the Time Lords did. They harnessed a black hole and spurred the growth of the Tardis's."

Rose gave the Doctor a considering look. "That's not an unfair assessment, Doctor."

"As it so happens, there are ways to travel through time, though they are heavily monitored and restricted. Almost no one is allowed access to them and those that are need special permission from the Relativistic Agency." At Rose's snort and amused smile, Kyst swished in amusement. "Someone had a sense of humor when naming it."

"Time Lord, Lady Rose, Harry, Kyst, if you could return your attentions to the Council, we are about to conclude the meeting. We have come to several agreements." Bryshl's voice startled them out of their talks, and they turned back to the Grand Council members.

"You do know that it is rather impossible to impose any sort of rules on us, right?" Rose said, frank and blunt.

Shorll nodded. "Indeed. It is a problem that we are trying to come to terms with. We know Harry comes to Haleysio in his future, our past, but we do not know if he comes in the future of this planet. It is a prospect we are unsure of how to deal with. We have agreed that the book Memchark has written is probably best we can do at this time to give you the tools to learn about your Focus. We cannot make you return to Haleysio for schooling, we do not have that kind of power. We will put measures into place that will remain for as long as the Council does when it pertains to teaching young Harry, which is the best we can do." Shorll looked down on them. "We must rely on you to return to Haleysio for training if you should need it."

Harry grinned. "I'm sure that might be able to happen, if necessary. But hey, might be hundreds of years from now, really."

"Which is why the guidelines will exist. Now, since it is nearing the time for the Festival, we shall call an end to this session. Most of us have duties in relation to the Festival to see to. I bid you a good day, Harry, Lord Doctor, Lady Rose."

The Council as a whole bid farewell to the three of them in a booming, resounding voices that echoed off the walls.

~~~~~This is a Scene Change~~~~~

The Festival, Harry thought, was huge. There were thousands, tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands, maybe millions, of beings in attendance. They spread out through the space, filling daises raised into the sky, floating under their own power, flitting about, chattering, muttering spells, talking into Crystals. The mass of bodies was insane.

They were in a special area reserved for those of special importance. Most of the Council was there, as was Vanderian and Prysh and their families.

Harry met Prysh's child, Kiarl, among the crowd of bodies and voices. The little one was barely up to Harry's waist and a shimmering gold in color with vibrant silver eyes. Kiarl latched onto Harry with a squeal and babbled nonstop. "I'm not allowed to tell you anything I learned at school today
because we're learning about significant historical figures and you're there but I think it's just awesome! You're awesome! I'm so glad I get to meet you! All of my friends will be so jealous. This is amazing! I get to meet Harry!"

Harry raised an eyebrow at Kryill and Marstiik, knowing them to be the more rational ones. "I'm in your school classes?" he said.

Marstiik's eyes rolled in a full circles as several thin appendages disengaged Kiarl from Harry's waist and pulled the little one a bit closer. "Let's not discuss that, Harry. The main part of the Festival is about to start. The Upper Levels at the Academy always have a magical display as soon as Oreph goes down. This system's star is named Oreph," Marstiik clarified at Harry's confused look.

"Ah, okay, that makes sense."

The Festival up until that point had consisted of interesting plays about some key points of historical events Harry knew nothing about yet found the interesting, though all the jokes went over his head. There had been speeches and grand proclamations, then Vanderian had joined several others on the central stage to set up the protective wards.

The light show from the ward casting had been impressive. Harry wondered how long it would take him to figure out how to do that.

Then the light from Oreph had faded and a group of magicals with their foci out crowded into the central stage.

The magical show began.

It was spectacular. Harry wasn't sure exactly what it was they were doing, most of it looked like illusions or complicated spell work, but it was fascinating. There were some interesting animation works, conjuration, and creation. A small mountain scene sprung from the ground as one of the students conjured it, and another magically projected the image for everyone to see as the conjuration began imitating a magical battle of some sort.

Everyone ooohed and ahhhed.

Harry just wanted to learn how to do all of those spells.

The last student stepped up to the central area of the platform and with a slight gesture, the central section rose up, until the student was a good ten meters above the rest of the students. Harry didn't know to what species they belonged, every student wore some sort of robe that covered them entirely. Only height differences and body size were notable.

The student pulled out a long strip of cloth and began waving it in elegant circles and swirls, and a spiral of tightly controlled magic built up in front of them.

The audience held their breath, waiting, the final performance was something spectacular to behold, Harry was told by someone.

A final swirl and the magic burst, flying outwards, towards everyone in the audience, until it reached the youngest members, the children, and glowed a brilliant red. When the light died, Harry found himself holding up a strange sweet, vibrantly green in color, with the word 'Haleysio' carved into the shell.

"Huh?"
"Oh, wow! It's a Magic Flavor Sphere! I wanted one of these! Oh wow, this is amazing!" Kiarl's voice pierced Harry's stupor.

"It's a what?" he asked.

"A Magic Flavor Sphere. They're quite a popular treat amongst youngsters and, I will admit, amongst the adults. They're charmed to change flavor each layer down you go based on your own taste preferences. So they are always unique to the eater. That was an impressive bit of culinary and directed magic," Kryill said, awed.

Harry looked at the green sphere, then licked it, tentative.

The bite of sharp green apple from Earth, a favorite snack treat of his, filled his senses and he grinned. "This is awesome!"

~~~~This is a Scene Change~~~~

The Festival was winding down.

Haleysio's moons were high in the sky and everyone had begun to depart for their homes. The platforms were slowly emptying and Harry was yawning.

"I think it's time for bed," the Doctor said, eyeing his tired son.

"Yeah. I'm exhausted. The Festival was awesome though. Did you see that last illusion thing by the Grand Council? It was awesome! I actually felt like I was there at the first Naming, surrounded by a crowd with my focus up, helping to chant the spell!" Harry grinned. "I wanna be able to do that!"

"No experimenting."

"But dad!"

"No. Last time you experimented with magic on the Tardis you nearly blew out the power couplings in that sector. Wait until you get to Hogwarts. You can't destabilize anything important there."

Harry sighed.

"You are rather prone to blowing things up, Harry," Rose said, a grin on her face. "I remember your maths mishap."

Harry glared at her.

They left for the Tardis, chatting amiably and laughing. The Council and a few of those who had helped set up the Festival, watched them go.

"That's Harry Potter?" one of the magi said. "But he's so young...I keep expecting him to be ten feet tall with fire coming out of his Focus."

"He's a handful without any of that. He's been here a week and already changing the way we view Haleysio and magic. He's the one who met Haleysio's native magicals. His father translated the First Documents. His mother, the Lady Rose, has been formally adopted into the Kespri. They are a walking whirlwind, those three," Shorll said.

"The Kespri? How would Lady Rose even meet the Kespri?" a voice called out. "Aren't they rather clannish?"
"She ran into a mated pair at Fashion Walk and they took a liking to her. The Grand Council received the notice this morning. It officially makes Lady Rose a citizen of Haleysio."

"I thought someone was assigned to them to keep them out of trouble," Joffryin complained.

"No one accounted for Lady Rose. The Time Lord and Harry were considered more important." Lady Shorll paused. "We should have obviously reevaluated that. A full citizen on Haleysio has a number of rights that, if they planned on staying, might actually cause quite a number of problems."

"Then it's a good thing they aren't staying," Joffryin said, a tone of finality in the words.

"But they do make things interesting."

"Would you like to have them on planet for the next ten cycles until Harry finishes the Academy, Prryxt?" Shorll asked.

Prryxt shuddered at the thought.

~~~~This is a Scene Change~~~~

The Tardis was welcoming and Harry spun around the console, laughing.

He was ready to go to sleep, but he was enjoying the giddy, half asleep feeling the festivities had left him in.

That changed as a rush of energy filled the Tardis then coalesced into a figure slumped on the ground next to the console.

"Uncle Jack?"

"Jack!"

"Hello captain. Welcome back."

Jack lay where he'd landed, not quite acknowledging them. He moved, pushing his body into a sitting position, sagging against the console, head in his hands. His shoulders were shaking and small sobbing sounds were escaping from between his hands.

Harry sat down next to him and put a hand on his shoulder. "Uncle Jack, it's alright to cry," he said, wondering what had happened with the Founders that left his Uncle in such a state. "It helps a little bit."

Jack looked up at Harry, eyes rimmed red. "Harry. Oh, my Harry. Look at you. Look at you. Oh Harry." Jack laid a hand on Harry's cheek, a small smile filling his face. "Oh, I missed you little one." Harry was expecting the hug he was pulled into.

He wrapped his arms around his uncle. "Missed you a bit too, Uncle Jack. You've been gone for a little while."

Jack let out a strangled laugh. "I have, haven't I. I feel like I barely know you anymore. It's been so long. But here you are, just like you said." Jack held Harry a little tighter, then released him.

"Harry, you can talk with Jack more when you wake up. Go get some sleep, he'll still be here," the Doctor said.

Harry looked at Jack. His uncle looked broken, in a way. Something had happened with Salazar. He
had known his uncle wouldn’t return until either Salazar had died or something else horrible had happened. Still, the shattered look on his uncle's face, hiding right behind the smile he put on for Harry, made his heart hurt.

He would have to get the story later. He was so tired.

"Night, Uncle. I'll see you when I get up." Harry grinned.

"You can tell me all about the adventures you've gotten into since I left. Night Harry."

Rose watched Harry go, then looked at Jack.

She pulled him into a hug. "It'll be alright Jack. It'll be alright. It may not seem like it now, but it will be."

Jack’s hands tightened around her, and he buried his face in her shoulder, small sobs shaking his body. "He was killed, Rosie. Some bastard killed him. And Morwen never showed up, still gone. I don’t know where she went. My little girl, she disappeared. Sal and I, we could never find her. Then Sal...God Rosie."

Rose just held on.

The Doctor's hands guided the pair to the chairs on one side of the console and Rose sat down, pulling Jack's head to her chest and carding her fingers through his hair. She used to do this to Kelly whenever she was upset, or her brother when something happened. She remembered her mother doing this for her when she had been a child and sad.

She understood some of how he felt. When she had lost John, she had broken down and raged. To have lost Salazar and their child, she wondered if this was how her brother felt when Kelly had died. She remembered the grief that had swept her.

She looked up at the Doctor.

His face was solemn and he looked like he was trying to figure out what he should do with his hands and mouth.

"Rose, do you want me to fetch anything?" he asked, voice soft.

"Some water would be good. Tea too."

"Alright. I'll be right back." He turned and headed for the kitchen.

"Jack you think you can drink something or do you want to go to bed?" Rose asked, looking down at the man now laying in her lap.

"Can I just...I haven't seen any of you in a long time. Can we just stay here?"

Rose smiled. "That's fine. Though I would recommend a more comfortable couch situation. The console chairs aren't really made for three."

Jack half laughed. "I missed you Rose. It was nice, living at Hogwarts. I helped corral the students and I did physical exercise with them and made sure they all got along, or at least pretended to. It was great. I missed you all, but I knew when I returned it wouldn't be long after you left me for you. And I loved Sal, I truly did. And Morwen was the best thing that could have happened to me." He pushed himself up until he was leaning against Rose's shoulder. "Hogwarts was an amazing place. It
grew so famous that their names were known all over Europe and even reaching into Asia. It was astonishing."

"How long were you there Jack?" Rose asked.

Jack tilted his head. "65 years. Magicals live a lot longer than non magicals, especially for the time. Sal would have lived another thirty years or so naturally."

The Doctor came back holding a tray with a couple cups of water and three cups of tea. He set it down on the console and Rose plucked two of the tea cups off the tray, handing one to Jack.

"Do you want to tell us more about it now, or give it some time?" Rose asked after a few minutes of silence filled with the sound of tea being drunk.

Jack sighed, running his hands through his hair, tugging on the ends. "It doesn't do any good to bottle it all up. I mean, it's been a little over a week for me since Sal died. Morwen vanished years ago. I have no idea where she went. Sal and I could never figure it out. We lost any trace of her somewhere in southern England, not that everyone called it England at the time. Borders were sorta sketchy, really. And in the magical community, well, they didn't really have any particular care for borders or what have you."

The Doctor took a long drink of his tea. "So, who's Morwen?" he asked, figuring Jack was going for the talking option.

Jack grimaced. "I wish we had something a bit stronger for this discussion."

Rose shook her head. "No, no alcohol, not right now. Maybe later, but not when you look like you'll fall apart any moment."

"I guess that's a valid argument." Jack sighed. "Morwen was mine and Sal's daughter. I convinced him at some point that experimentation is rather fun, we were rather drunk, and we had been discussing various magical theories while getting drunk with a young woman at the local bar. She said she'd be more than willing to hook up for some fun and, well, we were all too drunk to be concerned with protective charms. Nine months later, the young woman contacted Sal and I, telling us we were now fathers and that she didn't want anything to do with the little girl she gave birth to. She wasn't in any position to take care of Morwen. She was from a poor family, only a new-blood and trying to work her way up in the world, rather good at charms and illusions. So we took the baby from her and Morwen grew up at Hogwarts with us."

"What happened to her?" Rose asked.

"We don't know," Jack said. "She was 29 when she disappeared. We didn't know if she had run off with someone, there had been rumors that she was seeing a man in the little town that sprung up beside Hogwarts, but we were never able to find her. Any of the tracking charms or location spells or potions all fizzled out to nothing. If there was a body, it would have found her, but nothing. Sal and I, we tried everything we could, all the way until the day he was killed. Morwen, she was our little"
The Doctor stayed silent. Rose had far more experience in this area of loss than he did. Than he ever wanted. He couldn't imagine Harry vanishing like that, no trace left to find. Just, gone, vanished. It made his hearts clench at the idea. Rose, Rose had lost the girl that might as well have been her daughter, her niece, Kelly.

It was gut wrenching to think that they knew a pain he might one day have to feel; Harry was human, though with a longer life. Someday Harry would grow old, frail, feeble, and die, and the Doctor would have to watch it happen, unable to prevent it.

He wondered if he would be able to let his son go that way.

He didn't think he could.

"So, you and Sal raised Morwen in Hogwarts? What did the other founders think about you two showing up with a baby girl one day?" Rose was asking as he tuned back into the conversation.

Jack barked a laugh. "Oh, the confusion on their faces was priceless, especially since it was so obvious Morwen was Sal's biological daughter. No one they had ever met had the same eye color as Sal, yet here was a baby girl with moonstone eyes, yawning and curling into his chest. Rowena wondered why I wasn't upset Sal had slept with someone else. We had to explain what had happened. I think Helga might have invented a new shade of red in her embarrassment." Jack grinned fondly at the memory. "This all happened right in the middle of the school season, so we had kids at Hogwarts as well. They were somewhat confused when Morwen started appearing at the Great Hall for meals. I would have her while Sal was teaching and Sal would take her when it was time for the kids to exercise and on sports days. When she was old enough, after she started walking and talking fluently, she would shadow us around the castle." Jack grinned at the fond memories.

Rose laid a hand on Jack's shoulder. "She sounds amazing. You'll have to tell me more about her. We can trade. I'll tell you about Kelly, you can tell me about Morwen. Our two little girls, taken away from us too early." Jack rested his head against Rose's, eyes closed.

"I'd like that. Then we can go spoil Harry rotten."

Rose laughed, hugging Jack. "Yeah, sounds like a plan."

The Doctor's throat seized up.

~~~~This is a Scene Break~~~~~

Harry woke up to the sounds of people banging around the Tardis, noisy and all wide awake. He wondered if they had gotten any sleep or if they had been up all night talking with Uncle Jack about his time at Hogwarts with Salazar and the Founders.

He was betting on the latter.

Yawning and stretching, he climbed out of bed and padded into the hall, heading towards the console from where most of the noise was emanating.

He barely jerked himself back from running straight into Rose's side as she chased after Uncle Jack, yelling about him giving her phone back and don't he dare look through those photos or so help him.

Harry laughed.
"Hey, you're awake. Good. We were wondering when you'd be up. We wanted to take our leave of Haleysio for now. They're getting a bit too interested in you for my taste and I'd rather go see a planet where no one knows who any of us are." Harry looked at his dad, who had rolled up his shirt sleeves and whose hair was in disarray.

"We're taking off for now? I need to get my jacket from Prysh! I am not letting all those hours in that modeling window go to waste." Harry headed for the door, tugging the clothes he had fallen asleep in last night (Prysh's clothes, in fact, which were really rather comfortable) straight.

Jack stepped in front of him, a smile stretched across his face. "You were a model? And I missed it?" He looked up at Rose. "Please tell me you go pictures at least."

Rose raised an eyebrow. "What kind of person would I be, taking pictures of an unwilling model like Harry here."

"The same Rose I remember," Jack shot back.

She laughed. "Yeah, I got some good pictures. Give me my phone back and I'll show you how to access the memory." She held out her hand, and Jack reluctantly gave her back the phone.

Harry dashed around his uncle and sprinted out the door. He was ready to leave, but he wasn't leaving his jacket behind.

~~~~This is a Scene Change~~~

The planet's sun was just barely over the horizon as Harry dashed over the black bridge leading to Prysh's shop. She would be there this morning, Harry knew, finalizing all the orders and taking care of sending all the packaged orders to the proper delivery points.

He would make it quick. Adventure, and Uncle Jack's story, was waiting for him back home.

The orange streets around the Orange Street Shops were empty for the moment, everyone taking the morning to recover from the events. Harry just rounded the corner to Prysh's shop and skidded through the entrance, hoping the wards would let her know he had arrived.

"Harry! You're here! I was hoping I would see you soon! I've just finished up your jacket, come take a look!" Her voice filtered down from the stairs in the back and Harry grinned.

He'd finally get his jacket!

He took the oddly floating stairs two at a time until he reached Prysh's personal landing. She was hovering around the fabric Harry had given her a little while ago, prodding it with her limbs and turning it around and around, consulting the notes Harry recognized as his as well as her own.

He walked forward with cautious steps, wondering what it would look like. He wished Prysh would move just a bit so he could see what it looked like. She wasn't truly translucent, more a cloudy opaque and Harry really just wanted her to move. He wanted to see his jacket.

At the sound of his footsteps behind her, Prysh turned, and Harry saw the wild light in her eyes. "It's absolutely perfect! I saw some of your ideas for spells on a back page in your notes and designs and that's actually what took me the longest. You really wanted a lot integrated into this coat. But I got a lot of them in there, as many as I could without overpowering the fabric and disintegrating it." She grabbed his arm with a few of her limbs and brought him over to see the jacket where it hung in midair, supported by her magic, Harry suspected. "Tra-la-la-la!" she said, presenting her creation to Harry.
Harry's mouth fell open.

The green fabric he had found was cut and styled in intricate folds and layers, hidden designs worked into the hems, collars, and cuffs that Harry could just about see if he looked closely. It was nearly as long as he was tall, perfect for his needs. He wanted a jacket that swirled around his ankles.

"It's amazing," he breathed, reaching out. "Can I take it?"

Prysh giggled. "Of course! Here, just grab it, the spell will release."

Harry grabbed the jacket's hem and the weight of the material fell into his arms.

It was heavier than he expected. He lifted it up and slid his arms into the sleeves, reveling in the feel of the fabric against his exposed skin.

"This feels amazing. It's like I'm sliding on the cool folds of an uninhabited planet's atmosphere." Harry grinned, feeling the jacket ghost down around his feet. "It's awesome!"

Prysh squealed. "Oh, I love it when my customers love my clothes! It's such a rewarding thing! Do you want to know what spells I was able to put on it?"

Harry nodded. "Yeah. I'll supplement what's missing with some bit of technology I create."

Prysh rolled her eyes in a full circle. "Well, I was able to apply an All-Weather Charm to it, which will keep you at the perfect temperature no matter what the weather is like. I have a Growing Enchantment on it, which was no small feat. I had to work the extra fabric the jacket would need into a secret magical pocket. Since I didn't know if you would ever come back to get it resized in person, I took the initiative to have it grow until you are no longer growing, so it will tie itself into your magical core. I also gave it as strong an impervious charm as I could muster, so it is water and blast proof. There is a minor heat repellent charm, so it won't get singed in fires, but anything too hot will still do some damage."

Harry looked at the coat. He could figure out that bit on his own. "Sounds pretty awesome so far."

"I wasn't able to work in the expanded pockets you wanted, they were interfering with the magical space I included so your jacket would grow with you. I was able to put a anti-theft spell on the pockets, so only you or someone you gave permission to could even reach into your pockets. Permission requires you to have a small sample of their blood, as you will need to provide for the spell to recognize you," Prysh added, and Harry grinned.

"Nice idea. I didn't even think of that."

"It's a specialty of mine," Prysh boasted, sounding smug with herself. "There are also protection charms tied into all the sigils you see on the hems, cuffs, and collar. They're there to protect you from harm, the parts of your body not inside the jacket. The jacket itself is rather well protected. The sigils allow the protections to spread, if necessary, over your entire body."

Harry's grin couldn't get any bigger. "You are amazing Prysh. The detail on this is amazing, and I can't thank you enough. I love it." Harry twirled around, getting a good look at as much of the jacket on his as he could.

"I'm so glad. I know you're probably leaving soon, so I wanted to get it to you as fast as possible."

Harry looked up at her. "We're leaving today. Uncle Jack came back. We wanted to celebrate."
Harry smiled. "I'm awesome like that. Say goodbye to Kiarl for me? I'll miss them. And Marstiik and Kryiil. I'll miss you, Prysh. It was wonderful meeting you."

"Oh, Harry, it was an honor meeting you! I'm so glad I got the opportunity." Prysh pulled Harry in with several appendages, brushing them over his face and body.

Harry tried not to squirm. "Um, Prysh, do you want your clothes back?" he asked, fingering the outfit he was still wearing.

"Oh, no need. I have plenty of them and you earned that as well. I have never had a child's showcase sell so quickly before. It was astonishing!" Prysh let Harry stumble back. "I'm glad I got to make your jacket for you, and it was an honor having you model. Goodbye, Harry. You are wonderful."

Prysh walked Harry down to the entrance way of her store, waving with several limbs as Harry grinned and waved back before dashing back to the Tardis.

He had a jacket to show off.

~~~This is a Scene Break~~~

"You told the Council we were leaving?" Harry asked, seeing as how everyone was waiting for him in the console, at ready positions, as he ran back on board.

"Pryxt was right outside as you dashed your way towards Prysh's shop, and he came to see what the fuss was about. I was able to tell him then. He assured me he would inform the rest of the Council and wished us a fond journey," Rose said. "And that coat is marvelous. Prysh really outdid herself. Do a twirl for me, Harry," she said, spinning a finger in the air.

Harry obliged with a grin. "It's awesome. She was able to put in quite a few magical protections as well. I think she might have snuck in some fabric specific charms for comfort because this feels amazing to wear. And no, you can't try it on," Harry said, looking at Jack who had opened his mouth.

Jack sighed. "You never let me have any fun," he complained, with a hint of laughter in his voice.

Harry stuck his tongue out.

"If we can all behave in a mature manner," the Doctor said, only to get an elbow to the ribs from Rose. "Ow! What was that for?"

"Mature, you? Since when?" she laughed a bit.

The Doctor sighed. "Well, if we can all save the childishness for later then. And Harry, I want to see that jacket as well." He looked down at his son. "It looks awesome!"

Harry grinned and dashed around the console for his spot. "If you're able to get her into a system with some adventure, I'll even let you help me figure out what kind of technology I can put into my jacket," Harry said, gesturing to the Tardis.

The Doctor laughed. "You're on!" and he flipped the switch.

~~~~This is an Ending~~~~
So this arc had to end somewhere and if I explored all I wanted to explore or all that seemed like it was planned, that's because I could have literally spent probably another 50,000 words on this planet. But I spared myself and you all the long chapters and will possibly have some side alongs to fill in some missing gaps here and there.

If anyone is confused as to Jack's bit there, there is a side along that gives a lot of information for that. It's about 2,000 words and gives a brief, outsiders look at Jack's time at Hogwarts. It also clears up confusion.

Also, YES I KNOW WHEN HOGWARTS WILL BE HAPPENING! NaNoWriMo did happen and I did get 50,000 words written and Hogwarts is planned in two chapters (one chapter around my usual length and one on the shorter side of my generally long chapters). So you all can start looking forward to that! The next couple chapters do need some editing (read that as a LOT of editing) because I procrastinated horribly after hitting a slump mid-November and I ended up writing 25,000 words in a single day. And that is a literal figure, not an approximation. So yeah, editing needed.

Thank you all for reading this, I adore you all to tiny bits and send all my love for readers to you from Japan. It may take awhile to receive so if you don't get it immediately, assume international shipping issues.

Kuroi

Also, quick question, who would be apposed to changing to title of the story to Savior, Child of the Tardis, Son of a Mad Man? Let me know with a quick YES or NO in the comments!

Thanks!
Hello! I am back! This is from NaNo and has, hopefully, be edited enough I can safely post it. Though I promise absolutely nothing. Seriously. Most of this was written in a rush, but I did take my time editing it. I hope I caught everything.

This is a bit of an experiment for me, so I’m hoping you all let me know how it turned out for you!

Also, side note, the title has been changed since every reviewer who left a comment voted yes for the title change. So, new title!

So, let’s start!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

~~~This is a Beginning~~~

The Tardis landed with a thump and Harry all but ran towards the doors, jacket swirling around his feet and grin on his face. "Race ya!" he called back to the Doctor, and Harry’s infectious attitude spread to his dad.

The Doctor was out the doors just a few seconds after his son.

"Where are they racing to?" Rose wondered.

Jack huffed a laugh. "Who knows. One of them will pick an arbitrary point and then they’ll fight over who actually won. It is amusing to watch the argument. Care to join me on my meandering stroll after them?" Jack held out his arm.

Rose laughed, taking it. "Let’s go see what the troublemakers are up to."

They walked out the door and followed the sounds of laughter and pounding feet.
Harry was just a few steps ahead of his father, rushing through the colorful flora this planet had to offer. Huge flowers in a bright array of colors that hurt his eyes to look at too long bloomed above his head. Tall, skinny trees with no branches burst into a kaleidoscope of color a hundred meters or more over him, and huge, lumbering beasts in as many bright shades as the flora pounded the ground, not paying any mind to the tiny human and Time Lord rushing past.

He wondered if their mouths, wherever they were, could even reach that far down to the ground.

Their race ended, though, when they were faced with the edge of a cliff, and Harry skidded to a halt, eyes wide at the scene spread out in front of him.

The cliff face was a sheer drop hundreds of meters down, far enough so that the kaleidoscope trees formed an amazing canopy below the edge of the cliff. The giants of the planet didn't break through the canopy at all, and the most Harry could hear were their footsteps.

And some kind of giant flying animal was moving in their direction, reflecting light from the system's star.

"Dad, what planet are we on?" he asked. "Because it is amazing. I've never seen so many colors in the same place before. It's like some giant being got bored with painting carefully and just splattered color all over to make things more interesting."

The Doctor laid a hand on his son's head. "I'm not sure of it's proper name, though the designation I have on the Tardis says this is Kifrexxl-unla-pryshtori. Not sure where the designation comes from, the Tardis finds it all for me, so it could be a future or past name from the dominant species. I came here once, when I was a lot younger, and I loved the amazing array of life and color and the creativity that evolution took on this planet."

They smiled at each other, enjoyment clear on their faces, then turned to watch the flying creature move closer, curious to see what kind of giant flying being developed on such a world.

This planet's atmospheric density was much higher than standard norm and made flying much easier because the air would support more weight. Larger creatures could theoretically fly with a smaller wingspan and heavy frames, and Harry and the Doctor were the curious sort.

It didn't take them long to realize that it wasn't a creature at all but some sort of brightly colored ship, following the general trend set by evolution.
Harry raised an eyebrow at the Doctor. "I thought you said this planet had no high intelligent life-forms," he commented.

The Doctor shrugged. "Probably got a decimal point wrong, ended up a few millennia off the time I was aiming for. Don’t worry, it’ll be interesting! Wouldn’t you love to see what kind of life develops intelligence on this planet?"

"Bet they'll be as brightly colored as the rest of the life here," Harry said blithely.

The Doctor gave him a gentle head rap. Harry glared.

The airship grew ever closer and Harry did in fact see that those on board were as brightly colored as the other creatures and flora he had seen.

They were also carrying long, pointy bits of metal.

That did not bode well for them. Before the Doctor or Harry could turn and make a run for it, the airship grew close enough for a dozen of the beings on board to make a leap for the cliff edge.

They were surrounded.

Harry looked up at his dad. "Why do you always pick the worst planets to go adventuring on?" he asked, gesturing around.

They were a meter taller than the Doctor, with four lower limbs and four upper limbs and four finger like protrusions on each limb. Their face was located between the upper and lower limbs and four eyes were placed at each of the four corners.

Harry wondered if four was an important number on this planet.

"You are trespassing on the sacred land of the High One! You must answer for your crimes!"
Strangers, trespassers!" one of the colorful beings growled out.

The Doctor stepped forward, trying to placate them. "I'm sorry, we had no idea. We've never been here before, not a clue. We'd be more than happy to make our apologies to the High One."

"None but the Highest may touch the sacred land! No special designation is given for ignorance" another said, voice just as growling. "You will be taken for judgement."

Harry and the Doctor were herded onto the airship, which had drawn closer during the confrontation, before they could try a decent counter-argument.

Harry glared at his dad. "Really, you just had to pick a planet whose people have sacred lands. Then you had to land on them."

"Oi, don’t take that tone. don’t forget the time you nearly activated a doomsday device because you tripped over a lever and landed on the button!" the Doctor replied.

"The strangers will cease talking! You are being accused of treason against the High One. Your limbs must be bound." Growling surrounded them and their hands were yanked behind their backs before they could get a word in edgewise.

A thick, rope like substance was wrapped around Harry and the Doctor's hands and they were shoved through a doorway and into a large, empty, room. The door was shut and the sound of a bar dropping echoed between freedom and the two visitors.

"You know, Dad, this is not quite what I meant by 'Adventure'," Harry's wry voice came from behind the Doctor.

"Well, I didn't even know the planet had a civilization on it! Last time I was here, there wasn't a soul around!" the Doctor protested.

Harry groaned. "You know, I wasn't expecting to end up tied up and thrown into a prison for something I didn't even know was wrong, and yet, here I am, locked up in a prison. For, oh, let's see, the seventh time?" he said, sighing.
"Oi, I didn't know this was going to happen!" his dad protested again.

Harry sighed. "Where's Rose and Uncle Jack? They're not here with us, were they even caught? I don't remember them being around when the guards or whatever caught us."

The Doctor sighed. "Hopefully they'll be along shortly, with the means to get us out of here. I don't know if this planet has anything equivalent to pleading your case."

Harry tried to retain a sigh.

~~~With Rose and Jack~~~

They had followed the sounds of crashing and laughter for a while, keeping a decent pace behind the two, one of whom was a child and the other who acted like a child sometimes.

"So, how long until one of them is nearly squashed by one of the giants around here?" Jack asks.

Rose shot him a look. "That's a suckers bet. One of them probably already has been."

Jack laughed.

They heard the laughter and feet pounding stop, so it seemed the impromptu race had come to an end. Rose and Jack walked a bit faster to catch up.

They stopped short when they saw Harry and the Doctor surrounded by tall, multi-colored, many-limbed beings with pointy objects herding the two onto an airship.

Rose sighed and resisted the urge to make any loud noise of frustration while the beings were still on the ground and possibly within earshot. They would be of no help locked up.
Jack rubbed her shoulders. “Seems we’ve managed to escape detection,” he said softly.

"Well, looks like we have to go rescue them again," Rose said, making sure they stayed back and out of site of the creatures that had just captured the Doctor and Harry as they pulled away from the edge of the cliff.

Jack sighed. "Just have to figure out where they're going. Do you even know what planet we're on?"

"Nope, not a clue." Rose looked towards the ship slowly flying away from the cliff edge. "It looks like they're heading towards that mountain though," she said, just making out the form of rocks jutting into the sky through a cloud bank. Not that she could be sure, but it was a landmark of sorts.

She felt a tug at her shirt, much too low to be Jack trying to get attention.

Looking down, brow furrowed, Rose looked at a tiny version of the beings who had taken Harry and the Doctor away. They weren't nearly as brightly colored as the taller, probably adult, beings. "Hello," she said.

"I saw those two other strangers being taken away by the Highest. I know where they're going," they said, voice high pitched.

Rose knelt down. "Really?" She tried to keep the excitement out of her voice. “I'm Rose, and this is Jack. What are you called?"

They worried their upper limbs together. "I'm called Myliya. I'm part of the Ofrsted Fraction. We once lived here, before the High One declared it sacred and moved us away, but there was no where else to go, and we snuck back. It is treason against the High One to step onto Sacred Land, but we had no shelter or food and could not survive outside of this area. The High One doesn't care about what happens to those who live on Sacred Land, they just want it untouched by any Horprish."

Jack frowned. "Horprish, that's what your people are called?"

Myliya nodded. "Yes. There are several factions. The Highest, who serve the High One, are from the Jyfrial Faction. There is also the Mefrish Faction, much further away from here, and the Ofrsted Faction, my people. We are often considered lesser, as we are much smaller than either the Jyrial or
the Mefrish."

Rose blinked. She had thought Myliya a child. "So, you aren’t a child?" she asked. "I only ask because you look so much like those who took our friends away, but you are much smaller."

Myliya twisted around. "No, I am not, though I am not an Elder. I am partway between young and Elder, a Midling." Myliya looked at Rose. "It is the Midlings who are so defiant. The Highest are looking for us, but amongst the growth on the Sacred Lands, we are easily hidden."

Jack grinned. "It's wonderful to see a planet where extraordinary color is actually a camouflage system. Brilliant. You all have an amazing array of colors." Jack looked around.

Myliya hummed. "It is our way. We are given our names after our most defining color pattern." Myliya gestured to the splashes of colors on their frame that didn't look much different from the splashes of color all around them, but it obviously held some significance Rose and Jack could not make out.

"You said you could help us find our friends who were taken by the Highest?" Rose said.

Myliya hummed again. "Yes. I will take you to where my Faction has settled. There are many paths from there to the areas occupied by the Highest. Follow me."

Rose and Jack were led through undergrowth and plants, dodging around the giant footsteps of the huge beings that lived here, and skirting the edge of fantastical chasms.

"This whole planet is like a rainbow decided to make it's home here," Rose said to Jack. "There's color everywhere. Have you seen a non-colorful object yet?"

Jack shook his head. "I think color is far more important here than whatever importance we gave it. It's more similar to a pattern of communication than anything else. Insects, fish, and flora on Earth are prone to using color in the same way, to a certain degree," he replied.

Rose frowned. "Like using bright colors to warn predators you're poisonous, or to camouflage yourself as something else?"
“Yep, exactly. Except I think it’s far more elaborate here. I wouldn’t be surprised to learn that the colors shift around at time. It seems far too deliberate to be on accident.” Jack gestured around where even the simplest thing was a kaleidoscope of color.

Rose looked at Myliya. “Do you think the Horprish change color? I mean, they are rather colorful. They are the dominant species on this planet, yes?”

Jack shrugged. “They’re the most intelligent, yes. And probably, by number alone, the most numerous larger species. The giants around here can’t sustain themselves if there are many millions of them. Can’t compete with the smaller things though. Ants outnumber humans by an enormous amount back on Earth.”

Myliya pushed aside some dangling, hyper-colored vine-like plants and beckoned the chatting duo on. “We are almost there. My Faction is just beyond the Lyrfrici.” One of Myliya's limbs pointed over at a huge, many petaled and larger than a blimp from Rose's early years on Pete's World flower, or what might be a flower.

“Wow,” she breathed.

“The air here’s a lot more dense and filled with whatever element supports their growth, most likely oxygen, nitrogen, or carbon dioxide. It supports the growth of huge plants and animals. Earth had a period like that, where the atmosphere was so rich with oxygen that huge insects dominated the planet. Spiders bigger than a car and centipedes larger than that.”

Rose shuddered. “I am so glad that wasn’t a possibility when I was born,” she muttered back.

“There was a ton more oxygen in the air then than in the time your were born, nearly 50% more. They could grow so large in a large part due to the increased oxygen levels.”

“Is that what's happening here?” she asked.

Jack grinned. “Probably, most likely. This planet's atmosphere is also really dense and helps support more fragile life growing larger. Have you felt it, pushing down on you just a little more?”
Rose nodded, shifting her shoulders and feeling the air. "Yeah, it feels like I'm wearing a really heavy jacket. Not hot, so it's not uncomfortable temperature wise, but it's strange."

"Here, Rose and Jack. We have arrived." Myliya pulled their attention away from the discussion and they pushed aside virulently colored petals and vines until they could see an archway of sorts, dug into the side of a huge hill, almost a mountain.

Rose eyed it, wondered if she and Jack would fit through it, seeing as how Myliya's faction were much smaller than her and Jack.

They needn't have worried.

The hole in the side of the hill/mountain was large enough that Rose could walk in just fine and Jack, with a bit of ducking, was able to do the same. Myliya was so small it wasn't an issue.

The passage continued for a short while before opening up into a large, hollowed out room.

The inside of the mountain, Rose realized, was gone.

"Did you empty the entire inner bit of the mountain?" Rose wondered aloud, eyes huge as she spun to take in the whole thing. See could not, the space was too big to see all of it.

"All but the outermost layer. We have been safe inside here for nearly a full Turn. I was born here."

Rose glanced down, then up to Jack. He shrugged. "Longer years, or a different way of counting them," he said.

"This way, Rose and Jack. The Elders are knowledgeable of all the paths to the Highest's settlements." Myliya beckoned them after and set off for the far side of the mountain.

"Can you believe they emptied an entire mountain's middle?" she whispered to Jack. "It must have taken them ages!"
"Probably did. I'm more shocked they managed it without getting caught. If these Highest are so willing to take strangers for being on Sacred Lands, I don't doubt they would do more to their own people if they were caught."

Rose shuddered. She didn't like the prospect. "Myliya, why were your people banished from this area? I mean, what is Sacred Land?" Rose clarified at Myliya's limb twisting and silence.

"Sacred Land is declared such based on the Old Writings, seen only by the High One. The Old Writings are held in high regard by many, but there is talk that they do not exist and serve as a cover for the High One doing things as they wish, rather than for the good of those who look to them for guidance. Lands that hold many of the Horprish are suddenly declared Sacred and everyone on them must move, despite there not being another place to move entire settlements." Myliya fell silent for a moment. "Young are taken by the Highest from other Factions to be put into service to the Old Writing, and Elders are taken to serve the High One, and none but the Highest closest to the High One and the High One can read the Old Writings. The Orfsted and Jyrial are not given access to those scripts or that tongue."

Rose quirked a frown. "That sounds rather unfair," she said, though it sounded more than unfair.

Myliya twisted to look at Rose. "It is the reason we are here, searching for a way to reclaim our home and declaim the Old Writings. For too long have we been subject to scripts written on a substance that is older than we are, in a tongue none but those in direct service to the High One can read. There is no reason but for subjugation and..."

"Myliya, Midling of my Soul, calm yourself. You speak with such passion that it inflames my soul. All shall be solved, we have almost finished. Now, who are these strangers you are speaking with so ardently, and what, may I ask, are they? They have only two and two, a most unusual number."

Rose and Jack looked towards the voice and found themselves looking at another colorful Horprish, though their colors were a shade muted in comparison to Myliya. Also, they were nearly a foot taller, nearly level with Rose's shoulders.

"Kelysh!" Myliya turned swiftly at the voice. "You are here! I did not know you would return today!"

Rose stepped forward as Myliya’s limbs entangled with Kelysh’s. "Hello, I'm Rose, this is Jack."
Myliya found us as we saw our friends being taken by what Myliya tells us is the Highest. We were told you can help us retrieve them," Rose said.

"Myliya, you were told not to wander! What if you had been seen? I cannot lose another child to them." Myliya's body trembled. "Oh, Midling of my Soul, I did not mean to upset you. I just worry."

"I'm sorry, lysh, I'm sorry," Myliya muttered. "I just wanted to help. I'm small enough to hide in the undergrowth, they could not have seen me. I wanted to see how close the patrol would be to our settlement today. They've been getting closer and closer. They were at the Cliff today."

"So close."

"And they took Rose and Jack's friends. I said we knew how to help get them back," Myliya said.

"Oh, Myliya. That...that may shortly be impossible."

Myliya looked up. "What do you mean? You know all the tunnels and passageways. There was a smaller version of their species with the Highest!"

Kelysh turned to Rose and Jack. "Oh, I am so sorry. I fear your friends...we have set the Retaliation into motion, Myliya. We may not be able to do anything to help."

Myliya made an odd gasping noise. "The Retaliation is so soon? But it has barely been a full quarter Turn since you started it!"

"We have no time, Myliya. They are taking more and more every day. For those who have not hidden their Settlements as we have, the raids by the Highest are taking more and more young with them, and in some cases Midlings are being taken. This must stop," Kelysh said, voice growing hard.

"Um, excuse me, but what is this retaliation exactly, and why will it stop us from retrieving our friends?" Jack asked, stepping into the conversation as concern filled his voice.

Kelysh twisted to make sure all four eyes were on their faces. "Those of us in the Rebellion have
created the Retaliation. It will bring devastation to the High One and to the High One's power, destroying everything in it's way." There was a pause. "With the most potent acids and toxins that can be found, we have created a device of destruction that will only spread."

Myliya was making distressed noises. "You said you would wait for me! I put so much time into the Retaliation and you didn't even let me know when you were setting it up!"

"Myliya, Midling of my Soul, I could not chance you coming with us and possibly being caught. We needed to blend it. The Elders are almost large enough to pass for Midlings of the Highest to the unobservant and only Midlings are allowed freedom to walk in the Capitol. We could not risk bringing any of the Midlings that worked on the Retaliation," Kelysh responded, twisting Myliya's limbs in their own.

Rose was far less concerned with the complaints of what was probably the equivalent of an adolescent. There was some sort of deadly explosion to take place, and the Doctor and Harry would be right at the middle. "I need to get there," she said, fighting to keep the worry out of her voice.

"You are a stranger. We have never seen your kind before, you would be as obvious as a Gorbrk Flower in the Kaleidoscope." Rose looked blank. "The Gorbrk Flower is the only known item in nature to not have a Hue."

"I don’t care, I am not losing him, them, again. Show me the way, Jack and I will be able to get there just fine."

Kelysh twisted to look at Myliya. "You have found the most peculiar beings. No one wants to go to the Capitol, aside from the Highest and those who have grown comfortable in the oppression," Kelysh said this last bit to Rose and Jack.

"But...if you do not get out before the Retaliation, you will be dissolved! The Acid of the Keiyly is so potent it takes less than a drop to burn through a body!"

Jack whistled. "Impressive. That's some pretty potent stuff."

"It is! The Retaliation will be the biggest strike back at the High One in memory!" Myliya's limbs were twisting in excitement.
"We need to save our friends. We can’t leave them there," Rose said. She would have to see what she could do about this Retaliation as well, but she had long ago learned the value of keeping silent rather than spouting off in fury at people who would do such things, especially those who could care less about what you said. Silence, and a plan, tended to work out better than ranting and jail time. She'd given both a shot over the years and while raging at people who would hurt others to make their point felt better, more tended to get done when you shut up and did it.

She looked at Jack. They would talk about it out of earshot of Myliya and Kelysh, and between the two of them they could probably figure something out.

"If you are so insistent, I will show you the path and the way you must travel to reach the High Ones. Your friends will be there, any who tread on Sacred Land and are caught are taken directly to the High One for ruling. Treason is the universal conviction, but your friends are strangers and can probably talk the High One out of Death." Kelysh looked at Rose and Jack. "I will not be going with you. We are going to barricade the entrances behind you. We must also protect ourselves from the Retaliation."

Rose breathed a bit easier. "That's perfect, thank you."

Kelysh twisted to Myliya. "Go and tell the Elders and the Midlings what is going on, make sure the Young are well protected. They are susceptible to the fumes and must stay away from the tunnels." Myliya hung around a bit longer, twisting and trying to stall. "Myliya, go, now. I shall look after your friends, despite their stupid decision to go to the Capitol."

Myliya looked at Rose and Jack with all four eyes. "Be safe, Rose and Jack, and I hope you get your friends back before the Retaliation goes off. Do not be anywhere near the Capitol when it happens. The spread will be fast and impossible to stop."

Rose nodded. "We'll do our best. Thank you for your help Myliya. Stay safe." I hope you learn another way than violence, she said to herself. She hoped Myliya could learn a new way, a way Rose hadn't been able to master. Her skills with a gun, tranq dart or not, and her ability to out-spar nearly every new recruit at Torchwood testified to her need for violence at least some of the time.

~~~~~This is a Scene Change~~~~~

Harry and the Doctor had been shepherded out of the small, windowless room aboard the airship and into what might have been a cell of some sort. It certainly looked like something people weren't supposed to escape from. The door was barricaded much like it had been on the ship, with a heavy
clunk and thud.

There was, however, more room to move about. Which Harry was grateful for. He had disliked the cramped quarters of the previous holding cell.

"So, dad, what kind of adventure are we on now? Wait for Rose and Jack to Save Us?" Harry asked.

The Doctor looked at Harry. "Oi, we can get out of here just fine. I mean, we can surely figure out a way. You're able to get into my pockets. With enough fiddling we could get the Sonic out of there."

Harry glanced at the ties binding them. "You sure your sonic would even work on this stuff? It's natural, nearly wood, and you've not gotten around to fixing that weird bug in your programming. And I've not put mine in my pockets yet, so even if I could get to them I wouldn't find much of use in there."

"Then we'll wait! Can't be that long. Besides, I'm curious. Who's this High One and why is stepping on Sacred Land so bad? It's obvious we're strangers, though they have met aliens before, or they're used to odd looking creatures because we look nothing like them," the Doctor said, nodding his head at the door. "I doubt anything on this planet evolved to resembled anything that looks like either of us superficially. We're not colorful enough."

Harry frowned. "Why did they even bother with us then? We could have just been some strange animal."

"Really? You think a species as smart as these ones seem to be wouldn't know most of the larger species on their own planet? I mean, they've got flight, there's probably only patches of the planet not explored right now. And they might only be one of many species with the ability to create a civilization." The Doctor wandered the large room of a cell. "Though they aren't technologically capable of space travel at the moment, I believe. Still a bit primitive with their tools in general. Maybe. Haven't gotten as close a look as I would like. But definitely not space worthy as a species."

Harry sighed. "Yeah, but they managed to capture a species that is capable of spaceflight, you. And we're possibly being charged with treason. Which doesn't explain why they even bothered with us in the first place." He slid down the wall and tried to find a way to sit that didn't make his wrists twinge.

"That would be due to the Old Writings," a hoarse voice whispered out of the blackness.
The Doctor and Harry turned to look.

A much smaller version of the beings that had captured them was crumpled in a heap at the back wall. A very very small version. Less than half the size, barely coming up to Harry's shoulder.

"Hello, um, are you okay?" Harry asked, walking closer. "Sorry we didn't notice you before. We're usually much better at being observant."

"It is alright. I am not much visible in this light on this background. I am a special Blender, I am only easily visible when I wish to be." There was a ripple of color as they shifted colors to match the wall and floor. Harry squinted to see the outline.

"Wow, that's pretty awesome. I'm Harry."

"I am simply Blender. I wish we had met under better circumstances, Harry. But this cell is for traitors or those to be declared traitors. None who have come here have left with their freedom. I was so unfortunate as to be caught in a Forbidden Area not just a few days ago." Blender's voice faded.

The Doctor frowned. "What were those Old Writings you mentioned? And why were you on Sacred Land if it is so forbidden to be there?"

Blender shifted, limbs moving in awkward ways and Harry winced at the pain that Blender was probably in. "The Old Writings are sacred text that gives the High One power and prophesy. With each new Quarter Turn, a new leaf of the Old Writing is unveiled and such are new laws laid. But the High One is taking advantage of this and with a new Quarter in just a few days, there is talk in the Capitol and amongst the Hoprish that the High One will be declaring more land Sacred and banishing its inhabitants. No one is sure what Sacred Land is used for, only the Highest in service to the High One can even touch such land, but many believe it is being used for purposes so horrible that the High One wants no one to see what is happening."

"But how would these Old Writings relate to them knowing we weren't just strange new animals?" Harry asked.

Blender twisted a little to look at them. "Your beings are described in the oldest of the Old Writings. It is well known that you are space beings and you can come and go as you wish from planets. The
High One has all of those in service making sure they look for beings such as you."

Harry and the Doctor traded looks, eyebrows raised in surprise and concern. Why would such a description exist? Who were the beings that came before those who lived here? Who had left these Old Writings?

"Do the writings say why those who look like us are such a concern?" The Doctor asked, wondering if they had stumbled into another prophecy set up. They seemed to find all too many of them with Harry around.

Blender shifted a bit. "Not exactly. I do not know the contents of the Old Writings personally, I was never allowed near them, but there has been rumor around the capitol that your kind is meant to herald destruction and the end of the High One's reign. But other than that, there is little information. The High One keeps everything very very secret." There was a huff. "It is probably why there is so much discontent."

"Who is the High One? We've heard that title quite a bit but the big fellows haven’t exactly told us what it refers to," Harry said, trying to shift his wrists around to ease the discomfort growing in them.

"The High One is the greatest of the Highest and is trained by the previous High One in the ways of the Old Writings and the traditions that follow them. Only the High One can read the Old Writings, or have them read by highly trusted Elders, and all the passages are as law to the Horprish. Sacred Land, the Next Disaster, the Coming of the Turn, all is in the Old Writings, or so says the High One. But there has been an increase in all declarations and among those not in the Capitol discontent is growing against the High One. Many are being banned from settlements because it is on Sacred Land, but no concessions are made for their resettlement. More and more Young and Elderly are being taken into service to the High One. I was one such, taken from my settlement when I was but a Young, and when I rebelled against my orders, trying to steal the Old Writings, I was harshly punished. I will see my sentence in the next new sun or two."

Harry gulped. It was sounding more and more like something very not good. "Um, dad, any idea what to do?"

The Doctor was deep in thought, trying to recall as much as he could about this planet and its history, but he had only been here once, long long ago. He had no idea if it was in this planet's future or past, but the last time he had been here there had been no sign of intelligent life. "Harry, how much magic can you do without direct access to your focus?" he asked, trying to get a gauge on their current situation.

Harry groaned. "Let me check. Can’t believe I hadn't before."

'Hello? Are you there?'

Our Child, we are always here. Is something wrong?

'Not sure, but I was hoping you could maybe help me out a bit. I'm in a bind, literally. Not sure how to get out, and we're not in the best place to be without hands.'

You find the strangest of places to be, our child. If you need us bad enough to access your internal magics with enough concentration, we will be able to help power one or two instinctive spells and direct them appropriately, but it will come at a cost. We can only help direct so much power without knowledge. If you use too much, you will risk harming your magical pathways.

'Alright, that helps. If I need to, I will risk it.’
Harry looked at his dad. "If I need to, I can power around two strong spells without needing the knowledge of what the spell is, but I will be rather useless after that."

"Alright, we'll save that until we absolutely need it. Don't go trying to unlock doors or undo the ties. We might need your power for other things. For now, let's get a better look at our situation. There's enough light in here to see and it's a rather large space. Take a look around and try to find something to take these ties off." The Doctor looked at Harry. "Don't wander too far. I don't want you to be too far away from me in this place. We don't know when they might come back and I would rather you be close by."

Harry nodded. "Won't go too far. This place doesn't look that big but I'll stay within eyeshot, earshot at worst."

The Doctor watched his son head off, the sight of Harry's tied wrists enough to make his eye twitch in agitation and his hearts beat a bit faster. "Blender, what exactly is the punishment for stepping on Sacred Land, specifically?" he said softly, not wanting Harry to hear.

Blender's eyes focused on the Doctor. "Being on Sacred Land is treason and nearly always either punished by imprisonment or death, depending on your status. You, being strangers and your existence written as a warning in the Old Writings, would probably be sentenced to death," Blender replied in the same soft tone. "Is Harry your Young?"

"Yes, he is. And I would rather not die, either of us." He paused. "A couple of our friends are on planet as well, not far behind us. They probably saw us being taken away. They might be here before I can figure out how to get us out of here safely. You too, Blender," the Doctor added.

"You do not need to take the risk. I have been prepared for this moment since I first decided that the High One was abusing the power given. I have served the Rebellion well."

"There's a Rebellion," the Doctor said, surprise in his voice.

"Yes. All those who are discontent, displaced, and derided formed the Rebellion. They are planning a strike at the heart of the High One's power. It will happen to coincide with my sentencing and will devastate the High One." There was a note of pride in Blender's voice.

"What are you planning?" the Doctor asked. He needed to know if he should get Harry away quicker than he was at the moment. Right now, there wasn't an immediate threat and while the binds on their hands were rather irritating, they weren't debilitating and there wasn't anything wrong with sitting around waiting for Rose and Jack at the moment.

But if Blender and the rest of the Rebellion had decided violence was the answer to their problems, something found far too common a reaction in any intelligent species, he would need to get Harry as far away from here as possible, soon. And find Rose and Jack, though those two could probably survive whatever would happen here, as could he, possibly, though much to his discomfort.

"Why should I tell you? How do I know you and your Young have not been brought in here to inform to the High One?" Blender was suddenly suspicious, making the Doctor blink.
"Well, at this point you've given us more than enough information that if we were, we wouldn't really need the specifics to have done our job. And why would I willingly endanger my Young just to try and make this more convincing?" the Doctor pointed out, nodding his head over towards Harry, who was exploring a section of wall with his face pressed as close as he could manage to the material forming the structure.

Blender twiddled a few limbs. "I do not know the specifics, I was only meant to be the main operator in the Capitol. With my skills I can blend in and hide as anyone I wish, or become anyone I wish, within reason. I can not change my height, but I can disguise my origins. I pointed out the weak points and made sure that those who were in the Capitol to set it up were well disguised."

The Doctor groaned in frustration. "This is not helping. Harry, have you found anything?"

Harry spun on his heels. "I can come back now, yeah? Figured you wanted to be all secretive. And no, I didn't, not really. The walls seem to be made from a seamless material, so no ways out I can find. It's really smooth, but not in a metallic kind of way. more like baby leaf smooth, or an apple's skin."

The Doctor frowned. "Well, that's rather unhelpful. And we might have another problem soon. There's going to be some kind of retaliation against the High One by those who have been affected by what's been going on. No idea what, but it's probably not going to be a peaceful march."

"And we've gone and landed ourselves in jail. Brilliant." Harry rolled his shoulders, frustrated at his inability to move his hands. "Any ideas yet on how to get out?"

"At the moment, not a single one." He was lying of course, but he really didn't want Harry to be pushing for an answer. He needed to figure out what was going on and the best way would be to go to that trial and talk to them.

~~~~This is a Scene Break~~~~

Rose and Jack walked down the narrow, slightly cramped and most certainly damp passageway, only a small, circular globe to light their way. Kelysh had shown them to the passageway and given them a sphere. Inside was a bright light that they were told would burn brightly so long as they kept on the right path. If they turned off, it would dim and then darken. It was a substance that reacted to some sort of chemical in the tunnel's ceiling. Too far from the chemical it would dim.
Rose thought it was a rather ingenious invention.

"So, you think the Doctor and Harry are at the Capitol?" Jack asked, hunched down behind Rose.

"According to Kelysh. They always take those found on Sacred Land to the Capitol for sentencing. We just have to get there before they get sentenced. Who knows what sort of mischief the Doctor and Harry can get up to, and with that Retaliation planned, it would only be a matter of time before they screw up everything and leave nothing but confusion and bewilderment behind them."

"Isn’t that what they always do?" Jack said.

Rose gave him a grin. "Well, they better not do it without us. And they don’t know anything about the explosion of highly deadly poison. The two of us can survive it just fine, a little worse for wear but alive. The Doctor might run through a regeneration and survive, but Harry most certainly wouldn’t make it."

Jack’s grin melted into grim determination. "Let’s go a bit faster then," he said.

Rose laid a hand on his arm, knowing what was running through his mind. "We will not lose him," she said, voice soft but firm. "Remember that. He is not Kelly or Morwen, he is the son of a Time Lord and the Tardis and more resourceful than both of us put together sometimes. He’ll be fine."

Jack’s face faltered a moment, fear spreading across it before he shuttered it in his mind. "We won’t let anything happen to him," he reinforced.

"Of course we won’t, and if we won’t what do you think the Doctor would do?"

Jack shuddered. "Oh, I know what he would do," he said, recalling Olympus. "They wouldn't escape with their lives much less their sanity."

"Then we better get to them before the Highest do something stupid like threaten Harry."

Jack nodded and they hurried forward.

The sphere in Rose's hand glowed steadily, keeping them on the right path. The tunnel wasn't just one tunnel, it was one amidst a maze of crisscrossing connections and side paths, and without the guiding sphere they would have been lost long ago.

As it was, they weren't sure how far they had to go, but they carried on without stopping, exchanging easygoing banter to keep the mood light in the face of what they had learned.

Rose wondered if the Doctor knew how to avoid planets with war and rebellion brewing on them, because she had certainly not seen evidence of such.

She wasn't sure how long they walked for, but Jack informed her that it had been well over three
hours since they had left Kelysh behind.

The tunnel dipped down for a long ways, a set of crude and haphazard, for two leggers, stairs carved into the soft rock. When it leveled out, Rose felt like she had descended Fuji.

Jack was wondering if he needed to exercise a bit more. His body was protesting the strenuous workout and his joints were complaining.

Up ahead, they could see a faint outline of a door as the light from beyond filtered through the minute gaps.

“Almost there Jack, do not collapse on me now,” Rose muttered, keeping her voice soft incase this species’ hearing was good.

“How can you have just done that and not want to collapse?” Jack whispered back, straining for breath.

Rose chuckled. “I spent the better part of half a century running as many young, eager, and energetic things as showed up through their paces. I earned my title.”

Jack thought back to a late night conversation. “You were called the Commander yeah? Sorta grandiose.”

“Torchwood in that Universe wasn’t as underground as the one in this Universe had to be. Extra terrestrials were known and Torchwood was relied upon to deal with threats and peaceful overtures. We negotiated a number of peace treaties with those who stumbled across Earth. So only the best and brightest made it into the program,” Rose said, voice soft, remembering. “The life expectancy for a field agents increased by ten years after I took over Torchwood.”

Jack laid a hand on her shoulder. “You did good Rosie. Now, lets go save those two idiots we love, yeah?”

Rose smiled. “Let’s.”

They pushed the stone slab open and looked around.
There was no one and nothing in sight.

“At least they picked a secluded spot for the exit,” Rose said, shoving the rock back further to wiggle all the way out. “Can you squeeze through?” she asked Jack. “You’re a bit bigger than I am.”

Jack eyed the rock. “That thing has got to move more than that. Kelysh is a lot bigger than I am sideways.”

“They’ve got a few more hands and arms than you do. More leverage. Let’s see if we can get it together. Maybe more hands will do it. Come on, let’s give it a shot.”

Rose and Jack shoved at the stone, inching it bit by bit until Jack could wriggle through the gap. As soon as they weren’t holding the rock back, it slammed back into the hole and Rose wondered if they would be able to go back through it when they had the Doctor and Harry.

She figured she could worry about that later. When they actually had the Doctor and Harry.

“So, where to Jack? We can’t exactly blend in here, we’re missing a few limbs and we aren’t colorful enough.”

Jack looked at her. “Here I thought you were the one with the plan.” Rose gave him a look. “Well, we should probably find civilization first, though what said civilization looks like is beyond me. Stick to shadows. We obviously don’t belong and if kidnapping is their response to foreigners, then it’s probably best we not draw attention to ourselves.”

Rose nodded. “Alright, that works. Pick a direction and head towards it, you reckon? Or try to find some vantage point that lets us see where we are. Get a better look at our surroundings.” Rose squinted. “Everything here is so absurdly colorful I wonder if we could even distinguish something made by intelligence and something created by nature.”

Jack laughed. “Well, it can’t be that far. They wanted to be close enough to set up that bomb and they couldn’t do that if they had to sneak for miles along open hostile territory.”

Rose nodded. “So, find somewhere high,” she started, looking around. “Or, we could follow those small footprints leading to the left,” she finished, having seen the scuff marks in the ground leading
away from the hole. “This is probably not a well traveled area, especially if they haven’t seen those yet.” She pointed.

Jack looked, and blinked. There they were, clearly defined footprints leading to the left. “Well, that’s a bit out in the open,” he said. “I thought they were trying to be discrete.”

“No one must come out here, if they don’t mind leaving the footprints out in the open.”

“Wanna follow them?” Jack asked.

“Better than just standing around. Besides, that bomb is gonna go soon and we need to get to Harry and the Doctor before that happens.”

They took off, trying to stick to the side of the path in the shadows of the huge pants while still following the footprints.

~~~~This is a Scene Break~~~~

“Harry, we’re gonna have to get out of here soon,” the Doctor whispered. “Something big is going to happen soon and it’s probably not going to be good.”

Harry frowned. “Did Blender say that?”

“He implied it, which is more than enough for me right now.”

“You’re not going to stop it?”

“I don’t know if I can. They’ve got an entire rebellion behind it, and it’s already been scheduled for Blender’s execution.”

“I don’t know. But if we can get out of here, we might be able to help. Have you found a way out yet? Any weakness in the walls?”

Harry had taken to circling their cell, examining the walls and floor, wondering if they were inside the trunk of a very very large tree since everything seemed to be made from the same material in one continuous, unbroken piece. There were no seams, joints, or breaks. “Nope. Nothing. And it’s some sort of organic material as well, but I can’t get a good nudge at it with my fingers to really feel it.” Harry shrugged a shoulder, indicating his bound hands.

“Well, we might be relying on whatever good graces we can muster from the High One to let us go,” he said. “Which might be sooner than I thought.” The door they had been tossed through only a number of hours before opened and one of the large, colorful Horprish from before stepped inside.

“Strangers, you are to receive your sentencing. Come.” The voice was deep and echoing in a strange manner, sounding doubled.

“Can we get a please with that?” the Doctor asked. Harry rolled his eyes.

“Come now.”

“Really, is a please too much to ask for? I mean, really.”

“Dad, let’s just get going,” Harry whispered. “Do we need to antagonize them further?”

The Doctor grumped, but got up, shielding Harry as much as he could behind him, then tugging him until Harry moved around front to stand in front of him. “Stay close,” the Doctor whispered.

“Not going anywhere without you dad,” Harry said back. They walked out of the door, finally able to see where they were.

They were up high. Really high. And there weren’t any guardrails.
Harry turned. “So we are in a tree,” he said. “Really high up in a tree.”

The Doctor nodded. “Really big tree. Only one way up or down if you don’t want to take a flying leap off the edge. Hopefully they won’t be bringing us back Here. I do not like the idea of being imprisoned in a tree.”

“Be silent,” one of the Horprish snapped at them.

A smaller airship hovered at the end of a long, rather wide platform and they were guided onto in without a sound. As soon as they were shut into a small room again, the Doctor turned to Harry.

“So, what kind of magic do you think you might be able to pull off should we need it?” he asked, keeping his voice soft.

Harry frowned. “I'm thinking teleportation would be the most useful one, though I only vaguely remember doing that as a child once. We could try and get back to the Tardis, then find Uncle Jack and Rose. But I'm not sure about the distance. It would be the most limiting factor, and trying to bring you along with me would be dangerous as well.”

“If you get the chance and we’re in a dangerous situation, do it. I don’t care if you can’t bring me along, do it. Rose and Jack are probably looking for us, so if you manage to get away and they find me, I’ll be fine.”

“What if they don’t?” Harry whispered back, trying to keep his voice steady.

“I’ll be fine, Harry, you know me. When have I ever let anything stop me from getting back to you? I'd rather you be safe than anything else. But aside from teleportation, what else?”

Harry tipped his head back. “I'm not sure at the moment. Some kind of transfiguration, or an illusionary spell that makes it look like we are not there. Invisibility, a distraction, maybe a memory spell to forget that we even exist.”

“That sounds like a lot more than not sure. That illusion or invisibility would be a good option, so keep those ones. I don’t like messing with memory and minds and if you don’t know what you’re doing you could so some serious damage, so let's save that for a hopefully never situation.” The
Doctor leaned against the wall. “We're going to have to stick this ride out though. Finding out what's going on will be important. And they do not seem inclined to kill us at the moment, so it's alright. And I'd rather know where you are than have you pop off and run right into trouble without me.”

Harry stayed silent. He didn't want to teleport without his dad and he didn't know if he could. He would have to ask his focus if it were possible.

‘Um, quick question.’

Yes, Our child?

‘Is it possible if I needed to teleport could I take my dad with me?’

That would be a very strong spell. How far would you wish to go?

‘I don’t know. Back to the Tardis, ideally.’

We know the Tardis, we could follow the energy signature. But I do not know if you could take your father with you without him having direct, unimpeded skin contact.

‘You mean I would have to take my necklace off?’

Yes. We could not act on an outside body in something as complicated as teleportation without having direct contact with their body, and with you unable to remove us from our holster, direct skin contact is the best way.

‘That sounds...less than ideal.’

It is the only way. Let us know if that is what you wish to perform. You will be unable to perform any other magics for a while afterwards.

‘Would it be the same with an illusion that we are invisible?’

We do not know. We might be able to spread the illusion around you so that anything within that field is not seen.

‘Thank you’

You are always welcome, Our Child.

Harry looked up at his dad. “I've just talked with my focus and the teleportation with you is possible, but you won’t like it.”

The Doctor looked at his son. “What will not I like?”

“Well, since I don’t have direct access to my focus, to teleport you as well, you would have to have
direct contact with my skin, without my limiter on.” Harry shifted. “That's the only way my magic could affect you enough to transport you.”

The Doctor leaned back. “Then that's out. If you need to teleport away, do so.”

Harry shook his head fiercely. “I'm not leaving you behind. I should be able to do that illusion of invisibility one without you needing to touch me. It would be a field of magic around me, and as long as you stay within it, you should fall under the illusion's properties.”

The Doctor hmm'd. “That would be a better option then, if you aren’t going to leave me. Which you will, if you must. I will not let you get hurt, Harry.” the Doctor looked at him hard. “If I tell you to leave, you teleport back to the TARDIS. Don’t argue with me, you can get mad at me later all you want. Just listen to me then.”

Harry sulked.

“Harry, tell me you’ll listen to me if I order you to leave,” the Doctor repeated, staring hard at his son. “Promise me.”

Harry sighed. “Fine, I promise. But don’t tell me to leave if it's for nothing. If I vanish and you're still there...” he trailed off, eyes wide in a plea.

“I will not send you away if I do not absolutely think it's needed. But I will hold you to that promise Harry. If I say leave, you leave.”

Harry nodded as the airship came to a shuddering stop. “Well, let's go meet this High One that Blender didn't like,” Harry said.

“Let's go figure out what all this is about. And why we're in their Old Writings.”

The door opened and the tall Highest made sure they kept the Doctor and Harry between a circle of them at all times as they were marched from the airship to the colorful mix of small plants that made up the ground. It was a well beaten path that they were kept on and within the circle of bodies that escorted them. They couldn’t actually see much of anything around them, aside from snatches of color and the soaring trees that made up the colorful canopy.
The Doctor and Harry were nearly running to keep up with the pace they were being kept at, and running with tied hands was difficult.

Above the heads of their captors, Harry and the Doctor got a glimpse of the structure they were being brought to.

It was huge, and shaped like a flower, almost seeming to bend with the breeze. It was as colorful as the rest of everything on the planet and Harry, at least, was starting to find the colors more annoying than anything else.

Everything and everyone here was colorful, could they not just calm down on the colors?

The flower stretched above them, higher than Harry could accurately measure, and before he could get a better look at it, they were herded inside.

“You will be entering the presence of the High One. You must show proper respect Strangers. Bow your strange heads and offer your measly four limbs to the High One.”

The Doctor raised an eyebrow. “Why exactly must we show respect? I mean, you've taken us here without cause and have tied our hands together. Not exactly respectful behavior.”

“The High One cares not for your suffering. Show respect to the High One, such that you might be granted mercy for trespassing on Sacred Land. Strangers are not trusted and your mercy will not be granted because you are unfamiliar with laws.” There was a tone in the voice that made Harry perk up his ears.

“You're scared of us,” Harry piped up, astonishment crossing his face. “You're scared of us!”

The Doctor blinked, remembering the words Blender had told him then looking at the closest Highest. “You are,” he said softly. “Wow, is not that a kick. Scared of the strangers. Must be some awful prophecy you've got about us.”

“You're scared of us!” The giant Highest stalked out of the room, leaving the two others at
the door to guard them, though they locked it and stood at the entrance, making sure Harry and the Doctor had no feasible way out.

Harry turned to his dad, pulling him over to a far corner so they could speak quietly and hopefully not be overheard. They didn’t know how sharp their hearing was but they would try to keep quiet.

“So, they’re terrified of us,” Harry whispered. “Think that might help our case?”

“Only if they’re not so scared they refuse to listen to anything we have to say. You remember your promise?”

Harry rolled his eyes. “I’m reluctantly not short on memory. If you order me to leave, I will leave. Promise. Though you’ll be getting an earful from me about it as soon as you get back.”

The Doctor nodded. “I can deal with an earful. I can not deal with you dead.”

“If you come back with a new face, it’s gonna be a lecture with me and the Tardis on how to not get yourself into such dire predicaments,” Harry warned.

The Doctor wondered how well his son would take to knowing his life before him and his penchant for always ending up on a planet at the worst possible time. He shuddered mentally. He had done a fair job, for the most part, of keeping Harry out of the more serious dangers that one could encounter in the Universe. They happened across the odd culture with a clash, or stumbled into jail occasionally, but the most dangerous escapade he could think of that Harry had gone on with him, aside from the disastrous trip at Olympus, was the Cryotheen’s planet and the Narionights, and everything there had ended well.

He wondered how long they would have to wait until someone came to get them.

He hoped it wasn’t too long. They could not afford to still be here if the planned attack that Blender had told him about was going to take place so soon.

~~~~This is a Scene Change~~~~
Rose and Jack followed the small, shuffling footprints on the path for a while, seeing no signs of life or civilization.

“What do you think we’re looking for? I mean, in terms of buildings?” Rose asked, keeping her voice soft. “That mountain they hollowed out wasn’t exactly an easy thing to find if you didn’t know what you were looking for.”

“I’m not sure. Maybe something not as colorful? Probably not though, they wouldn’t really have anything not colorful to work with.” Jack looked thoughtful. “I’d just keep an eye on the area and maybe if we spot one of the Horprish it’ll let us know we’re getting close.”

“If they don’t spot us first. We don’t exactly blend in,” Rose said, gesturing to their, by comparison, drab clothing. “We don’t look like a rainbow threw up on us.”

Jack chuckled. “Let’s hope we don’t get seen, or we run into a nice one.”

Rose raised an eyebrow. “You’re awfully optimistic about this.”

“Well, between the two of us, I’m not worried about us dying, so it’s not like we have to panic. Sure, painful, but it’s not permanent.”

“Still would rather not. I like this shirt and blood is really hard to get out of real silk.” She brushed a hand down the soft brown shirt.

Jack whistled. “Wow, silk, that’s fancy. I remember the girl in the cotton UK tee hanging from a barrage balloon. What happened to that?”

“Grew older, found a taste for more eclectic materials, and let me tell you how expensive and rare real silk was by the time the 21st century ended. I would have had to pay a small fortune for my silk clothes if I hadn’t rescued one of the top silk farmers from an alien invasion.” Rose laughed at the memory. “Apparently their scans of Earth pegged the silk worms as the offspring of their most hated enemy and they came to burn the farm down, followed closely by the planet. They weren’t exactly the most accommodating of invaders, but after I rose from the dead a couple times, they labeled me a god and listened to whatever I said.”
Jack laughed. “That’s brilliant. Never got labeled a god, though my eyes don’t glow like yours do. That’s a bit of a side effect of the Bad Wolf, right?”

Rose ran her hands through her hair self-consciously. “Yeah, though they didn’t turn gold until after I died the first time. Freaked my mum right the hell out. Though the whole ‘not aging’ thing had already made her worry about me. I picked a poor time to stop aging. I’m not quite into full adulthood physically, so I was always showing my ID to every bartender and cashier.” Rose looked at Jack. “At least you look old enough to buy alcohol and rent a car.”

Jack winked. “Nothing wrong with aging well.”

“You’re incorrigible. Shh, I think I see them.” Rose pulled Jack down beside her, crouching among the bushes. “Yeah, dead ahead. There are half a dozen moving around. I think we’ve found the outer edges of the city, or capitol, or whatever they call this place.”

Jack looked ahead, seeing the Horprish. “These ones are taller. What did they call them, the Highest? Strange name.”

“It’s the Tardis’s direct translation. Names and titles don’t translate well between languages. Even on Earth there are problems translating titles and names from one language to another. I was in Japan for a few years, exploring, and they have all these honorifics that have no translation at all in English. You just have to get used to using them for the right situation.”

Jack looked at Rose, eyebrow raised. “Well, you certainly boned up on knowledge,” he commented.

“Didn’t have much else to do for a few decades. Now, how are we getting around this area? We do not exactly want to be seen, especially if kidnapping is what they do to trespassers. And we can not blend in,” Rose said.

“Head a bit into the foliage, see if we can sneak around them. They look to be sticking to the cleared areas.”

“Hopefully it’s because they like the light and not because there’s something dangerous and prone to eating anything that walks into it’s territory living around here,” Rose said, glancing around.
Jack grimaced. “That is not a fun way to go.”

“Don’t want to try. Now, let’s go. We need to figure out where the Doctor and Harry have been taken to.”

They slunk back away from the path and took off in the direction the path had been heading. As they got closer and closer to the main areas, they had to swing out further and further to avoid the Horprish, but they also got a good look at the civilization that the beings on this planet had created.

“They look like they’re living in giant flowers!” Rose whispered, her voice as excited as it could be at whisper level. “And all different kinds! I have not seen the same flower more than once!”

Jack nodded. “I wonder if they’re natural or built like that.”

“We could always get closer,” Rose suggested.

“Let’s go get the Doctor and Harry first. I’d rather not tempt fate on a rescue mission.”

“Where do you think they’ll be?” she asked.

“Hopefully somewhere really obvious and with easy back door entrances,” Jack replied.

Rose snorted. “Unlikely.”

“We could always hope, Rose, we could always hope.”

~~~~This is a Scene Break~~~~

“The High One will see you now, Strangers.” The Highest from earlier had returned, distinguished by the bright pattern on their skin.
Harry and the Doctor stood up. “Any chance we could have out hands free?” the Doctor asked. “I mean, these ropes are chaffing my wrists something awful and Harry here is rather young to be restrained.”

“You are convicted of Treason. You are not allowed limb mobility in the presence of the High One while under treason charges.”

“That’s harsh,” the Doctor muttered.

Harry sighed. He had hoped they would be able to get these ropes off soon. It seemed like they would have to wait a bit longer.

They were led out of the room and into the vaulted hallway where the shapes of the petals above them could be seen in the curves and lines of the roof. Harry stared at them, awed at the shapes they were creating with their subtle movement.

He wondered again if this building was a natural flower of some sort hollowed out by the Highest.

The ground was a spongy material under his bare feet, giving under his every step but bouncing back up as soon as his weight was off it. It felt slightly damp but not wet, sort of cool. It was a mix of greens, yellows, and blues in a mottled pattern spreading across the floor. A set of huge double doors in cool purples, blues, and black stood between them and their way forward.

“You shall show respect to the High One. Present your limbs in supplication and remain silent.”

“I’m rubbish at supplication,” the Doctor said, jittering from foot to foot. “Can’t shut up for the life of me. I mean, really, I’ve tried. I even talk to myself, though I’ve got several selves, so I could just be talking to a different self of mine, you know. That could possibly explain the monologues when I’m alone.”

The Highest stared at the Doctor for several long minutes, probably wondering if this stranger was insane, before pulling open the door and pushing the two inside.

The Door slammed shut behind them.
“Guess we’re here on our own then,” the Doctor said.

“Makes it easier for an escape,” Harry whispered back.

The room they were now in was only dimly lit from a small light sphere near the middle of the room. They had no idea if they were alone, if this High One was in the room, or anything else at all. There was something about the light that was making it hard for their eyes to adjust to the darkness.

“Strangers, you have come before me. What is the manner of your being?” a voice boomed from all around them, echoing out of the darkness.

Harry jumped a bit, looking to his dad. His dad looked over, eyes wide.

“What do you mean?” the Doctor asked.

“You are not as we are, Strangers. Name your being.” The voice was grand and huge, filling the room.

“Um, if you mean species, I’m a Time Lord, and this is my son. He’s Human.”

“We have heard of Time Lord. That name is written in your Prophecy. We have not heard of Human. Is this a Young Time Lord?”

“Not exactly. Different species altogether, to be honest. Look the same, superficially, but different species, different planet, different evolution. Insides are all different.” The Doctor shrugged.

“What is a Son, Time Lord?”

“I think you call them Young, though it’s a possessive. He is MY young. Not anyone else’s Young.”
“I do not understand. Do not the Elders of your group raise the Young?”

“It’s a little different. But I thought we were here for something else besides a linguistic debate,” the Doctor said. “Not that I wouldn’t mind just discussing linguistic differences with you for a while longer,” he added hurriedly.

“I am trying to assess your Beings. There are only two Strangers. The prophecy says there would be Four, the Time Lord, the Young, the Wolf, and the Immortal. I see only the Time Lord and the Young. Do you know the Wolf and the Immortal?”

Harry looked at his dad, eyebrow raised in surprise, but he didn’t say anything. Gestures were different here, so facial expressions could not be deduced, but that didn’t mean he could be careless with his words.

“Um...do you mean Wolf as in the animal? Because I know lots of wolves,” the Doctor said, trying to keep the atmosphere light.

“The Wolf is not an animal, Time Lord. The Wolf is a being of Light and Gold and Eternity.”

“Well, I don’t know anyone like that,” the Doctor said. “Does that mean we can go now? We don’t fit your prophecy and we are obviously strangers, we don’t know much about your planet or peoples.”

“It is not said when the Wolf or the Immortal will appear, only that they will come alongside the Time Lord and the Young and they will herald the coming of the End.”

Harry’s mind was racing. Rose and Jack were obviously the Wolf and the Immortal and he knew something was going to happen soon. Blender had hinted at that, his dad had told him. It seemed like they had just shown up at the wrong time, as always. It seemed they managed to find the worst places to stumble into at the worst possible times.

“What is the coming of the end?” he asked, piping up into the darkness.

“The Young has courage to speak before the High One. The coming of the End is the End of the Horprish, the End of everything. The prophecies end, there is nothing written after this prophecy. We
have all been worried, and then the Strangers are seen. We fear the worst. You were on Sacred Land and you are so odd, with only two and two, not four and four. How can you walk with only two and two?” The question was filled with honest curiosity.

The Doctor chuckled. “We could ask the same of how you walk with four and four. We evolved with two and two, so we have no problems walking as we do.”

“It is such a strange evolution. You are also colorless, aside from those decorations you wear over your skin. How can you tell each other apart? Does it not get confusing to have no patterns to distinguish your kin?”

Harry was beginning to suspect that the High One was a very sheltered, innocent being. Maybe very young, the booming voice may have had an air of authority but the questions were tinged with youthful wonder. “Every species in the Universe evolves differently. You have your colors and your four and four. Humans and Time Lords have varying bone structures and small shifts in skin color and eye color,” Harry said.

“I seem. Well, as fascinating as you are, we must still deal with you. The coming of the End is a terrifying prospect and the fact that the Prophecies ended many Turn-parts ago has been kept a secret here. We cannot have you here to destroy the Horprish.”

The Doctor wasn’t liking the turn this was taking. “We can just leave,” he said. “Leave, never come back, you won’t have to worry about us at all, no coming of the End or anything like that. If we could just go back to where we were captured…”

There was a gasp. “Let Strangers step on Sacred Land?” the voice said, a note of incredulity in the tone. “That is...that is forbidden. No. No. We must dispose of you. We have an execution planned as soon as the Light is at it’s Highest tomorrow. It will not be difficult to add another two to that number. And if the Wolf and the Immortal are found, they may join you.”

Harry shuddered at the finality of the voice. “You would kill us because your prophecies end with our arrival?” he said, frustration in his voice.

“If we can destroy the bringers of the End, maybe our prophecies will be revealed to us on the Sacred Lands. We cannot let the possibility go by. You will stay in this building, for ease of transportation. All executions take place on the grounds of this building.” A tone of dismissal followed. “It was intriguing to learn about the strange beings who live beyond the sky.”
Harry felt the wind from the door behind them being opened and one of the guards from before, maybe the same one, he wasn’t sure, yanked them up by the shoulder and spun them around, marching them beyond the confines of the darkened room and across the extravagantly patterned floor and towards a small door only big enough for one of the Highest to enter at a time.

The Doctor was trying to figure out a way to get out of this. Knowing that the execution tomorrow was now three people strong, and at the exact time of the attack by those people Blender worked with, wasn’t going to make the claims that they weren’t these End bringers any stronger.

And he knew Harry had to get out of here. One spell, he had said, one strong spell, and he could make sure Harry was back in the Tardis, too tired to do anything, away from the danger that was awaiting them.

The Doctor wished his hands were free. He could have done so much more if his hands were free, but the knots were intricate and he had no wiggle room to try and twist around to get to the knots. They were very very good knot tiers, and he had no doubt that if he managed to get the ropes off without escaping, it wouldn’t go well for either of them.

The guard shoved them through the rounded opening before ensuring the wooden slab was lowered into place on the opposite side, effectively trapping them inside the small, shockingly bland room.

Harry blinked. “It’s not colorful,” he noted in an undertone. “I mean, sure, it’s got color, but it doesn’t look like a rainbow threw up in here. Is this their idea of prison?”

The Doctor sighed. “That’s not the most important thing right now. Harry, if we can’t figure out a way out of this before this execution, you leave. You teleport away back to the Tardis. If I say ‘Teleport!’ you get out of here. Do not argue, do not fuss, just do it. I will figure a way out in the confusion, we’ll make sure to use your ability to the best effect, but I do not want to chance you even possibly maybe facing execution.”

Harry looked at his dad with wide eyes. “Dad…” he breathed. He saw the look shot his direction, then conceded. “Alright. I already promised, but if anything goes wrong, I will get out of here. Swear.”

And he could not go back on that promise, he knew. He would have to figure out another way out.
He slumped against the wall, another smooth if strangely alive textured wall. He pressed his ear against it, wondering if he could hear anything.

Nothing.

More nothing.

Wait...was that the wind? That was! It was the sound of the wind rushing through the giant plants, rustling the leaves. They had to be close to the forest if he could hear the rustle of plants.

“Dad, I think we’re right on the outside of this building. I can hear the plant’s being moved by the wind!” Harry said, voice low but excited.

The Doctor hurried over, pressing his ear against the wall. “I can hear it. We’re right on the outside wall of this place.” He looked at Harry. “Think you can manage to get a hole in this wall? Not a huge one, mind, we don’t want them following us, but if we’re that close to the forest, which if I recall was actually really close to the building, we can get out and into the underbrush and away before they realize we’re gone. But you have to be quiet about it,” he reiterated.

Harry nodded, understanding. He closed his eyes.

‘I have a questions. Can we make a door, or a hole, or something, in the wall right behind me? Only about the size of me sitting down, really small.

Our Child, that request is a strange one. Have you found a way out of your predicament?

‘Maybe. We’re really close to the forest, I think if we get out of here, we can get away before they notice we’re gone. Also, our hands, can I get rid of the rope?’

The door is easy, though it will strain you. We believe we may be able to weaken the material on your wrists, make it something not as strong.

‘That would work. What do I need to do?’

Imagine, Our Child. Imagine a door, the size you want it, the color, the type. Think hard about that door. We will use that image to direct the magic. It will be much more draining than a spell to do the same thing, but you have enough magic that it will not be detrimental to your health.

‘Thanks...I think.’
Harry thought about the door. He wanted it to be the same color as the wall, so it would blend in better, and small. He thought about how tall his dad was, and imagined it half his size and just a bit wider than his body.

The Doctor watched his son’s eyes close, and a few moments later a shimmer covered his entire body.

“Fear not, Father of Our Child. We shall fulfill Our Child’s request. Do not worry,” a twining, doubled voice emerged from his son’s mouth, not Harry’s voice.

The Doctor blinked. “Are you...Harry’s focus?” he asked, surprised.

“Indeed we are. We can speak this way as we are accessing his magic directly through his core, rather than allowing it to flow through us. We are using his imagination and his magic to direct his need. Do not let Our Child come to harm, Father of our Child.”

“I have not intention of letting him come to any harm. I have express orders for him to teleport away if we run into any sort of trouble that we can not escape.”

“Thank you, Father of Our Child. I believe the door is almost done, and in a short while, when his magic has settled, he might be able to do something about the ties binding his wrists.”

The Doctor blinked again, feeling like he did that all too much in relation to his son. “Well, that would certainly be useful.”

The shimmer around Harry vanished and the door behind Harry’s back solidified. Harry opened his eyes, his bound hands feeling the door’s outline.

“Guessed it worked,” he said, joy and exhaustion clear in his voice.

“Did you know your focus could use your voice to talk if they access enough of your magic,” the Doctor said.
“Um, nope. Nope I didn’t. That’s...that’s a bit disconcerting. I will have to talk to them later, see what’s up with that. Right now though, we have a way out. My hands are still tied though,” he said, frustrated.

“Oh, yeah, your focus said in a little while, after your magic settled, you could do something about that. I believe they are trying to make sure you have enough magic to teleport if you need to. They want you safe.”

Harry heaved a sigh. “Well, they are rather overprotective. Just what I need, more overprotective beings in my life.” He pushed back against the door, feeling it give. “It’s open, and it leads outside. I can feel the wind. It’s strong,” Harry warned.

“Anyone out there?” the Doctor asked.

“I don’t see anyone in the immediate vicinity. It’s dark out, so it’s hard to tell, but the forest is literally a meter away. Maybe not the best place for a prison cell,” Harry said.

“I don’t think they anticipated anyone being able to magic their way out of the cell. The walls are rather thick,” the Doctor commented, squeezing out. “A good ten centimeters thick.”

Harry grinned. “Good thing you didn’t send me away before, huh?”

“Don’t get all uppity over it. I will send you back if I need to,” the Doctor warned.

“Well, let’s get into cover before someone comes to investigate the cell. We don’t want to be anywhere near here when they find out we’re missing.”

The Doctor nodded, struggling to stand up without using his hands. They took off at a decent pace into the huge plants and started heading downhill, away from the huge flower like building the High One lived in.

Now they needed to find Rose and Jack and either get out of the city before the event happening the next day or stop it somehow.
Neither prospect seemed like an easy one.

~~~~~This is a Scene Break~~~~~

Rose and Jack had found civilization as darkness fell. More and more of the Horprish were moving about, skittering here and there and generally being very busy. They had to stick to the path in the plants and not get too close.

It was a good thing that the Horprish didn’t seem keen to move too close to the forest either. It made moving closer and closer to the heart of the busy area easier.

“Where do you think they’re keeping Harry and the Doctor?” Rose asked in an undertone.

“Either in a prison cell or really close to whoever the head honcho around here is. Though I wouldn’t know where that is either.” Jack groaned in frustration. “Everything here is so foreign. I mean, I haven’t been on a planet that was so far behind technologically in a long time. Only rudimentary air travel, basic technological items, more nature based things. Early societies have a very different social system than those that have at least been to space once, or were trying to get there. These people are centuries away from trying. I can’t find anything similar in their behavior patterns, how things are set up, to what I know about civilizations.”

Rose smiled. “And here comes my experience with small tribes on Earth. The leaders of those tribes were almost always in the center, and often higher than everyone else. The highest hill in the area, the highest tree, something to put them higher than their subordinates. So uphill is probably a good way to go.”

“In that case they could be up a tree,” Jack argued back.

“They don’t look like they live in these giant trees,” Rose reasoned. “Unlikely Harry and the Doctor are in a tree.”

“But you can’t be sure!” Jack whispered.

“Well, we don’t have all the time in the world to argue about it. Let's go find the highest point in the area and check there. We can’t go climbing every tree just to see if Harry and the Doctor are there,” Rose hissed back. “And wandering around here is not going to get us any closer to finding them.”
Jack raised his hands in surrender. “Alright, alright. Let's go, we might as well try.”

Rose nodded in satisfaction, heading off towards the sloped section of the ground. Jack followed, wondering if they would have to climb what appeared to be a mountain in the dark with little to no path to follow.

It didn't seem like an exciting prospect, but he was damned if he didn't try to get Harry and the Doctor. He couldn't lose more people.

Rose was confident in her steps and Jack drew strength from her. He was centuries older than her and he had lost so many people in his life that it made his heart hurt, but Rose's determination gave him strength. And right now he needed it.

They climbed in silence, thankful for the lights the Horprish strung around just beyond the forest's edge so they could follow it. Too dim and they were leaving the path they needed to follow, too bright and they were too close.

The noise grew softer and softer as the stars above them twinkled, night falling fully and the Horprish following the tradition of most day-dwelling species and retreating inside. The glow lamp given to them by Kelysh was a soft glow, indicating that there was some of the same chemical around here that the substance inside reacted to. It illuminated immediate dangers in the dark and they stuck close together so they wouldn’t trip over tree roots or fall into gaping holes.

Rose was worried. She didn't know if they were alive, though she had to believe they were. She didn't know where they were, though she had to believe they were either safe or already escaped. As the darkness fell and silence began to fall, she felt fear settle more firmly into her stomach.

She could not lose them now. She could not lose them at all.

So when she heard rustling from up ahead, she was ready to beat the crap out of whatever, whoever, came through the leaves then demand to be taken to Harry and the Doctor.

“Jack, stay back,” she whispered.

“What are you going to do?” he hissed back.

“I'm going to see how long it takes for me to disable one of them and get answers on where Harry and the Doctor are,” she replied.

Jack’s eyes went wide. “Are you sure?” he said, disbelief in his voice. “Have you seen the giants that took them? They’re huge!”
“I've gone against a few things bigger than them. They underestimate smaller opponents.”

“At least let me help you.”

“If it looks like I need it, go ahead, but don’t just jump in. You'll throw my rhythm off if you do that.”

Jack nodded.

The rustling was louder, almost upon them, and Rose settled back into a fighting stance, ready.

So when a panting, bedraggled, mud-splattered, and slightly scratched Harry came into view, followed closely by the Doctor, she was taken aback.

“Harry?” she whispered.

Harry whipped his head up, and a smile spread across his face. “Oi, dad, we found them!” he said, joy in his voice.

“Found who Harry?” the Doctor said, leaning against a tree, hearts racing.

“Rose and Uncle Jack!” he replied.

The Doctor’s eyes shot open, searching. “Rose,” he breathed. “Jack.”

“Well, hello to you too. And why are your hands behind your back? Feel like trying out a new running style?” Jack asked, a grin on his face.

Harry shook his head. “That would be a bit detrimental to running, don’t you think? No, they tied our hands up when they caught us. Tight too. I was actually going to try and use my magic to get them off when we stopped again, now actually, but since you two are here, you wanna give us a hand with them? I don’t think I can feel my wrists anymore, though my fingers are all tingly.”

Rose beckoned him over. “I have a knife on me, this shouldn't be a problem. Hold still,” she warned. “I don’t want to cut you, especially near your wrists.”

Harry nodded.

Jack went over to the Doctor and pulled out a small pocket knife, holding it up as an invitation. The Doctor nodded.

There was silence as the two with knives sawed through the tough ropes binding the other two's bound hands.

Harry was freed first, and he felt blood rush to his hands. They throbbed. “Oh, ouch,” he whispered.

“Did I nick you?” Rose asked, worry in her voice.

“No, I just, those ties have been on for a long time. I forgot what it was like to have a decent blood flow to my hands. They're just throbbing a bit.” Harry rubbed his hands together. “At least I didn’t have to try and magic them off.”

Rose chuckled.

“Oh, that's better,” came the Doctor's voice and Jack got the last of the ropes off. “Oh, ouch. Yeah, you're right Harry. Getting proper circulation back is a bit painful.” The Doctor walked over. “So
you found your way over here. Want to fill us in? We'll trade stories.”

Rose nodded. “We also found out about an attack that's going down tomorrow. And it's going to be a bad one.”

“We've heard a bit about it too. Nothing specific about what the attack entails. We know when it's happening though.”

“Well, it's not going to be pretty,” Jack said. “As in, acid explosion not pretty.”

“Ouch,” Harry said with feeling.

“I think that's a bit of an understatement. According to the Horprish we met, just a single drop of this acid can eat through a person's body.”

“That's a bit worse than acid Rose,” the Doctor said.

“I don’t know what it is exactly, it's from a plant or animal on the planet though. The oppressed on this planet have been putting this into motion for years, or many of our years. I still am not sure how they count years here, or time at all. But it's going down soon. And it'll devastate the High One and the Highest,” Rose said.

“The when is tomorrow, at the execution of a traitor named Blender. Actually it was also supposed to be our execution times as well but we managed to get out of the cell without them realizing we were gone,” the Doctor said, nodding towards Harry.

“Execution? Why were you going to be executed?” Rose asked, horror in her voice.

“Apparently the coming of the Four Strangers heralds the coming of the End, and we were on Sacred Land. They're prophecies end with our coming, and they are worried about what we might signify,” Harry said. “It seems we stumbled into a bit of a mess.”

“They called us the Time Lord, the Young, the Wolf, and the Immortal,” the Doctor said, voice bone dry.


“A little too specific for my liking. I want to know where those prophecies come from. It's too strangely predictive about our arrival for my liking,” the Doctor said. “And we’re not exactly bringing and end of any sort, but the end is happening when we came. That explosion will leave a power vacuum behind, having eliminated the High One and many of the Highest. These oppressed, do they have any plans in place for after this goes down?” the Doctor asked.

Rose shrugged. “We didn't exactly get the tour. We needed to get here as fast as possible. We were lucky to run into Mylyia when we did. There's two other factions of Horprish on this planet that we know of, and the Highest, the ones who took you, are physically the biggest. They have the largest impact on the lives of the other two factions and take children and elders from them to work for the Highest. I think the only physical difference between the different factions is size, with Mylyia's people being the smallest and the Highest being the largest. But that's out of the factions we know about. We know nothing about this planet as a whole. In this area though, those three factions are the main species.”

“They are also really lacking in technology,” Jack said. “Only those rudimentary flying crafts, and basic if impressive digging machines, or something like them. Violence, as always with many intelligent species, is rather advanced. But they don’t have any widespread technological
capabilities."

“So, barely a level eight planet. But they’ve got information far beyond that level, and I want to know why.” The Doctor propped a hand on his chin.

Rose could see the raw red marks where the ropes wrapped into his wrists in the light of the glow sphere, and looked down at Harry's wrists as well. They too were bright red.

“Can you use your hands?” she asked, directing the question and Harry and the Doctor.

They looked taken aback at the sudden change in topic. “Um, yeah, I can. They don’t hurt too much, not at the moment. I think in a little bit the pain will catch up but I can deal with it for now,” Harry said, rubbing at his wrists.

The Doctor waved a hand around. “I’m fine. I’ll get a salve and the healing wand back at the Tardis and run it over both of us. We’re not planning on being here too long. We need to get out before that bomb...do you know how many of those things there are?” he asked.

Rose shook her head. “No idea. I’m not even sure what they look like. I don’t know how they’re going to go off and I don’t know how to stop them.”

“Primitive cultures are often harder to influence, or easier, in a negative way. They don’t know anything beyond their own planet and if you do something wrong it can have really long standing consequences,” Jack said. “The Agency was very insistent on giving us firm directions about pre-space cultures.”

The Doctor nodded. “It’s not the wisest thing to interfere in such cultures, but I need to figure out where that information came from first. I can do it on my own...”

“Yeah, that's not happening Doctor. Nice try,” Rose said, cocking her hip and looking at the Doctor with a challenging gleam.

“I never said you couldn’t come, though I would prefer it, Harry, if you went back to the Tardis, but!” he said, raising his hands. “I’m not ordering you back, not yet,” he finished as Harry looked ready to raise a fuss.

“Alright,” Harry said, shifting around and getting more comfortable leaning against the tree, feeling that having his hands free was one of the best things ever. It was a pity he hadn't put his sonic screwdriver into his pocket.

“Where's this High One?” Jack asked. “That's where all the prophecies are, yeah?”

“Actually the High One's temple/palace/castle/giant flower home is just up this way,” the Doctor said, pointing behind him. “We only got out of there a few hours ago. I will say, running with your hands tied behind your back is not the easiest thing to do. And getting up after fall down is really a challenge. It'll be nice to do this without trying to compensate for tied hands.”

Rose smiled. “At least you're looking on the bright side of things. So, come on, let's go.”

The Doctor led the way up the hill.

~~~This is a Scene Change~~~~

“That's the High One's place?” Jack whispered as they came into eyeshot of the building.
“Yeah, It's beautiful. Absolutely amazing. One of the most spectacular things I've seen in a long time, really. It's a natural plant whose base was hollowed out except for the necessary bits for life, and the High One lives inside. It's a sturdy plant. Thick and you can't get through it's skin without some really tough things. We had Harry's magic make a door in the side to get out,” the Doctor said.

Rose grinned. “Nice. Good idea. How is your magic Harry?”

Harry felt out his magic. “It's settling down. Using it the way I did wasn't the best idea, since without a spell, my magic is reliant upon my imagination and takes a lot more energy to accomplish the same thing a spell could do instantly. It also stirs up my magic and makes it swirl around. Which was why I couldn't get the bindings off sooner. Also, suddenly not having ropes around our wrists while still in jail might not have gone over well and they had really pointy weapons.”


“Let's go around the back. I believe that's the closest to the room they took us to when we talked with the High One. The prophecies are probably around there somewhere. I would imagine they would keep copies at least close by on hand,” the Doctor said.

The Doctor led the way around the edge of the forest, keeping an eye out for any of the Highest that might surprise them without warning, but everything looked clear. It was obvious they hadn't noticed Harry and the Doctor's absence yet either. There must not be a lot prison breaks on this planet for them to not have checked in at least once. They had high level prisoners and they didn't even take the time to make sure they were still where they left them.

Well, not everyone snuck out through a magical door in the wall either.

It didn't take long before they found a back door, narrow and skinny, that they could slip in through. They couldn't see anyone watching it, so it seemed safe enough. Harry laid a hand on his focus, asking for the energy to weave an illusion to make it seem like they weren't there. Just in case someone looked in their direction they would be encouraged to look away, to not see anyone.

“Stay close. I've managed to put a small illusion up around me, but it's only a meter or so in each direction,” he whispered.

“Illusion?” Rose asked.

“A bit of magic that encourages those who look at us to not see us,” Harry replied.

“That's a good idea. How long can you hold it?” Jack whispered.

Harry frowned. “I don’t know. For a little while, but I don’t think my focus wants me to run these spells for too long. They want to make sure I can teleport back to the Tardis if I need to and that will take a tremendous amount of magic to do, so they're making sure I don’t use a lot of my magic at once.”

“Sounds like your focus has more sense than you do,” Rose said. “Making sure you are able to stay safe.”

“But I don’t want to leave any of you behind!” Harry argued back quietly. “What if you get caught in the explosion?”

“Well, Jack and I can pretty much survive anything,” Rose said. “And your dad might get a new face but it's likely that he'll be just fine if it comes to that. We aren’t planning on being here when it explodes,” Rose said at Harry's worried look. “But out of all of us, you are the only one who
definitely couldn’t survive when it explodes. We are all worried about you.”

Harry sighed, trying not to drag his feet. They had a point. But he didn’t have to like it.

The four of them moved quietly through the halls, ghosting around guards who ignored their presence and towards the large, flower shaped door that Harry and the Doctor remembered leading to the High One's room.

“Here,” the Doctor whispered.

“Can you get the door open without alerting anyone?” Rose asked.

“Maybe a small amount. We're much smaller than the Highest, all we should need is a crack. Jack come help me. Harry stay close, I don’t want to lose that illusion you've put over us.” Harry and Rose followed Jack and the Doctor over towards the edge of the door where they pulled it open just a bit, enough for them to slip in. No one had seen them.

Their luck could only hold out so much.

“Who has entered the presence of the High One without permission?” the booming voice from before filled the room. Rose and Jack stiffened.

They were silent though, hoping the illusion would protect them from the High One.

“I may not be able to see you, but I can feel your limbs on the ground, the vibrations through the Mestrial. You cannot hide.”

They took a few steps, wondering. A skittering moved about the room. Small, fast.

“I can sense you moving. You are in the presence of the High One. Are you a Blender? A Shift? A Rebel? Have you come to try and eliminate me?”

They moved in a huddle around the edge of the room, hoping to run into the prophecies before the small skittering reached them.

“Your movements are strange. They are out of pattern. I thought there were two intruders, but there is more. The Strangers, the Strangers, the bringers of the End! You are here, you have come, as the prophecies foretold!”

The skittering headed back across the room. A tumbling sound as it ran into something, then an odd thunking sound.

“You have come, you have come to bring my downfall. You will bring ruin to the Horprish, you will destroy us!” the voice wailed, losing the authority it once held.

Harry looked at the Doctor, who nodded. The headed towards the skittering sounds, betting the prophecies were over there.

“All will end when the Four Strangers walk the Mestrial. The End will come, the Four Strangers will be the heralds. Watch for them closely. With two-and-two and with no patterns, they are the bringers of the End. The Time Lord, the Young, the Wolf, the Immortal, the heralds of the High One's end. The End. The End.”

The Mantra repeated. Over and over they heard the end again and again. It masked their approach, and soon they were within the circle of light over a mess of odd multi-colored parchment with solid
gold glyphs inscribed.

And in the middle was a tiny Horprish. Or what might have been a Horprish.

No taller than Harry's knees and a mix of gold and silver was a little being, three upper limbs grasping a parchment and running in circles.

“They are here, they have come. You have come to End me,” the High One said.

“We have not,” the Doctor said softly. “We do not bring the end, High One, we are merely here at a time of rebellion. Those you have suppressed bring the End. We just had the misfortune of being here when they planned their retaliation.”

There was a squeak and the High One spun, looking for them, unable to see them. “But...but why are you in the prophecies?”

“I do not know, but I intend to find out. I will take those, if you don’t mind.”

The High One squeaked again as parchment seemed to vanish into thin air. “You...you are not here to end me?” the High One asked.

“No, we are not. We are here because your Highest kidnapped us, and your prophecies spoke of us. We just wanted to see your planet. It is beautiful, but there is darkness, and the darkness from your own people will destroy you,” the Doctor said. “I am so sorry, but I cannot stop it.”

“But...but you are the Strangers, spoken in prophecy! Why can you not stop the End, if you do not bring it?”

“Because all things must end at some point, even if it is cruel. And we are not gods or deities or anything else. We do not know how to stop it. We can only find out more about what happened here.”

They quickly left the High One, skittering around in the corner with the remaining parchment clasped in their upper limbs, moans and clacks coming from them.

The journey back into the forest was silent and filled with tension. When they reached it, Harry dropped the illusion, swaying a bit. Jack swung him up into his arms, ignoring Harry's protests that he was just fine, and they made haste down the hill.

It wasn't long before the exhausted eight year old, the days' events and magical expenditures catching up with him, was in a light sleep in Jack's arms. The Doctor gave him a grateful look.

“So, how are we getting out of the doomed city? Or are we staying to try and stop it?” Rose asked, looking at the Doctor.

The Doctor's face hardened. “I want to stop it, I do, but I don’t know how. From what you've said, they've placed these things everywhere, or they have a way to get the acid everywhere, and it's been timed. I don’t know what they look like. If we can get them to show us the bombs back at this base you talked about, I might be able to do something. I also need to get Blender out. No one deserves that, especially someone stolen from their family at a young age to be put into service.”


They ran at a quick pace downhill, making time better than they would if Harry were awake. Small legs didn't make for fast getaways.
The stone Rose recalled exiting from was there, and the Doctor pried it open, letting Jack slip in ahead with Harry, before Rose popped through before holding the stone back for the Doctor.

They let go and it slammed back into place.

“It's a long way back,” Rose said. “And one really long uphill climb. It'll take most of the night.”

“Well, the only one here who sleeps on a regular basis is already asleep, so let's go,” Jack said.

Rose nodded, taking the lead with the guide light out in front of her.

The passed the time back to the mountain base with banter and light hearted chatting. No one wanted to think about the impending explosion happening probably only hours from now.

But when they arrived, they found the entrance boarded up with heavy rocks.

Rose breathed in deeply. “Alright, I forgot about that. They said they would board it up behind us, but this looks like we can push it out of the way. Doctor, let's get shoving.”

Rose rolled up her sleeves and attacked the rocks, moving the smaller ones and pushing at the larger ones until they rolled out of the way.

It was slow going and it was probably half an hour before they had managed to clear the passage back enough for them all to slip through.

Jack made it through first, making sure Harry didn't bump his head on anything.

Rose and the Doctor followed, dusting the dirt and bits of stone off their clothes.

The Doctor looked around. “This really is the inside of a mountain. This is impressive for a society that doesn't have widespread electricity,” he said, grinning.

“Rose? Jack? What are you doing here? Who are...are those the ones the Highest took on the Cliff?”

Rose turned at the voice. “Myliya? Is that you?”

“I'm waiting for the Retaliation to start. It's only a short time from now. It's timed down to the last moment.”

Rose stepped forward. “Myliya, your Retaliation will destroy hundreds, thousands!”

“Just as they have destroyed us, driven us from out settlements, taken our Young and Elders, held back food and weapons! We must forage for food to survive, we have lost thousands due to the Highest and the High One!” Myliya retaliated, voice shrill. “You can not possibly imagine what we are going through.”

Rose knelt down to be closer to Myliya's level. “No, I can’t but violence only begets violence. What do you think will happen once the Retaliation is carried out? Do you think those Highest remaining will just submit? They won’t. You killed their friends, their family, their ruler. You destroyed their homes. They will fight, as you have done, for their right to live. It will become a war, Myliya.”

“We know, we are prepared for that. We have been waiting for our chance to strike back at the Highest. It will be at the perfect moment.”

The Doctor laid a hand on Rose shoulder. “You can’t convince a true believer Rose. We should try and find out what these devices look like, then I might be able to do something,” he said in a soft
tune in Rose's ear.

Rose sighed, standing up. "Is anyone else here?" she asked.

"Myliya twisted. "No, they have all gone to the shelters. Only the Midlings remain. You cannot stay here. If Kelysh finds you have come back, it might not be with kindness you are greeted."

Rose sighed again. "Let's get Harry back to the Tardis. You can do a scan from there, can't you?"

The Doctor nodded. "I can, and I would feel better with Harry safe. Myliya, was it? Thank you, for showing my friends how to get to us. They saved us. I hope you survive this war you will be bringing upon yourself."

Myliya stood proud. "I have my home and my friends to fight for. And my family, though they have all been taken from me, all except Kelysh."

"Where's the exit, Myliya?" Jack asked.

"Follow the blue spheres. They lead to the outside. It is light, so stick to the shadows. You do not want to be caught again."

"Thank you. Good bye," Rose said, feeling her heart clench as yet another young one fell to the lure of violence to solve their problems. She wished violence wasn't always the quickest answer so many people went to when they had problems.

The blue spheres were easy to see when you knew what to look for, and they were quickly in the passage Rose remembered leading to the outside world.

It was light outside and as soon as they were past the entrance and the curtain of plants that guarded it from prying eyes, they hid in the shadows.

The Doctor pulled out his Sonic Screwdriver, pointing it around until he felt a warm pulse.

Rose raised an eyebrow at him quizically. "What was that?"

"Well, Harry put a way to detect which direction the Tardis was into his Sonic Screwdriver because I hated him getting lost when he wandered off, so I sort of stole the idea. Now it pulses when I find the right direction. It's much harder to lose the Tardis now," he added as an afterthought.

Rose snorted. "And I'm wondering why it took you so long to put something like that in as a function. It mends fence, distracts lions, lulls bears to sleep, unlocks doors, disables electronics, fixes near about everything electronic, yet you could be thwarted if someone decided to move your Tardis," she said, a cheeky grin on her face.

The Doctor swatted at her head playfully, which she dodged out of the way of and stuck her tongue out at him.

Jack chuckled.

The walk back to the Tardis was filled with joy, though subdued in fear of attracting attention. It was still quite a ways back before they found it, sitting in the middle of a glade. The Doctor had never been so happy to see it in a long time.

He stuck the key in and turned it, just as a long spear thudded into the door beside his head.

"Hurry, hurry hurry, in in in!" He shouted, shoving the door open wider and letting Rose and Jack,
with Harry in his arms, rush in, before slamming the doors behind him and locking them, hearing the thud of another spear.

“I guess they found the Tardis,” Rose said, heart racing.

“Yeah, I guess so,” the Doctor said. “Jack, go put Harry in his room, make sure he is still sleeping, then get the healing wand and the salve. Run them over his wrists, then come back out here. I need you.”

Jack nodded, heading off to put the little magical to bed.

The Doctor flipped some switches and toggles until a wheezing filled the console room and they vanished from the glade.

They set down right on top of the huge flower where the High One held residence.

“You gonna scan Doctor?” Rose asked.

“Running it now for explosive chemical compounds. And it's lighting up, all redlining. This is not good, very very not good. It's gonna go...” he pressed a few more buttons, toggled more levers, switches, until they vanished once more, now reappearing with two more passengers on board.

“Did you have to save the little High One too Doctor?” Jack said, walking into the console room.

In the middle of the console room was Blender, kneeling down and prostrate, limbs at awkward angles. Nearby, almost on top of Blender, was the High One, squealing in terror right now.

“Well, the High One was right next to Blender, and I couldn’t leave Blender behind. It was hard enough to time it just right to get these two. And right now, this area is in full meltdown. The acid bombs have all gone off and they were seconds away from death themselves.”

“Strangers! Strangers! You have kidnapped me! Strangers! You dare take the High One?” the High One squealed in outrage. That large, booming voice from the darkened room was gone.

“Well, High One, you aren’t dead. If you wish to change that, you can go out that door. I guarantee one step out those doors and you won’t be worried about being saved. You’ll not be alive any longer.” The Doctor gestured towards the front doors of the Tardis.

The High One spun in fright.

Blender was sprawled awkwardly on the floor, trying to push themself up. Their limbs were spread out in many angles, looking very wrong. Rose bet a number of them were broken.

“Blender, are you Blender?” she asked, kneeling down.

“Yeah, are you like the Doctor, Stranger? I have never seen the likes of your kind before the Doctor and the Young one showed up. And here I am, alive surrounded by three Strangers.”

“I'm sort of like the Doctor. But I can get you some help for your limbs. They look broken.”

Blender twisted uselessly. “I fear they are.”

“We have a way of helping them, if you do not mind,” Rose said.

“Even get you walking again,” the Doctor said, grin on his face. “Payback for telling everything you did. It helped a lot.”
“Walk? I may be able to walk again?” Blender breathed. “I never dreamt I would walk again. A broken limb is a serious injury for us.”

“Well, here we have some better medicine and such. Even a healing wand. Helps repair broken things,” Jack said pulling out the slender metallic wand. “If you don’t mind?”

“Oh, if I could walk again I would be most thankful to you!” Blender said, joy in their voice.

“What about me? You have kidnapped me!” the High One shouted, having skittered to a corner.

“We'll deal with you later. Maybe drop you off on the opposite side of the planet to fend for yourself. It would be fitting, seeing as how your policies left thousands homeless,” Rose said, feeling a little mean spirited. Being unable to stop the destruction of the Highest's city was digging at her conscious and she was aiming her rage at the easiest target, the High One who was, outside of the cloak and dagger of the darkly lit room, rather pathetic and whiny. Harry had said they had been childish curious, and Rose thought childish fit as a good descriptor.

“You can not do that! I do not know how to do anything. I can not cook, I can not find shelter, I do not know how,” the High One wailed.

Jack sighed. “Well, we can’t just leave that one all on their High and Mighty own, but where do you suggest...” he trailed off, looking at Rose and the Doctor.

Rose grinned, mischievousness all in it's wideness. “Well, you know that planet that takes the mentally ill and treats them? We could drop the High One there, they would treat it as delusions!”

“Why not leave the High One with the Rebels?” Blender asked.

“You think they won’t tear the High One limb from limb if they find out the explosion didn't kill them?” Rose asked, eyebrow raised.

Blender paused on that. “Hm, well, you have a point. They are not exactly friendly towards anything to do with the High One. Rather unfriendly.”

“When did you figure that out, when they set the bombs to explode deadly poison acid all over the Highest's settlement and the High One?” Rose said, sarcasm dripping from her words.

Blender looked reproachful.

It didn't take too long for them to heal Blender's limbs, and they dropped them off at Myliya's mountain fort at Blender's request. The High One was still in the corner, making whimpering sounds.

“Well, High One, how about you take a visit to a very friendly facility? They're really nice there, and they'll take care of you. Shelter, food, all that.”

The High One just whimpered. “I'd take that as a yes, Doctor,” Jack said.

“Well, to the Orion Care Facility we go!” he said, and punched it.

While it did take a bit of convincing to get the High One off the Tardis, lots of whimpering about the End and the destruction of the High One, they did manage to get the whimpering former ruler into the care facility and inform the staff that the High One was suffering from delusions and extreme phobia of armageddon. They nodded and promised to watch over their new patient.

They left, and they left the High One behind, the colorful planet behind, and headed out to the future.
That still left them with a problem. How exactly did the Horprish get such specific information about the four of them on a planet without space travel?

The Doctor, Rose, and Jack crowded around the console as they floated in empty space, the Doctor pulling the scrolls and reams of parchment out of his pocket. They scattered it around on the ground, then leaned down to take a close look at the script.

“Doctor, can you make out what language this is originally written in? The Tardis is translating it all for me, so I’m having a hard time figuring out the base language,” Jack said, picking up a sheet. The glyphs changed to English before his eyes, making it impossible to decipher.

“Same here, Doctor,” Rose said.

The Doctor was humming and staring at the pages. “It’s on the tip of my tongue. I know what this is, but I can’t place the name. I’ve seen it before, it’s old, really old, and powerful, but I’m not sure exactly what culture it’s from…” he trailed off.

Silence permeated the console as the three of them peered over the sheaves of paper.

“Doctor, they’ve mentioned the Tardis here before. Like, way near the beginning of these writings. It was before the Horprish evolved into what we saw them as. Here, listen.” Rose cleared her throat.

“The Time Lord walks the lands. Of two and two, in strange design, the Time Lord comes from the sky. A Visitor long before the Horprish settle, to travel and to see. Be cautious for the Time Lord is the herald of the End, a walker in Time, companion of the Wolf, the Young, the Immortal. For when they walk the Sacred Lands together, so shall the End arrive.”

Jack stared at Rose. The Doctor stared at Rose.

“Well, that’s appropriately ominous and distinctly unfriendly,” Jack said, trying to keep the unease out of his voice. “How long ago is that bit from?”

Rose shrugged. “I don’t know their dating system, but this looks to be from an older section. It’s got only a few numbers in the upper corner, rather than long ones.”

“How long have the Horprish been around then?” Jack wondered. “I mean, they were fairly advanced for a culture overall, so several thousand years, but when did the High one suddenly gain so much power? It seemed like a religious thing.”

The Doctor hummed louder. “I think,” he said. “The High One came about with the discovery of these documents. Whoever, whatever, left them on that planet, guided them in that direction. See, here, listen. The High One, guardian of all, of Hues bright and blinding, shall guide and lead and create. From small to large, all shall follow, for the High One is absolute.”

Rose scoffed. “Not very subtle, is that?” she said.

“I don’t think whoever wrote this was going for subtly. It’s far too direct and straightforward. The parts that seem mysterious are only mysterious because the Horprish are a primitive culture. There’s plenty of references to other space-faring species and far flung technology. Those bombs they used,” the Doctor stopped, winced, recovered. “That technology is written in here too, only couched in weird metaphors and language. That entire culture was guided to that extreme, that precipice were resentment and rebellion was fueled by those in power, then left without any further guidance. After living for so long with such accurate prophecies, if you want to call them that, not having them must have been terrifying.”

“Accurate is the right word,” Jack said. “They’ve got marks in the margin saying that the various
Rose nodded. “It’s eerie. I can see why they relied on this so much, if so much of it was true.”

“What are you doing with documents from the Eternals? I thought you promised me you would help me learn the Eternal’s script and you’re not even letting me in on the meeting!” Harry’s voice came from just beyond the console, where he was holding a scroll, partway open.

The Doctor’s eyes widened. “Harry, are you sure? I mean, are you positive this is from the Eternals?” he asked, scrambling over to his son.

Harry frowned. “Yeah. I mean, you don’t have much on them in the library, only a couple books, but I recognize the glyph style. What are you all doing with these? And where did they come from?”

Harry looked at the documents again. “Are these from the High One? I mean, they’re colorful enough,” he mused.

The Doctor looked down at the documents and parchments. “Oh, this is very not good,” he muttered. “Why is this very not good?” Rose asked, standing up. “Who are the Eternals?”

“They’re primordial forces of the Universe. Beings who have ascended to a higher plane of being and only interfere out of boredom. They’ve got powers that make them godlike and absolutely no limits. When they get bored, entire systems can collapse, because they’ll mess with it to such an extent, just to see what happens. They’ve got no moral sense and they don’t particularly care for anything beyond what amusement it can provide.” The Doctor stared at the scrolls.

Jack whistled lowly. “Well, that can’t be good,” he said. He blinked. “Wait, didn’t you say that the reason magic developed differently in humans on Earth is because of the Eternal’s interference? Do they know about Harry?”

The Doctor turned wide, fear filled eyes to Jack and Rose. “That’s what I’m afraid of.”

~~~~This is an Ending~~~~

Chapter End Notes

So, here it is. An interesting and somewhat proper Doctor Who adventure, sort of. I wanted to see what would happen if Harry and the Doctor were captured and what the Doctor would do in such a situation, one where he couldn’t really control the outcome. If you see any stray ‘very’’s or odd non-contractions, it’s because I didn’t catch all of them from NaNo. I apologize. There were a lot of them.

The Horprish are mine, in as much as they can be. I had fun creating them! They were interesting to work with.

Hope you all enjoyed! Thanks for all the support and I adore you all!

Kuroi
In Which Truths are Told

Chapter Notes

HEY! I’m BACK! And I’m horrid at updating in a regular manner. So, this chapter is something I’ve always planned on writing, but never really knew how I wanted it to go, so I had a long struggle with some of the bits, and I still don’t quite feel like I got it write, but after three different attempts, I decided to just post it and deal with it, and if I figure out a better way later, I’ll update this chapter.

So, Enjoy! Thanks for reading!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

~~~~In Which This is a Beginning~~~~

It was Harry’s turn to choose the place they visited, something he always took to with great relish, and this time was no different. He bounced into the console room, interrupting his dad and Rose's kissing time with a rather loud cough, before informing his dad he wanted to visit Egypt. And no, not whatever designer planet was popular in a given century that someone named Egypt, he wanted to visit Earth Egypt, and not just any time in Egypt. He wanted to visit the Pyramids being built.

In his hand, possibly the reason for his desire to visit Pyramid-era Egypt, was a frayed book filled with hieroglyphs and stories from the Library of Alexandria in Egypt the Doctor had pilfered (totally on accident, he swore up and down, he planned on returning it, just never got around to it) from a previous visit there.

“I want to go to Egypt! Please dad? We’ve never been to Earth Egypt and that’s where all those other planets get their inspiration from and I know some of those planets have really awesome set ups and all, but it’s not as authentic!”

“Really, Harry, you could not have picked a better time?” the Doctor said, trying to straighten his tie.

Harry rolled his eyes.”You two should pick better places. Really, the console room? After three years or so you should probably have found a more private place. You have a bedroom, I’m sure. What if Uncle Jack had walked in?"

Rose laughed, shoving herself off the floor. “So, Egypt huh? There’s more than just the Egypt on Earth? I mean, from what you’re saying there’s all sorts of Egyptians.”

Harry shrugged. “Sure, designer planets of all types pop up with Egypt as a name and sort of the same pyramid/pharaoh theme, but I want to go to Earth Egypt, back when the original pharaohs ruled! I want to see the pyramids and the sphinx and the temples and the palaces and everything! Do you know some of the stories about their gods? One of them was chopped into little tiny pieces by his jealous brother so his wife, who was also his sister I believe, put him back together with mud from the Nile River and he became the God of the underworld! And there was one pharaoh who believed there was only one god, Aten, and declared Egypt to be Monothiestic, and when he died they tried to erase him from history! And Tutenkahmum was so young when he took the throne and
when he died. And did you know they had a female Pharaoh, Hatshepsut, who the following
dynasties tried to erase from history? Can we go?” Harry begged.

The Doctor smiled fondly. “Go get your uncle, let him know where we're going. He’s possibly still
asleep, or working out, or something. I’ll go set coordinates.” Harry headed off, then stopped,
waiting for something more. “And I won’t press them in until you get back,” the Doctor finished.

Harry grinned. “Thanks dad!” He raced off.

Rose chuckled. “Can you believe he’s ten already?” she said, a smile on her face.

The Doctor shook his head. “Sometimes I forget he’s a child, then other times it's smacked right in
my face. Smart and quick, but he’s terribly naive under all of it. He comes racing in here, probably
having learned how to read Hieroglyphs in the past few cycles, begging to go on a trip to Egypt.
When he gets to Hogwarts in his birth time, will he be able to cope with the fact that he can’t just go
running off whenever he likes to whatever time or place catches his eye?”

Rose sighed, laid a hand on the Doctor's cheek. “Love, he'll have to learn. Maybe being at a magic
school will help; it’s an institute for learning, which he loves. But you know, he is going to be going
there in maybe six months. It's not too long from now, you better make sure he’s prepared for long
termed living in a single time and place.”

The Doctor hung his head. “Yeah, and then I'm going to have to deal with him whining about it, and
wanting to go somewhere on the weekend and not realizing that we can't just take off and leave
because he wants to.” He sighed, dragging a hand through his hair. “That’s gonna be fun.”

Rose laughed.

It was a few minutes more until Harry came back, dragging a somewhat disheveled and still slightly
sleepy Jack into the console room.

“What's all this about Egypt and Pharaohs and Pyramids?” he muttered, trying to rub the sleep out of
his eyes.

“Well, Harry here's got it in his head that he wants to see Egypt on Earth in the BC Era. Back when
there were pyramids and pharaohs and huge temples and multiple gods being believed in,” Rose
said. “I believe he is taught himself Egyptian too.”

Harry nodded, a smile on his face. “Yep!”

Jack groaned. “Alright, alright, at least it's only Ancient Egypt,” he said, stretching.

“Ancient?” Harry queried.

Jack ruffled Harry's hair. “The Egypt you want to go to is rather famous throughout Earth history, so
to distinguish what Egypt you're talking about when you're living in linear time, everyone would call
it Ancient Egypt.”

Harry mouthed the phrase. “That's strange,” he decided.

“Well, you still suck at telling time so it's not a surprise,” Rose chuckled.

Harry stuck his tongue out at her.

The Doctor waved his hands. “So, Harry, let's give this a whirl. Now, program in whatever time you
Harry rubbed his hands together and started pressing buttons, pulling levers, typing on the screen, switching switches, toggling little knobs, and the Tardis started to rattle and shake.

“We're going!” he shouted with glee and the Doctor pushed a few more buttons to keep the Tardis stable and ran around to bang on a few things.

Rose was glad that the rocking, shaking, and general haphazard travel the Tardis in her younger years had been prone to lessened with more than one person at the controls. Also, the affection the Tardis had for Harry did help make the whole process much safer in general.

When the Tardis stopped all the rattling and shaking, settling down into real space and time, Harry raced for the door, his green coat flapping around his bare feet (his habit of not wearing shoes was still in effect, and as a consequence he could run over almost anything without any serious injury).

He swung the door open, and a blast of hot, sandy air filled the Tardis. “Harry, shut the door!” Rose shouted, feeling the sand finding all the little pockets on her body to settle in and making her skin feel itchy.

She needn't have spoken for the door was almost immediately closed.

“Well, I guess we need some special clothes,” Harry said, rubbing his eyes and spitting out sand. The Doctor, who had been behind the console, and Jack, still hovering in the back doorway, had been spared the blast of sandy wind and were now laughing as Rose and Harry tried to shake as much sand as they could off themselves.

“I have some face cloths in the wardrobe room, and hoods. Keep it out of our hair and mouths. Should be the best bet we have to staying generally not sandy,” the Doctor said, cheerfully heading off to the wardrobe room, followed by Jack, and at a distance, still trying to get the fine particles of sand off them, were Rose and Harry.

“That may not have been the best idea,” Harry said.

“Maybe not,” Rose replied.

“I didn't think sand could get there,” Harry complained, pulling up his shirt and rubbing more fine particles off his chest. “I think there's some down my trousers,” he whined.

Rose snorted. “Did you not realize how sandy Egypt was when you wanted to come here?”

“There's the Nile in Egypt, I wasn't expecting the sand to be so persistent with so much water nearby!”

“You didn't research the land itself very well did you?” she asked.

Harry sighed. “Not the details. I mean, I knew the Pyramids were built in a desert-like biome, most of the designer planets copy that, but I figured the main city would be set apart from it some. I mean, there is a very large river close by, why would there still be so much sand?”

Rose patted him on the head, feeling more sand clinging to his scalp. “There there, we’ll all be thoroughly sandy at the end of this. Very sandy. So much sand there will never be enough shower to ever get rid of the sand. So much sand that we'll track it all into the console room. So much sand that if you shook it all out on the floor, we'll create a desert in the Tardis. So much sand that...”
“Okay, Okay, I get it,” Harry grumbled. “A lot of sand.”

Rose grinned.

They trooped into the wardrobe room where the Doctor was already holding up the veils and headscarves. “Anyone want the full robe ensemble?” he asked.

Rose raised her hand. “Me. I would like to not get all my nice clothes super sandy. And besides, they’ve got some cool stuff in this time period.”


Rose smacked him on the back of the head. “Don’t go flirting with the pharaoh, Jack. We do not want to have to help you re-attach your head to your body. Or have you regenerate yourself after they let a crocodile eat you.”

Jack waved a hand around. “I’m sure I could get myself out of such a situation just fine without your help,” he said, grinning.

Harry rolled his eyes. “I’ll get it too. I rather dislike the feeling of tiny grains of sand rubbing against my skin.”

A few minutes later they were dressed and ready to go out and see Egypt in all her glory, dressed to prevent the sand from doing it’s level best to grind them down into smaller, rounder versions of themselves.

Though the clothes made quite a difference, the moment they stepped outside sand, sun, and noise assaulted them. Harry had, rather than finding a quiet, out of the way area to land, set them down near the busiest street they had ever seen.

The Doctor looked at Harry. “Well, this is the opposite of not very many people,” he said.

Harry shrugged. “We didn't land on anyone, unlike that one time you tried to get us near that huge tree on that one planet with all the huge trees and whose people lived in them and never even touched the ground. You miscalculated the landing space and ended up on top of their ruler.”

Rose and Jack laughed. The Doctor shook his head, sighing. “Really? I thought we agreed to ignore that little event.”

Harry grinned before dashing away, robes flapping around him as he took off, laughing. “Catch me if you can dad!”

The Doctor groaned. “And here I was thinking he had matured enough to not pull stupid and silly stunts like that,” he moaned.

“He's your son, you shouldn't expect anything less than that from him,” Rose said.

The Doctor rolled his eyes. “Still a handful he is. Let’s go find him, before he gets himself into trouble.”

Harry was, in fact, running right into trouble, though he didn't know it yet. It came in the form of a tall, slightly portly man holding a stone tablet that Harry nearly ran right into. It was a close call, as he skidded to a stop just inches away from slamming into him and breaking the stone tablet into pieces. Very small pieces that couldn't be put back together.
“Hello!” he said, full of cheer. “I'm Harry. I want to see the pyramids, can you tell me which way they are?” he asked.

The man looked down at him. “The pyramids? They're under construction, young one. Though I suppose if you're so interested in seeing them I wouldn't mind showing you where they're being built. You can see the foundations from the bank of the Nile.”

“Awesome, just what I was hoping for! I actually got the timeline correct, which is a first. You all used such brilliant maths to get it all to work, triangles and angles and so much precision, and using the stars, that's absolutely brilliant. You all are geniuses!” Harry bounced, running his mouth in a rant as he was prone to do.

Unfortunately, the person he was ranting to was not a normal, easily overwhelmed and confused citizen out on their daily walk, but the chief engineer for the Pharaoh and head of the pyramid project.

The engineer looked at the young boy, judging him to be about ten seasons old, though very tall for his age, but also very young to be able to speak so confidently on the process they were undertaking at the moment. A very secret process, at least the specifics of it were secret.

“You know quite a bit about construction. Are you at all interested in engineering?” he queried.

“Oh, I love it. Math, engineering, science, history, everything is so fascinating. And you all were so brilliant. Do you know, you couldn't replicate the pyramids as you built them for thousands of years. Making something as big as the pyramids as exact as they are, well, that's an amazing feat of engineering. It take millennia for anyone to understand how you did it.”

The engineer was hearing the words of the pharaoh’s chief advisor echoing in his mind. This boy, he sounded like the advisor, that humongous presence of the giant man pressing down on him with his wisdom and knowledge. This boy might lack that presence, but there was the wisdom, the knowledge, and something else.

The advisor would be interested in this boy.

“Bo...Harry. “ He recalled the name, a strange name that felt odd on his tongue. “Harry, after seeing the pyramids, would you like to meet the person behind the idea for the pyramids?” he asked.

Harry spun around, and he was treated to the sight of the greenest jewel green eyes he had ever seen. He was sure now that this boy was something special.

“Really? You mean it?” he breathed, excitement in his face. All thoughts of his father maybe wanting to know where he was leaving his head.

He had interesting things to learn, and interesting people to meet.

“I do...mean it. After you see the pyramid's base, I will take you to see Osiris.”

Harry tilted his head. “The God of the Underworld? His parents had a really weird sense of humor,” he said.

The Engineer chuckled. “Something like that.”

Harry skipped ahead of the engineer, missing the look of calculation and planning that flashed across his face. This boy...yes, the Chief Advisor would like him. A lot.
Harry scampered up a ladder to the top level of an observation tower at the edge of the Nile, a crude design used to keep watch for boats, and turned to look over the desert.

Thousands upon thousands of people moved in amazing synchronization. Huge blocks of limestone were shifted, the whiteness blinding in the sun. The base of the pyramids already rose well over twenty feet, though it was far from it's completed height. Harry stared in awe.

“Did you know that this is some of the most advanced engineering Earth has ever seen? Especially for it's time,” Harry said, watching the blocks being moved by teams of men. “It's absolutely astonishing how well coordinated this is.”

He stood for a long moment, staring at the construction process with wide eyes. The engineer watched him follow the construction with those oddly colored eyes, eyes whose color he had never seen before.

“Harry, I am sure the Advisor would like to meet you. Are you ready?” the engineer asked.

Harry grinned. “Am I ever!” and he scampered back down the ladder.

He babbled all the way through the city as the engineer walked them to the small temple Osiris was staying in. Much of it made little sense to him, but it only reaffirmed his belief that Osiris would want to meet this little child.

“What is your business here?” a guard asked, blocking his path with a large spear.

The engineer raised a delicately painted eyebrow. “Do you not know who I am?” he said, looking at the guard and holding up his insignia.

The guard glanced down at the metal circle, ready to sneer, before his face went from astonished to apologetic to sheepish to blank. “I am so sorry, Chief Engineer. I was not informed of your visit. Please proceed. Is...is the child with you as well?”

“He is. I believe Osiris will find him of great interest.”

The guard managed to maintain a blank face, though the engineer could see the desire to question hanging all over him. “Please proceed. My Lord is within the mediation chambers.”

The engineer nodded, and Harry bounced after him. “He must be really important, this Osiris,” he said. The guard blinked. Well, the child would certainly be surprised.

“Oh he is,” the engineer assured him.

The meditation chamber was just beyond the small pond and filling with canopic jars, twisting spires in odd formations, strange shapes, odd sigils, and weird mechanical devices the engineer, for all his knowledge, couldn't figure out.

“My lord, I found someone I believe would be of interest to you,” he said, bowing low.

“My Chief Engineer, it is such a pleasure to see you. I must ask, how are my pyramids progressing?”

“Very well, my lord. I was just overseeing some of the progress before I came to you.”

“That is good. Now, who is this interesting person? I already sense them, they have a certain...aroma I know well. I am very much interested in talking with them.”

Harry peered into the room, and immediately knew he had walked right into something he really
shouldn’t have walked into. “Hello....” he said, eyes taking in as much of the room as he could. This was not the typical Egyptian room and that being was not human.

“Hello, young traveler. Engineer, you may leave. I wish to speak with this young one alone.”

The engineer bowed and left the room, pleased. He had sensed correctly.

Harry cautiously edged forward. “You...you aren't human are you?” he said. There was a strange necklace that glowed in his sight, pulsing. “Your necklace...is it a Shifter?” he asked, referring to the technology that could disguise the outer appearance of a being’s body.

“I am not, young time traveler, and this is indeed a Shifter,” he said, touching the necklace with a long fingered hand. “My natural appearance is a bit much for humans, so while I am here it is better to mask my true form.” He looked up at Harry, his bright green eyes glowing. “You are not fully human either. It is a distinct scent, I have smelled it once before. On a man with a strange outfit and a peculiar taste in scarves.”

Harry knew exactly who he meant. “Well, um, you see, I only wanted to see the pyramids, I thought they were spectacular by the way, but if I could just go now, I'm sure my dad is rather worried about me...”

“Sit down, young traveler.” Harry sat, sure that if he tried to leave, there would be dire consequences. There was also a part of him that was yearning for a story from this stranger who knew his dad, a part bigger than the bit that told him to run as fast as he could out of here. “You are the child of a Time Lord, I remember that scent of time well now. It was masked by another scent for a moment, but I figured it out. You smell of a Time Lord and their vessel. Such a sweet smell of time, so much better than our method. Though now it is so rare. The Time Lords, reduced to one through his own fault.” There was a saccharine sweetness to the words that Harry didn’t like.

“What do you mean?” he demanded, not sure if he liked the implication in Osiris’s words.

“Surely you know the Time Lords were destroyed, yes?” the not-human Osiris said.

“Yeah, I know. Dad’s all that’s left.” Harry really wanted to get up and race from this room now, his desire for a story fading in light of the atmosphere of the room, a heady mixture of confidence and arrogance. Osiris was an uneasy presence that clamped down on him, made him feel all syrup-y. His mind desperately wanted to leave, but his body wasn’t cooperating.

“Well, yes, but did you know that your...father is the reason the Time Lords are gone? It was a shockwave through the Universe, and any sensitive enough to time felt their loss. It was a stab through the Time Vortex. They were a very essential part of the Universe, you know, and with their loss, there was a vacuum of power to be filled in a way that was unlike any other. Your father had to fill that alone.”

Harry was stiff. “My dad didn't...he couldn't...he couldn't...” he stuttered. His dad...the reason? “I don't understand,” he finally said. He was intrigued, curiosity getting the better of him. His dad was a paragon of peace and nonviolence, though he knew there had been a great war that preceded the loss of the Time Lords. Harry knew next to nothing about what had happened though. If this...Osiris knew, he wanted to know.

“Oh, the Time Lord has not told his own son of his greatest sin?” the not-human Osiris said, glee in his voice.

Harry shook his head. “No,” he said, for emphasis. “He told me the Time Lords were gone, but he
never told me...he never told me what happened to them.”

“Well, little Time Traveler, sit, as I tell you a story older than Time, for it is a story that was ripped from Time itself. A story of two races, two species, and a desire for dominance and control.”

Harry was riveted.

~~~~This is a Scene Change~~~~

The Doctor, Rose, and Jack headed down the street Harry had taken off down, though they were hampered by the hustle and bustle of people. Harry, small being that he was, had slipped through the crowd to dash off and the Doctor could no longer see him.

“HARRY! YOU BETTER STAY OUT OF TROUBLE UNTIL I FIND YOU!” he shouted, hoping his son had heard him.

Rose chuckled. “Really Doctor, you should have known something like this would happen. It's not the first time, won't be the last. Besides, what kind of trouble could he get up to in ancient Egypt?” she said.

Jack raised an eyebrow. “Do you really want to know the kind of trouble Harry could possibly get into?” he said. “Because you are talking about the same Harry I know, right? The same Harry that, just the other week got himself stuck in a dimensional vortex and split himself into five different parts all over the Tardis? The same Harry that, at the age of four, turned an entire tribe of ritual cannibals into vegetarians? The same Harry that almost destroyed a planet with a sonic screwdriver and poor aim? The same Harry that...”

“Enough enough, I get it. Let's go find him before he does something like getting his face marbled into the side of the pyramids or something like that,” Rose huffed at Jack.

The Doctor snorted. “Well, that would certainly be a sight to see. Confuse the rest of the planet for centuries.” The Doctor felt something niggling at the back of his mind, something to do with the pyramids and Egypt and energy, but he couldn't quite grasp it.

He would regret not paying attention to it later.

~~~~This is a Scene Change~~~~

“Have you heard of the Daleks, young Harry?” Osiris said. Harry shook his head, not trusting himself to speak. “Well, the Daleks were a race of monsters, creatures with no emotions other than a desire to destroy everything that was not them. My people had a couple encounters with them, but we were never a target of theirs. Our form of Time Travel did not interest them and they could not use it to any great effect, so we were left alone. Mostly they were uninterested in fighting us on our territory and we were uninterested in fighting them, so they left us alone as we left them alone. But the Time Lords, they were the pinnacle of Time Travel beings. Harnessing the energy of a black hole and powering their Tardis through the vortex itself. And the Daleks wanted that. They wanted the Universe to be only Daleks.”

Harry's eyes went wide. “That...that would be monstrous...”

“Yes child, and that is why the Time Lord fought them, though it took some time before it truly started. Your father, the Doctor, was their number one Enemy, the main foe of the Daleks, and they feared him. He had destroyed millions of Daleks all through time. They called him Ka Faraq Gatri, which means...”
“Destroyer of Worlds,” Harry breathed, the Tardis Translation Matrix doing it's job. “My dad was called this?”

“In consolation, it was by a race universally considered the epitome of evil,” Osiris said with no sympathy at all.

Harry felt that only made it worse, to be called something so cruel by beings considered so cruel. “It's not,” he told Osiris.

“I didn't think it would be. It is a rather cruel name. But he was the savior for so many races that he was considered a hero. Though the Time Lords did not approve of his actions, he was still called upon when the Last Great Time War first began. It began once, then all at once, if that makes sense,” Osiris said.

“Yeah, that makes sense. A Time War starts, then throughout time it echoes, creating a start in all times.”

“You are a very intelligent young one, Harry.”

“I know. I also know this is all just a story. You could be making it up, for all I know. There’s no proof my dad did anything.” Though Harry knew his dad had to have been involved in some way with such a war. He was the only survivor and he refused to let Harry see anything about the Time Lords.

Osiris looked amused. “Of course, I could just be spinning you a story about a being I find rather irritating. Your father interfered with some of my projects many years ago. It was very frustrating.” He peered at Harry closely. “But you know something happened. Something drastic and immense. Your father’s people are gone, reduced to a single member and their Tardis.”

Harry’s face was a mask of denial, desperately wishing that Osiris was lying to him, spinning stories about something he could never prove. “Prove it,” he said.

“I wouldn’t be telling this to you if I couldn’t, as you say, prove it. I was not present for the war, not in a true sense, but as I travelled through the Time Vortex, I would be inside it for a time, watching events happen.” He pulled out a small, crystalline pyramid that shimmered. “It was, I believe, the final battle at Arcadia on the last day of the Time War. They had heinous weapons, both sides.” He extended his palm with the pyramid on it. “Do you know what this is?” he asked.

Harry nodded, feeling his mouth go dry. “Memory crystal,” he said. “Holds true memories. You can’t tamper with them or alter the perception, not without destroying the crystal and possibly yourself.”

“You are intelligent. I wouldn’t think you would know the shape of the crystal. They are rare and unique items.”

“Dad has a fondness for crystals of all kinds. There are a couple Memory Crystals in the Tardis,” Harry heard himself say. He was still trying to process the events that were unfolding. His magic
battered against the limiter, wishing to lay waste to the thing that was causing so much turmoil within
him. He had to force himself not to touch his focus, otherwise they might find a way to use that urge.

“Then I shall release the memory. Please, young Harry, if you could touch the Crystal, we can begin.
I shall show you the battle I witnessed between the Time Lords and the Daleks, a battle that tore
apart worlds and destroyed civilizations. For what is a battle on the universal scale if not universally
destructive?” Osiris gestured towards the pyramidal crystal, and Harry laid his hand on it as Osiris
depressed the activator.

~~~~~In Which a Memory is Viewed~~~~~

He hung in the pockets of Time and Space, finding comfort here as he rarely found elsewhere. His
people’s form of time travel was limited and often meant they spent long periods of unmeasurable
time hung in the balance, waiting to arrive at their destination.

Such was what he was doing now. He hung somewhere near the center of the local galaxy, near
enough that if he shifted a few tens of light years in the wrong direction he might just be pulled into
the black hole, even if he wasn’t really part of the physical plane. He was an observer, travelling the
cosmos, able to see but never interfere. Not in this limited stated.

And what a spectacle he was witnessing now. Gallifrey, the might of the Time Lords, heralds of
Time and insufferably stingy and snobby, were desperately fighting for their lives.

Their planet was surrounded, bombarded on all sides by hundreds, thousands, maybe millions, of
Dalek ships. Each one contained millions of Daleks. The little monstrous robots despised the Time
Lords more than any other species, envied them their technology and directed the entire might of
their considerable empire onto the planet.

Though, to be sure, the Time Lords had little to redeem them, other than generally not being set on
destroying every other race in the Universe. They were stuck up and full of their own power, rarely
designing to help the lesser races, as they viewed them, fight off the invasions the Daleks subjected
them too. In fact, only their renegades and cast offs ever took the time and effort to put a stop to the
Daleks.

The most prominent being that thorn in the side of the Universe, the Doctor. Meddler and interferer,
he wouldn’t be surprised if the Doctor caused as much damage as the Daleks did while trying to stop
them. At least the Daleks left everyone dead. The Doctor left behind people so torn apart from war
and battle against a foe that seemed unstoppable that they rarely knew what to do with themselves
but fight.

Here though, it seemed that the Doctor would be getting his fill of fighting. That light in his eyes that
blazed whenever he perceived injustice would be at a full inferno by now, he bet. The Time Lords
were losing, it was merely a matter of time, Time they were surely doing everything they could to
extend.

He could see the dreaded Weapons of the Time Lords raging through the battlefield, swiping through
ships, leaving behind not torn hunks of metal but puffs of dust and vapor as they either aged them
beyond existence or returned them to their infantile state or they became Never-beens, things that
were but weren’t, erased from Time itself.

The Weapons of the Time Lords were never very easy to understand, but the results were plain for
all to see. Most of the Weapons evolved from experiments gone wrong, or gone horribly right.
Locked up, away from the hands of those who would use them, they were released now, in full
force, as Arcadia fought for its life.
He could see the Doctor’s Tardis, doing what he could, battling as the sky trenches fell, directing the Weapons towards the Dalek ships. But those Weapons, Osiris knew, weren’t able to be used for long, not unless they didn’t mind tearing not only their enemy apart but also themselves.

The longer the Weapons were in use, the harder it would be to trap them away. Already, the Nightmare Child was waiting, jaws open, pulling anything that passed close by into its maw. None knew what happened to those unfortunate enough to be swallowed.

The Could Have Been King, released with his armies of Meanwhiles and Neverweres ravaged whoever was close enough, Dalek or Time Lord. No one could have controlled the Could Have Been King. The Daleks had their own weapons, the Skaro Degradations, horrific mutations of Daleks into fearsome weapons.

And death raged around. The Time Lords, beings given unusually long life, died and regenerated and died and regenerated all around. Little flashes of light sped up artificially, dangerously, by war time protocols.

The Doctor’s Tardis stopped in the middle of the battlefield, hung there for a moment, then in vanished, blinked out of existence.

He wondered if the Doctor had fled, if his delicate sensibilities finally couldn’t handle the horror and destruction that raged.

If only it had been thus. At once, every single Time Lord ship froze for an infinitesimal second. Then they all flew into a panic. It was the only thing to describe the sudden flurry of movement.

Something was happening. Something big.

He didn’t have to wait long to figure it out.

The Doctor’s ship appeared again, hovering on the outskirts of the battlefield, not long after he had left it. But something was wrong. He wasn’t joining the battle. He merely hung there, watching, waiting.

A jolt shuddered through his body, from the tips of his ears to his toes. The scene in front of him wavered, then space and time itself split open, a gaping maw. And the Daleks, the Time Lords, the Weapons, Gallifrey, the Could Have Been King, the Nightmare Child, all of them were swallowed. It was instantaneous and endless as Time shuddered and jolted and writhed.

When it settled, when only the aftershocks remained, only the blue Tardis hung in space, alone. Scorched and chipped and dented from battle fire, only the Doctor remained. Then, after a moment, it too blinked out of existence, and Osiris was shoved out of the Time Stream.

A Time Stream, he realized with a jolt, no longer existed. The Doctor and ended the war by erasing them from existence itself, locking them into a Time Stream no one could access.

His entire being went cold at the mere thought.

~~~~~In Which the Memory Ends~~~~~

Harry blinked out of the horror of the destruction the memory had shown him. That was the Tardis, malfunctioning Chameleon Circuit and everything. And that was the Tardis and his father, destroying not just the Daleks but his own people. Banishing them into the depths of Time, locking them away, locking the entire war away. He had felt the unease as those...Weapons, those monstrosities destroyed. Casually, as if swatting bugs. But they erased from history, from time.
He jerked back, scooting away from Osiris and the memory crystal, hands twitching, trying to reach for something, anything. He wanted to reach for his focus, to let out the wild, pent up energy that was lashing at his limiter. He wanted to take the limiter off and let his magic pour out. But the destruction that promised….

“Why did you show me that?” he panted, his heart racing as he hovered at the brink of indecision. “How did you even witness that?”

“I showed you, young Harry, because it amused me to do so. Your father was an irritant. He interfered in one of my projects and set back completion by hundreds of years. You are, in some ways, a means to an end.” Osiris frowned as he felt the energy radiating off the boy’s body. It was trapped, but if he did not do something to calm the raging fire that burned under Harry’s skin, he might be feeling the consequences.

A small foot pressed into his leg. He looked down. “Mreow?” the little kitten enquired, tilting her head towards the boy, whose eyes had gone wide in unseeing anger.

“You wish him as your partner?” Osiris asked, amusing.

“Mreow.” Tails twitched.

“Very well, little one. It is time you had a partner. You are sure? He is empathic?” A narrowing of eyes and tails twitched again. “Ah, of course, this is your decision after all.” She climbed into his lap. “Harry, Harry, if you would please,” he called out, hoping to jostle the boy back into the present.

Jewel green eyes narrowed down, until the focused on him.

Harry felt his heart calm slightly as he gazed upon the small kitten Osiries was playing with.

“Would you like to hold Pashti? She is friendly and enjoys being pet. She is a very young cat, from my own planet. I find I enjoy those cats from my planet more than those native to Earth. They are much smarter and far more sensitive to time.”

Harry mechanically held out his hands for the kitten, taking her with care as Osiris handed her over. She purred as Harry pet her, curling up on his lap. He felt the purrs vibrate through his body. “She’s very loud,” Harry said.

“She is attuned to emotions. She senses you are upset and hopes to calm you. You are also part Eternal, and thus carry magic. I would wish you to not lash out in my meditation room in your anger. There are several rather dangerous items in here that would be disastrous if broken.”

Harry felt some of the anger fade a bit as Pashti purred. “She’s amazing,” Harry said. “I find myself already calmer.”

“Then as a gift from one Time Traveler and non-human to another, I gift you Pashti. She has needed a good home for a long time, for the Osirian Cats may only grow when they have found someone to bond with. I feel as though she has bonded with you.”

Harry looked down and examined his new companion, for she was much too smart to be a pet.

She was the color of sand, with dark spots speckled down her back, face, and belly. When he looked closely, he realized her tail was actually two, twined closely together. He looked at her paws and counted eight toes on each, and on her face there seemed to be a slit on her forehead for a third eye. “She is beautiful. I will treasure her.”
“I felt you might. I feel I must give some recompense for the amusement I am receiving telling you about your father. I shall answer your second question, as to how I witnessed the end of the Time War. My people have several methods of Time Travel. One allows us to send our mind through time and space. It often has the effect of requiring us to wait around within a field until we have arrived. That was what I was doing at the time.”

Harry absently pet Pashti, feeling the edge of his anger dull somewhat. If he had been without her, he was sure his anger, whether directed at Osiris or not, would have resulted in disastrous consequences. Still, it bubbled at the edge of his control, waiting.

“Tell me more? about my dad? You see to know more about him that I do, I mean, about his history at least. He never tells me anything of note.”

“Your father is a constant in the Universe. Those who have a connection to time often have glimpses of him while we travel through the vortex to our destination. I have pieced together much about him while stories also reach me. It is hard to go anywhere in the Universe without hearing about the Doctor. The Time War itself rippled through Time, blessing or cursing all those with time sensitivity with the knowledge of what had just been wrought upon the Time Vortex. Your father is the reason why.”

“What did he do?” Harry asked, almost afraid of the answer.

Osiris smiled, teeth showing. “You saw it. Your father battled at the fronts lines, destroying the Daleks utterly, but there were millions, billions of Daleks. They factory produced them and the Time Lords were never able to match their numbers. There were always more Daleks. It came to pass that the Time Lords were losing ground. They used their Nightmares and Never-Mores and all sorts of Time Monsters, monsters that swallowed galaxies and Daleks alike. They were pushed back to Gallifrey. They had lost almost all their colonies as the Dalek empire was amassing around the planet. They had one final option, one they had been reluctant to use. Well, reluctant isn’t the right word. They refused to use it entirely. But the war was ripping the Universe apart. Time itself was frayed and unravelling, they had pulled out so many of their nightmares to fight the Daleks that they were a threat to the Universe almost as much as the Daleks were.

They had one final option, and your father, he is the one who used it.”

Harry was frozen. “He killed everyone.” He hadn’t been sure, that final moment was so strange, so foreign, but it froze his body completely when he witnessed it.

“In a sense, yes. He destroyed them all. He locked them into a Time Lock, forever kept out of the Universe and held at bay inside a bubble of time separate from the universe, hung in the vortex as a pustule. And in doing so, he wiped the Time Lords from History and took their place. Time Lords became tales to tell your young ones to keep them behaved, became the myths of the Universe, only whispered about as being real. And only the Doctor remained. The Last Time Lord. Forever known to those who travel time as the Destroyer of Worlds.”

Harry couldn’t quite believe the words Osiris was saying.

Harry felt moisture drip down his face and plop onto Pashti’s fur. He felt her stand up, place her front paws on his chest, and lick the salty water from his face, purring all the while. She nuzzled up under his chin, and Harry stroked her back.

“Why didn’t he tell me?” he asked, horror in his voice.

“Your father is seen as a savior to many, many more than those who see him as a demon, young
Harry. He clings to that image, that idea that he is good and just, because his past is full of times when he couldn't be the savior. There is very little black and white in the Universe, but rather a spectrum. And your father has been the whole spectrum at some point to someone. His name alone is what gave that word it's meaning in thousands upon thousands of cultures. Doctor. Every language in the Universe has that word, did you know? And the all have that word because of your father. For good or for ill, that is the legacy he will leave.”

Harry's whole body was shaking in anger and hurt. He didn't like learning things he didn't know about his dad from strangers, he discovered. He felt betrayed in some sense, that all the things he had been told by his father were meaningless. His father, called Destroyer of Worlds by a race so evil destroying them wiped two mighty species out of the Universe. His father, a fighter, killer, destroyer. There was so much that he didn't know, that Osiris had hinted at, that he needed to know.

He held Pashti to him, climbed to his feet, and fled, the chuckles of the Osiris following him out the temple and into the dusty, sandy streets.

He needed to find somewhere to think. Somewhere to clear his mind. Somewhere not the Tardis, who might realize what had happened and cloud his thoughts.

He headed for the pyramids. He could find a shady spot and mediate, clear his mind. Think. Make sense of all he had learned.

With Pashti in his arms, purring and nuzzling him, he raced for the huge structures slowly taking shape on the plains of the Sahara.

~~~~This is a Scene Change~~~~

The Doctor was shouting up and down the street for his son. Harry should not have been this hard to find. Really, he shouldn't have. It hadn't been that long ago he had raced off. Would Harry really vanish? He usually didn't race off so far without one of them with him.

Rose and Jack trailed behind him, worried. It had been an hour and Harry was no where to be seen.

“Doctor, maybe the Pyramids. He might have gone to go see them,” Rose said.

The Doctor looked at her. “I thought so, but they're still being constructed, seeing as all I can see are the foundations just barely visible.”

Rose sighed.

“I heard you shouting for Harry. Are you perhaps looking for a Harry with startling green eyes?”

The Doctor looked down at a rather tall for the era man, head shaved and eyebrows painted on as was custom in higher classes. “You know where he is?” he asked, urgency in his voice.

“I took him to see the site of the pyramids construction, then over to the temple that houses the mastermind behind the pyramids. He was most eager to meet your Harry. He is a smart boy.” The man grinned.

Jack frowned. “What do you mean? Where is this temple? What did you do?”

“I did nothing to him. I merely escorted him. My Lord is speaking with him now in the Temple of Osiris. It is at the end of the street, take a left at the camel watering troughs, and go straight until you see the obelisk to Ra. Osiris's temple is just at the end of the street on the right hand side. There is a guard there, he may let you in. He may not. But Harry is inside that temple.”
The Doctor stalked towards him, towering over him. “If you've done anything to my son, you will rue the day you were born,” he swore. The man gulped and scurried away.

Rose chased after him, grabbing his name stuttered through mild panic before she came back. “His name is Hemiunu, Chief engineer of the pyramids and nephew to the pharaoh,” she said.

“At least he'll be easy to find again,” Jack grumbled.

“Let's go get Harry and worry about Hemiunu later. If he's there like he said, unharmed and merely chatting about math and design specs, no harm done. If we need to hunt him down we can.” Rose headed off in the directing Hemiunu told them, and the Doctor and Jack raced to catch up with her.

By the time they got to the temple, mildly waylaid by a small form carrying a cat and rushing through the streets leaving chaos in their wake, a large figure, much taller than any normal Egyptian of the era, stood at the Entrance.

“Doctor, I see you have found me. You have just missed your son, I'm afraid. He tore out of here rather quickly. Very upset, the poor child.” There was little sympathy in the voice filled with amusement.

“Osirian,” the Doctor breathed.

“My my, you are perceptive. Your son noticed I wasn't human as well, though he wasn't sure what I was. He left without asking for my race. It was most unusual. But I fear he had other things on his mind.”

“Which one are you?” the Doctor demanded, mind flying rapidly through his memory of Osirians. This one was wearing a Shifter, hiding their true form, but those green eyes and tone of voice, he recognized it, and all those hints he had been ignoring about Ancient Egypt and pyramids were starting to click. Osirians built the pyramids on Earth for their own purposes. There were good, bad, and ugly ones, and he hoped Harry hadn’t run into one from the latter two categories.

“Why, I am Osiris.”

Osiris. The chief. At least it wasn’t Sutekh, and this was before the death of Osiris. “You are here to oversee the work personally?”

“Of course. I couldn’t leave this to my brother, he rarely has the mental capacity to rule, much less manipulate a human empire into building our pyramids. We have an empire to run, us Osirions. The energy field matrix must be completed. I will say that Khufu is a most obliging Pharaoh. Very willing to listen to whatever my requests were.”

The Doctor felt a light bulb go off in his head as the rest of the pieces clicked together, and he felt like an idiot. “I'm such an idiot,” he cursed. “Of course. You all connected this sector of the galaxy with your technological matrix. Mars and Earth and between the two of them you were able to power your needs.”

“You do have a good memory. I am surprised. It has been many many years since you nearly destroyed my project on Gelforsci.”

The Doctor felt his blood run cold. “What did you do to Harry?”

“Oh I just told him a story, gave him Pashti, and let him leave. It was all very civil. I know better than to mess with the child of the Time Lord. What you did to the Olympians still echoes in the vortex.” Osiris fixed the Doctor with a look.
“What did you tell him?” the Doctor demanded through gritted teeth.

“Oh a bedtime story about the Time Lords and the Time War and the End. Can you believe that he knew nothing about the Daleks at all? Or anything about your history with them. It was a most enlightening talk, and I was able to give Pashti a home. She is a rare empathic cat from my planet and needed an empath to bond to. Not that I told young Harry that was why I was giving him Pashti. I was sad to watch her fade away with no bond. She is very happy now.” Osiris smiled and it was all teeth.

Rose fixed Osiris with a glare. “You really didn't have the right to tell that to Harry,” she said.

“The Wolf bares her teeth at me. I believe I feel a bit of fear. You are quite the legend in the Vortex. I see snippets of you whenever I travel through it.”

Rose growled. Then she turned to the Doctor. “And I told you, years ago, that keeping your past from Harry would backfire on you. That day has come. Now you're going to have to face the consequences.”

The Doctor's face froze and then filled with apprehension and fear. “Oh no,” he said. “Oh, why did you have to tell him that?” he said, desperation undercutting his voice.

“I couldn't very well leave your child unknowing of the greatest deeds of his father. Ridding the Universe of the Daleks, that was quite a feat, even if you didn't manage to get all of them. Still, you've gone a destroyed them several times since, haven't you, as have you, Wolf. At least once you dissolved the entire Dalek empire. Your feat still echoes in the Vortex. You created yourself, Bad Wolf.”

“I feel a bit left out of all of this,” Jack said. “And I'm curious, what exactly did you tell Harry?”

“Oh, Immortal, you are always there, ever constant. And I told Harry the truth, as I have seen it. The Time Lords nearly ripped the Universe apart fighting the Daleks, and the Daleks nearly destroyed all that was left. It was quite the war. But now, few are left who remember the Fall, and the Final Moment. I felt that one more should be told the tale, and who better than the child of the Time Lord who ended it himself.”

Rose's mind was racing. Harry rushed out of the temple in a state, he had been given a cat by Osiris. Her mind connected the dots and she turned heel and ran without a word to either the Doctor or Jack.

“What?” Jack said.

“I see your Wolf has figured it out, so to speak Doctor. She even now heads to your wayward child.” Osiris smiled wider. “She will undoubtedly find him. Harry is being obscenely obvious about his destination.”

The Doctor tilted his head, frowning. “What do you mean?”

“If you cannot connect the obvious clues, Time Lord, then I wonder why the Universe is so much in love with you.”

“The little figure with the cat,” Jack whispered. “You're not thinking clearly. Osiris said he gave Harry a cat. Who did we see racing down the street earlier?”

The Doctor's eyes went wide in realization. “A little boy with a cat...his hair was covered by the fabric but I think I saw green eyes. We passed by him and didn't even recognize him.”
“If it's any consolation, Harry probably did the same,” Jack said.

“We need to find him,” the Doctor said, turning to race off in the direction Rose went.

Jack grabbed his arm. “Woah, hold on there. Harry's pissed at you already, right? Probably, if I know what Osiris probably told him. Who do you think he's more willing to talk to right now, you or Rose?” he asked.

The Doctor struggled. “He's my son!” he shouted.

“And right now your son is feeling betrayed because you kept something so big a secret from him. Right now I wouldn't be surprised if his magic lashed out at you.”

“But...he would never..” the Doctor stopped struggling. “I hate this,” he muttered.

Jack patted his arm. “I know. We can take it slow, get to the pyramid a lot later than Rose did. Maybe she'll have calmed him down some.”

The Doctor nodded. “Osiris,” he said, half turning. “I don't ever want to see you or your people again. You've done enough.”

“Oh Doctor, you know us. We would never do something without a reason.” The smile was now saccharine sweet.

“Consider my not getting revenge for emotionally damaging my son fulfilling my apologies for accidentally ruining all your work,” he said dully.

“I shall. This was a most diverting afternoon, and your son has bonded with Pashti, so he shall have a tie of some sort to the Osirion race. I shall consider that payment enough. Pashti is to live with you, as Harry's companion.

The Doctor nodded. He could deal with a cat, even a hyper intelligent and empathic cat. He didn't know if his son would ever want to talk to him again though.

~~~This is a Scene Change~~~~

Rose knew where Harry was headed. He had been so excited for the pyramids, ecstatic, that it would be a logical place to go when upset. And at least one wasn't being worked on right now. He could hole up somewhere around it and be alone, away from the noise and press of people.

And with an empathic cat, it would make an ideal place to bond with it, him, her.

Harry's mind was probably racing through all of the things Osiris had told him, matching them with his own fragmented knowledge of the Doctor's past, and the sense of betrayal would be mounting.

She'd faced similar moments of betrayal at the Doctor's hands at various points in her life.

The Pyramids began to loom into view, already way over her head. It was amazing what they were able to do with little more than chisels, string, logs, water, and manpower. Lots and lots of manpower.

But the far pyramid was not crowded with workers and she headed there, knowing Harry would have made a beeline for it as soon as he noticed it was not in construction.

It took her a decent amount of time jogging before she made it over to the pyramid's base. She had been to Egypt before, with Torchwood. Even the completed pyramids then faded in comparison to
the brand new construction. It was absolutely stunning.

And Harry would have climbed inside, all the way up to the flat to that was acting as the workspace when this pyramid was being built. She sighed, looking up at the limestone bricks. They were huge.

She rubbed her hands together, heating them up for the workout, before starting up.

The climb was refreshing and, overall, rather short. The pyramid was still only thirteen meters high or so. She could see the top of Harry’s head cloth in a far corner, and she walked over, making plenty of noise so Harry would know she was coming.

“I don't want to talk to you,” Harry said as she grew close.

“I'm not your dad, Harry,” she said, sitting down a meter away from him. “And I know a bit about feeling betrayed by the Doctor.”

Harry turned to look at her, eyes red and a sandy colored kitten held lightly in his arms. “What do you mean?” he asked, voice rough and scratchy.

Rose smiled. “Why do you think I was in that alternate dimension when you found me? Did you think I wanted to be there, alone and immortal, with no one even knowing my name anymore?”

Harry tilted his head. “Dad left you there?” he said incredulously.

Rose nodded, leaning forward. “Yes, though he had a semi-decent reason at the time. Your dad was, and still is, in many way, a very broken man. He didn't believe he was worth anybody's love, though he wouldn't say that. So when an accident created a clone of himself, one with a human lifespan, he felt that it would be better for me, a human, so he thought, to live out my life with a human version of himself. So I was left on the other side of a dimensional wall, with a human Doctor who was more human than Doctor, immortal, and eventually alone. And I learned a lot about him through his human counterpart. Because part of Donna was mixed in with the mutated regeneration, he was far less a stickler about privacy and his past.”

Harry frowned. “How could you forgive him though, for doing that to you?” he asked. “I mean, leaving you in a dimension you weren't born in and you didn't choose. Not knowing you were immortal.”

Rose laughed a bit. “I spend many many years destroying many many pictures of your dad in creative and possibly insane ways. My subordinates jokingly labeled a rubbish bin 'Doctor Photos' because I turned so many into scrap paper or ash.”

Harry's eyes were wide. “Did you tell dad that?” he asked.

“I did. He wasn't sure how to take it.”

“I don't know anymore Rose. I mean, why didn't he tell me about what happened to the Time Lords? I knew they were all dead, or gone, and that he was the only one who survived, but he didn't tell me anything Rose. Nothing. And to hear it all from a stranger, it was horrible.”

Rose hummed. “Your dad is nothing if not the soul of self-preservation. He wants people to believe he is a good person because he can't believe it of himself often. He relies on those around him to believe in him to be good to do the right thing sometimes, though he is good. He's great. He's one of the greatest men I've ever known. But all he remembers sometimes are his mistakes. His failures. The times he's had to take life instead of find a way to settle things peacefully. Do you remember after that trip to the rainbow planet, where we weren't able to stop the acid from exploding all over the
“City?” Harry nodded. “He moped for weeks about that. He put on a smile for you, laughed and joked with you, because you gave him hope. You didn't believe he had done anything wrong. That he was still good. But his failure haunted him for a while. He is haunted by his past Harry, and while I don't believe it was right for him to keep things from you, especially when you got old enough to understand them, I know why he did it."

Harry was silent, letting it stew in his mind. Then, “But he's so strong, and he always tries to do what's right, even if it seems impossible. He saved Arthur and Kirigal and found a new home for Kirigal away from humans, even though he had kidnapped Arthur. He saved the High One and Blender even though that was almost an impossible maneuver to do so fast without disturbing the timeline.”

“He is. He is strong, and brave, and good. But he's also a warrior, though he will fight me if I say it. He's got a spirit that bristles at injustice and hates seeing the good turned bad. He will fight tooth and nail for those who can't fight themselves, to protect them from the horror of war. He is a champion of innocence, and in doing so he has none of that innocence he so readily protects. And it hurts him. I think he wanted you to keep that innocence Harry. That faith in him that he needs so badly. He feared that telling you what he had done to end the Time War would shatter that faith, that trust, that love. And he couldn't take that risk.”

Harry breathed a soft sigh, petting the kitten in his arms. “I think he's stupid about things,” he said. “Really stupid. And an idiot. Why would I stop loving my dad because of something he did to help save the Universe? It's horrible and it's terrible that he had to, that he had to take so many lives and lock them away, and it must weigh on his soul every time he thinks about it. But it hurts that he couldn't trust me enough to tell me, that I had to learn from someone else, a stranger. That my father couldn't trust me enough to tell me.” He stopped, sniffling. “That I had to see what he had done through a Memory Crystal.”

Rose blinked, eyes wide. “A memory crystal? You saw the end of the Time War?”

Harry nodded, hugging Pashti close. “Yeah, Osiris was there. he had been traveling through space as a mental projection and watched the last battle at Arcadia. It was horrible, Rose. The things they did, both sides.” He shuddered. Rose wanted to curse the Osirian who had done this, it wasn’t his place. The Doctor maybe should have told Harry when he asked about it, but it wasn’t Osiris’s place to do that.

Rose reached out and Harry curled into her arms. “He's a very scared man who's worried he could lose you at any moment. And while he may have done many things wrong, he's done a lot right. Just talk with him, ask him why he didn't tell you, ask him to tell you more, tell you about his home. From what John told me, Gallifrey was beautiful. There's bound to be a book in the library that the Doctor can find that has pictures.”

Harry nodded. “Alright. Thank you Rose. I'm glad you found me.”

“Me too. Now, who is this delightful little companion you have with you? You certainly didn't have her, him? Before.”

Harry chuckled. “This is Pashti. She's a cat from Osiris's planet and she's an empathic cat. I think she fits me well, since I'm an empath as well.” Pashti turned to look Harry, a meaow coming from her. “Yes, I'm an empath too. Do you want to see?” Pashti seemed to nod.

Harry climbed out of Rose's arms, knowing he couldn't be touching anyone when he took off his necklace. He unclasped it and let it fall into his lap and reached out to touch Pashti's head.
Rose had to shield herself from the blinding golden glow.

Nearby, a group of engineers witnessed the glow and interpreted it as a sign of approval from the gods and vowed to place a symbol to honor them at the top of the pyramids.

Harry, meanwhile, was immersed in his bond with Pashti. Never before had be met another empath he could touch and Pashti was amazing.

The depth of emotion and the acceptance was astonishing, and Pashti didn't overwhelm his senses. Rather, with the empathic bond sealed, they were forever emotionally connected. And Pashti felt she couldn't have found a better companion than the little part human, part Eternal, part Time boy. She curled up in his lap on top of the necklace that had restrained his powers before. She knew the connection would work through the limiter, that was how an empathic bond with those of her kind worked, but she was enjoying the free flow of not only empathic energy but the magical energy that inhabited her companion's body and she wanted to bathe in it a little longer.

~~~~This is a Scene Change~~~~

The Doctor and Jack were making their way to the pyramid site slowly. Jack had convinced the Doctor several times that letting Rose talk with Harry first was a good idea. After all, who else knew as much about being hurt by the Doctor as Rose?

This only served to make the Time Lord even more depressed. Jack just cheerfully waved at everyone he passed by, making a special effort to flirt with everyone.

The Doctor didn't even seem to be paying attention though, and Jack eventually stopped. He wasn't too interested in flirting right now anyway, his thoughts on Harry.

The boy was bound to be hurting. Having something so absolutely horrible revealed about someone you loved was always painful. Having it told to you by a stranger was doubly so.


“Most likely. It's in the right direction. Come on, Rose's had plenty of time to talk with him and I'm concerned about the light.”

Jack took off after the Doctor, hoping that Harry was okay.

They reached the pyramid and scrambled up the sides. It was a short if strenuous climb but when they reached the top, it was to a smiling Rose and a content Harry sitting with a cat.

Without his necklace on. The Doctor tried to not panic.

“Why is he not wearing his necklace?” he asked.

Rose shrugged. “He was bonding with his cat, Pashti. Apparently they get along wonderfully without the need for the necklace.”

“Is your brain still not working Doctor? Osiris said the kitten he gave Harry was empathic. It's probably a mutual thing, they're peas in a pod, if you will.” Jack grinned over at the boy. “I'm glad something good came out of this.”

Harry opened an eye. “Just because I look like I'm relaxing does not mean I can't hear you. And dad, we're gonna have a long talk. About a lot of things.” He stared at the Doctor.
“Of course,” his dad replied, heartfelt honesty in his voice.

“You have one amazing mate/wife/lover/whatever you're calling each other now in Rose. Just to let you know.” Harry then laid down, letting Pashti climb up and settle on his chest just over his heart.

“Rose, I don't know how to...”

Rose shook her head. “I knew some of what he was feeling. And before you start trying to apologize, let's remember the lovely three years we've had now, alright? And any apologies will negate everything those three years have been for us because you spent the first year apologizing at every turn. If you're trying to thank me, I only shared my story with him. You still need to talk to him. I just made him willing to listen to you. I don't perform miracles.”

“You could have fooled me,” Jack muttered.

Rose raised an eyebrow at him. “Really now?”

“You are a walking miracle, Rose, no matter what anyone says. Just by existing you define miracle.”

“That's kind of you to say. I think.”

Jack laughed.

The Doctor felt some of the tension that had been building up inside him fade. It was a lovely feeling, this release of tension, at least some of it. He had been so worried, worried that he had lost his son to a stupid mistake, to a stranger telling him something the Doctor should have told him. Harry was old enough, mature enough, to understand, had been since he turned nine and first asked the Doctor what had happened to the other Time Lords. All that dodging only led to this. He would have to work to get that trust back.

They sat, the four of them, on the unfinished pyramid, watching the workers drag the slabs of stone up ramps, building up the other two pyramids bit by bit.

Only when the sun started going down did they decide to head out themselves. The Doctor and Harry for a long talk, Rose and Jack for a spar in the gym.

And they headed back to the Tardis, a family again. Still a little fractured, still a little broken, but a family.

~~~~This is a Scene Change~~~~

They were in the Library and Harry was sitting on the couch, Pashti curled up on his lap. His necklace was back on his neck, though the connection with his companion was as strong as it was off. Pashti was merely complaining about the lack of magical energy to bathe in. She loved the warm feeling it gave her.

The Doctor was digging through a cabinet that Harry had never been able to open, pulling out several thick tomes and books, before shutting the doors and locking them again.

“What's that cabinet?” Harry asked. “I've never been able to open it.”

“I keep things I believe are too dangerous to leave lying around in the library in there. Books on Gallifrey, specific fields of mathamatics and science. Stuff like that. Books I'll eventually show you, but ones I believe you don't have the knowledge to understand yet, and you might do something with the contents that could be very very dangerous.”
Harry sighed in understanding. He had done enough stupid things with the materials he was allowed access too. He half dreaded half wondered what he could do with those books. “So that's where you've kept all the books on Gallifrey and the Daleks?” he asked.

The Doctor nodded. “Yes,” he answered aloud.

“Why did you keep all this from me?”

“When you were younger, I didn't think you were old enough to really comprehend it. And that was okay when you were little. But as you grew older and more observant, I was scared. I was so scared of what you might think of me, of my people, of what I did to stop the war. I was afraid you would reject me, hate me, for not living up to the standards I had given you.” He wrung his hands, then ran them through his hair, tugging at the ends. “You're my world, Harry, my son, my child, my hope and joy and menace and explorer. You're everything I wished I could be when I was younger. All those bright ideals, those amazing wishes and hopes, that curiosity and acceptance. It took me a long long time to realize many of those traits in myself. And I didn't want you to see those dark times in my past.”

Harry listened, wondered if his dad was listening to what he was saying. “Dad, how could I ever hate you? For one, you’re my dad, you raised me, you gave me all my morals and ideals and goals. You showed me the universe, you make me who I am. That's what parent's do, that's what you did, still do, every day. There will never be a day I won't need you. You're my world. You're the only constant, you and the Tardis, that I have. How could I hate you?”

The Doctor pulled Harry into a tight embrace. “You're an amazing kid, you know that?”

“I wasn't angry at you for what you did. I mean, at first I was. You always say that there's another way, violence isn't the answer, you hate guns and weapons, so I didn’t get it at first, when I was watching it, but there was so much destruction…”

“You saw?” the Doctor said, horror in his voice.

Harry nodded. “Osiris had a memory crystal. It was of the Fall of Arcadia, the last moments of the battle. After watching the destruction and thinking about it, I wasn’t angry about what you did, I sort of understand, in as much as I can, why you did that. It hurt though, that you didn't tell me. That Osiris, someone I didn't know, told me.” Harry curled around Pashti. “It made me feel like I wasn't trustworthy.”

“No, no, never. Never that. Never that.” The Doctor pulled Harry back, looked him firmly in the eye. “I never meant for you to feel like that. I'm so sorry Harry, I'm so sorry.”

“Will you tell me about it now?” he asked, voice strong but soft.

The Doctor smiled. “That's why I went and pulled these books out. They're the last remaining chronicles from Gallifrey. The good, bad, and ugly are in here, all the way through until right before the Time Lock. After that, the self-updating technology shorted out. We can go through them together, if you would like.”

Harry grinned sitting up. “I would like that.”

From the doorway, Rose and Jack, dressed in workout gear, watched with a smile.

~~~~In Which This is an Ending~~~~
Chapter End Notes

In my opinion, that wrapped up too fast. I wanted something….more to happen but I couldn’t figure out what. Ugh. This might be a chapter I come back to and rewrite later, but I’m looking forward to next chapter so I just wanted to get this up.

So, Yes! This is also, for all of you wondering when in the world with Harry get to Hogwarts, the last chapter before Hogwarts! Next chapter is Hogwarts! I have ideas for mini chapters, some of them dealing with the fallout from this chapter and some dealing with the short period of time between this chapter and Hogwarts.

And while I already have the sorting thing planned (I’ve been planning this for a long time) I’d like to see your guesses on this! Anything and everything is fair game!

Also, I moved to a new apartment in Japan, so I have SPACE! I also had to deal with setting up utilities and everything over the phone in Japanese. 0.0 That was fun….

Kuroi
In Which Hogwarts has Arrived

Chapter Summary


Chapter Notes

SOOOOOO, I am a poor example of anything resembling consistency and reliability and anything relating to those two words. *shuffles awkwardly* Sorry for the tremendous delay. I promise this story won't be abandoned, I have too many plans for it, but I also suck at updating.

Here's Hogwarts, at least the start of it. It took up so much space I eventually had to cut it somewhere and so another chapter of epic length arrives. I'm known for them at least...

Enjoy! And thank you for sticking with me this long...I adore you all so much.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

~~~~In Which this is a Beginning~~~~

Harry was, finally, eleven. Or thereabouts somewhere. He wasn't entirely sure, they weren't exactly precise with time measurement on the Tardis. His dad kept track of when they last celebrated his birthday and approximately one earth year later, they celebrated the next one.

This one was his eleventh. Which meant he would get to go to magic school now!

Except he HAD to go to Hogwarts. Not that there was anything wrong with Hogwarts, but everything he knew about magic on Earth in the late 20th century seemed to be backwards, frustrating, and contradictory. His focus was a veritable unknown and they all seemed intent on remaining mired in traditions and stagnating rather than looking forward and seeing what else they could accomplish with their power.

Hogwarts wasn't exactly on his list of schools he wanted to go to when he had discovered this. The building itself, herself, he corrected, was fascinating and he would love to be taught there, but not by those that lived in the 20th century.

No, it wasn't the school. It was the society. He had done a little bit of research, with Jack not his dad, since his dad wouldn't have allowed any at all and Uncle Jack was just likely to block search terms and let him go with a bit of supervision.

He learned that the society was so backwards they almost rejected new-bloods from entering. Why would you reject new-bloods? It made no sense to him. A fresh influx of magic from a new source,
new ideas, different ways! They clung to old traditions, which Harry found odd, and in doing so they absolutely rejected, outright, anything new. New ideas, new ways of doing things, new anything, was almost entirely avoided, ignored, or mocked.

Harry was going to have to do something about that. He was not going to be stuck in a backwards, regressive society for seven years just because of fixed events.

And he had fought long and hard with his dad about just going to Emerald Academy on Haleysio. But no, that was out of the question. There were certain things that had to happen, and Harry had to be there for them to happen. He couldn't just skip around, hop from one to the other when necessary. He had to live in the time stream. Apparently, according to his dad, this fixed event wasn't so much a moment as it was an entire series of moments, each one leading to the next and if they were done improperly an entire timeline could explode.

His timeline, to be specific. And his dad wasn't going to let that happen.

So Harry was going to be stuck going to Hogwarts for seven years. Seven long years where he would be fighting an uphill battle, akin to pushing a boulder while fighting off hordes of Getrifyx Mestria, those annoying little creatures from Kesltian, a relatively large planet with a magical population, that injected a mild paralytic with each bite. Not toxic even in large doses, but man was it really annoying to be stuck laying on the ground while a flock of the annoying little creatures laughed at you.

So he would have to find a way to introduce this society to more modern ideas, like fountain pens, similar to quills but with more reliable nips you didn't have to either keep sharpening or learn how to cast an ever sharpening charm and ruin a number of quills practicing, or shell out for a quill that has those spells already built in and hope you didn't lose it.

He would have to get a plan together.

"Do I really have to go?" Harry whined one more time to his dad.

"Do you want to explode into thousands of tiny crystallized time shards if you don't go?" his dad responded, and Harry couldn't come up with a counter argument.

"Will you at least stay with me then? Don't just drop me off at Hogwarts and take off. Please?" Harry pleaded, eyes wide, looking up at his dad.

His dad sighed, running his hands through his already thoroughly spiky hair. "I wasn't planning on it really, but now you'll have to find a way to make sure I can stay. I'm sure you know that parents aren't generally allowed to stay at Hogwarts while school is in session, aside from professors." The Doctor gave him a look saying yes, he knew about Harry's research.

Harry ducked his head. "I'll add it to the plan," Harry mumbled, wondering if he should have just kept quiet if his dad was planning on staying anyway. Then it would have been his problem.

"You have seven cycles before we go to Hogwarts," the Doctor warned. "I want to get there a bit before term starts and I don't want your age to be too different from what it would be linearly. Also, you probably need to get supplies and that would be easier if school wasn't in session yet."

Harry sighed. "They'll probably try and make me get a focus," he muttered, touching his focus reassuringly, saying he wouldn't let them try. Pashti brushed up against his leg, then jumped with effortless grace to sit on his shoulder. Pashti had, for some reason, stayed nearly the same size she had been when Osiris had given her to him. Harry wondered at first if it was because they were slow
growing cats but Pashti had assured him, in as much as she could with emotions, that she had chosen to stay so small so she could stay close to him at all times when he needed her or she needed him. She would probably grow with him, Harry reasoned, slowly getting bigger as he grew up.

He ran a hand down her back, enjoying the pleased feelings she projected.

"You have one, they don't have to try and get you a different one," the Doctor said. "And I'm sure Pashti will be allowed into the school as well. Pets are probably allowed and no one has to know Pashti isn't a pet, though I wouldn't let anyone call her that, she might hurt them," the Doctor said, grinning as Pashti glared at him through narrowed eyes, all three of them. Her tails twitched, until she sat up proudly, clearly claiming Harry as her pet.

Harry rolled his eyes but obliged his companions request for attention. Pashti would always return the favor by lulling him to sleep.

"I'll start working on an outline for the 'Taking of Hogwarts' plan and get a rough copy to all of you before we go. Come on Pashti, we've got some work to do." Pashti rubbed her head against Harry's as they left the console room where the Doctor was fiddling with things.

A few moments later, Rose poked her head in. "Hey, busy?"

"Not particularly, just fiddling."

"Anything you fiddling with going to blow us all up if you take a break and join me for a bath in this giant bathtub I just found?" she asked, her tone turning sly.

The Doctor's eyes gleamed. "A giant bathtub you say. Do show me."

And so the Tardis inhabitants went through their daily lives.

Jack Harkness, still passed out asleep since it was way too early for him to be awake just yet; with no life threatening or planet threatening emergencies he was still in sleep mode.

Harry, planning and plotting and creating.

Rose and the Doctor, hm-hm, playing.

It was a short seven cycles later that Harry, several pieces of paper in hand, stood in the console room with Rose, Jack, and his Dad, Pashti sitting on his shoulder.

"Well, today is the day," Harry intoned, voice deep and dramatic in pitch.

"Who let him watch Earth era war movies?" Rose whispered. Jack chuckled.

Harry glared at her. "Today is the day we go to Hogwarts. Where we will face the challenges of a society so backwards they haven't managed to figure out what a computer is, much less how to blend technology and magic."

"Seriously, who let him watch those movies," Rose repeated, looking at the Doctor and Jack. "Cause it wasn't me."

Jack raised his hand, chuckles turning in laughter. "I thought it would be interesting. Didn't know he would base his speech on motivational war speeches."

"I wasn't aware he was going to be giving a speech," the Doctor said, looking sceptically at his son.
"I just thought we were getting a piece of paper with some bullet points on it," Rose stated.

Harry groaned. "Come one you guys! We're going to be stuck at Hogwarts for most of a year at a
time, let me have my fun! I had the whole thing planned out and everything! It was awesome!"

"Sorry, sorry, I'll let you finish." Rose gestured. "You have the floor, General Harry."

Harry pouted. "Now you're ruining, I can't do it. You all suck space rocks."

"You know, you had better diction and insults when you were eight. What happened?" the Doctor
asked.

"You started letting him watch movies on a regular basis," Rose said, quirking a smile.

The Doctor sighed. "Knew installing that roaming package would only lead down a dangerous
path."

"It has twisted your extremely smart, verbose child into a dramatic speech giving, poor insults
flinging pre-teen," Rose said seriously. "This is a dire situation and we must address it immediately."

"I recommend a more rigorous course of physics modules followed by a harrowing adventure though
the mining shafts of an old asteroid, followed by some maths," the Doctor said.

Jack was trying to contain his laughter as Harry's face fell, realizing his parents were, for all intents
and purposes, mocking him.

"It's alright Harry," Jack said in wheezing gasps. "I'll help you get them back later. But this is too
funny."

Harry sighed. He would have to wait out the various adults laughing spells before he could give
them his plan.

Five minutes later, they had managed to regain some control and Harry just passed out his papers.
"I've just put down a basic plan. I mean, mine is more complicated, but I gave you the simplified
version."

"This is simplified?" Rose said, staring at the tiny print. "This looks like what I used to take to
chemistry tests when the teacher let us bring in a notecard with helpful hints on it. I can barely read
it."

"The gist of it is," Harry continued in the face of amusement. "That we need to change the 20th
century magical world. It is completely backwards. So, you three, you are not leaving me there on
my own. I need you. So you're staying. We can inquire as to teaching positions you can take up,
things you can do around the castle if the headmaster doesn't want you to stay because you're my
family, but you aren't leaving me there. Understand?"

"We weren't planning on it Harry," Jack said. "Let you have all the magical adventures as Hogwarts
alone? I know more about Hogwarts than probably anyone else there. You won't count, you'll have
direct communication with the castle with your empathy, but everyone else I'll have beat hands
down."

"And I'm not leaving him alone unsupervised. How many professors will he piss off by flirting with
them? He's going to get turned into so many different things that someone's going to have to keep an
eye on him, and your dad isn't leaving you there on your own. So we'll all find ways of staying there
with you," Rose said, jerking a thumb at Jack and nodding towards the Doctor.
Harry smiled. "Thanks. So, we can go over more of the plan after we get there. It's really awesome!"

Rose laughed. "Let's get there first, Harry. There's probably a lot of things we're going to have to do when we arrive, like shopping." She laughed at Harry's face, which was a mix between excitement and horror. He had a love/hate relationship with the activity.

Harry raced for the console as soon as the Doctor started flipping switches and began to help, pressing buttons with the ease born from many many years of practice. He had been flying the Tardis since he was tall enough to look at the console.

When the shaking subsided, Harry rushed for the door, yanking it open, ready to start on his 'Change Hogwarts For The Better' plan.

"Um, dad, what's the holiday with the pumpkins and the bats? Cause I think we're a little late," Harry said. "Also, I found out where all the red hair went." In front of the Tardis doors was a pack of red headed boys, four of them. Two of them were identical.

"That's Halloween. What is it with you all and not being able to tell holidays apart."

"It's not like there's a calendar in the Tardis uncle Jack, that would be rather pointless, yeah?" Harry pointed out. Jack shook his head.

"Well, after you magic boy."

Harry exited first, realizing that the silence wasn't because the hall was empty, as he had sort of thought at first, but because everyone, all the many hundreds of them, were staring at him.

"Um..." He fidgeted.

His dad and Rose followed, and Jack came out next, pulling the door shut behind him.

"Welcome to Hogwarts, Harry Potter!" came a voice from the front of the hall. Harry looked around, realizing they had interrupted something. A wave of whispers followed the announcement, a buzz of noise, until it subsided as everyone continued to stare at the four interlopers.

"Uncle Jack, when is Halloween?" he asked.

"October 31st. So yeah, we're a bit late, if you were asking."

"We're over three months late," Harry said, pulling up the Earth calendar in his mind and counting days.

The huge doors slammed open and a man in a turban ran into the room.

"TROLL! TROLL! Troll, in the dungeons!" He paused looked pale as he glanced around the room. "Thought you ought to know," he said faintly, before collapsing. The sicking sound of his head hitting the stone echoed through the hall.

"Ouch," Harry said, "That had to hurt. Stone is not fun to faint on. Rather painful on the landing." He looked up at his dad. "Hey, can I go see the troll? The last one I saw was awesome!"

"Take Jack with you, he knows where the dungeons are," the Doctor said.

Harry grinned at Jack. "Come on! Let's go!" And before anyone could say anything to the contrary, Harry and Jack raced out of the Great Hall.
Rose prodded the Doctor. "You do know we are in a rather large, populous, though extremely silent hall right?" she whispered in an undertone.

"The number of people has not escaped me. Hello! I like your hair," he said, much louder, winking at the group of boys in front of them. The twins beamed. "Dumbledore, old fellow, you look a bit stressed. Is everything alright?"

Dumbledore chuckled. "Aside from you being nearly three months later than you were supposed to be, I suppose I am concerned that you just let Harry run off after a troll."

The Doctor waved a hand. "He's got Jack with him. Between the two of them the troll's not a problem. So, I see we're interrupting here. Anywhere we could discuss whatever needs to be discussed in maybe a bit more privacy?" he asked.

Dumbledore nodded. "Of course. Hagrid, Severus, if you could go see to the troll? And make sure young Mr. Potter and Jack are alright. Severus, if you could escort them to my office when you are done. Filius, Pomona, if you could stay here until Severus sends the all clear, then have the Prefects escort the students back to their common rooms. Afterwards, please join me in my office. Madam Pomfrey, it seems as if Professor Quirrell has hit his head rather hard, if you could look him over I would be obliged. Minerva, if you would join me. Doctor, you and your companion can follow us to my office." The aforementioned Severus and Hagrid stood up and headed out the door, following the steps Harry and Jack had taken moments before.

A woman in a long white robe bustled forward toward the fallen Professor Quirrell, waving her wand and starting to levitate him towards the entrance hall. "Quite the nasty fall, concussion for sure. He must have had such a fright, his heart's racing." She continued to mutter to herself as she floated the professor away.

"Head Boy and Girl, Prefects, if you would make sure all students stay in the Great Hall until your heads of house tell you you may leave." There was a chorus of agreements from several of the older students as Dumbledore raised his voice to issue the instructions.

"So, we're to follow you then?" the Doctor said, looking over at Dumbledore as he made his way towards the Tardis. "Hello, I don't believe we've met," he said to McGonagall.

"Yes, we'll head to my office. Plenty of quiet there for us to discuss things. And this is Professor McGonagall. She teaches transfiguration." Dumbledore looked at Rose. "And I don't believe I've met your young companion."

"I'm Rose. Long time companion and, dear, did we ever get that marriage license finalized properly?" Rose asked, turning to look at the Doctor.

He pursed his lips. "Hmmm, not the proper one, no."

Rose snorted. "Well, whenever we get that finalized, I'm also married to him. So, onwards to your office?" she said.

Dumbledore was taken aback by her confidence and tone. She didn't look much over twenty yet she spoke as if she were much older. "Yes, well, follow me."

As the strangers left the Great Hall, it was as if a spell was broken. Noise filled it once again, but not about the troll. Rather, the news of Harry Potter arriving at Hogwarts, and the three strangers who traveled with him. Someone swore he heard Potter call the tall man with the wild hair Dad!

Rose and the Doctor followed Dumbledore and McGonagall up the many winding staircases, past
suits of armor and paintings, none of which were there when Hogwarts was new.

"Is this the way to the Founder's private chambers?" Rose asked in a whisper.

"Think so. Guarded by a gargoyle, remember?"

"The same one Harry pissed off so much it shot fireballs at him?" she replied, amusement tingeing her voice.

The Doctor grinned. "The very same. Oh, and there it is, old Stoney!"

Apparently he had spoken loud enough for the gargoyle to hear and it turned its head to blink slowly at him, clearly not amused. The Headmaster and McGonagall, who hadn't registered the nickname, looked at the statue with bewilderment.

McGonagall raised an eyebrow. "What was that?" she asked.

"I have no idea," Dumbledore replied. "It's never done that before."

Rose laughed. "It seems to remember us," she muttered under her breath. The Doctor snorted.

"Fizzing Whizbees," Dumbledore said, the gargoyle stepped aside, revealing the staircase behind it. It was moving this time, and all stepped onto a stair, whisked upwards at a sedate if steady pace. The Gargoyle slid shut behind them. Dumbledore let them all into his office at the top and they crowded in.

It wasn't much different from when he had picked up Harry, the Doctor thought, looking over the myriad of strange and whirring mechanisms. Most of them seemed to be monitoring various things, though he would need Harry here to tell him what the magic inside of them was doing. He could pick out a few, but the vast majority were unknown.

"What were you thinking, letting Mr. Potter run off like that?" McGonagall finally said, glaring at the two. "You let him run off after a troll, with only a single adult to accompany him! He's eleven!"

Rose blinked, looked over at the Doctor. "Doctor, is Mr. Potter supposed to mean Harry?" she asked.

The Doctor nodded, waving a hand. "Yeah. Though we never really bother with secondary names, well, unless you consider Jack, and I think he's just gotten used to having it. No real need for the rest of us. I don't think Harry even remembers it, though I did tell him."

"Are you listening to me?" McGonagall interrupted. They turned to her, eyes wide. "Why did you let him run off after a troll? They're dangerous and Mr. Potter is only eleven!"

The Doctor rolled his eyes. "They're only dangerous if you don't pay proper attention to their body language and antagonize them. Dumb, yes. Strong, yes, but not inherently dangerous. And I made him take Jack. Between the two of them they'll be fine."

Dumbledore and McGonagall exchanged looked. "Doctor, this is not a joking matter. You sent an eleven year old off into a school where there is a troll loose with nothing more than a cheerful farewell and a single adult. I gave Harry to you to care for him, not to let him run straight into danger whenever it presented itself."

Rose gasped out a giggle. "You...you," she couldn't finish the sentence.
The Doctor sent a reproving glare at her, before turning to the headmaster. "You gave Harry to me when he was barely over a year old. I raised him as I saw fit and he is brilliant. He knows when he can't deal with something and he can handle himself just fine. I didn't raise a child who can't take care of himself. Harry is more than capable of keeping himself safe."

"Doctor, that is highly optimistic. Harry is eleven," Dumbledore said.

The Doctor rolled his eyes. "You obviously don't place a lot of faith in eleven year olds. You run a school filled with children, surely you must run into self-sufficient children."

McGonagall looked like she was ready to go off on the Doctor again, something, Rose knew, would not end well for the elderly woman. Attacking the Doctor was one thing, attacking his son, that would result in serious consequences.

"Minerva, let's wait until Severus returns with Harry and this Jack. We'll discuss it further then. What I would like to know is why you have arrived three months after the start of the school year. Our agreement was that you would bring Harry back in time for him to start Hogwarts, in August, specifically. His letter was unable to reach you, not even Fawkes could find you." Dumbledore steepled his fingers.

Rose and the Doctor traded looks. As part of their discussion about Harry attending Hogwarts, they had decided, as a group, that they would keep the Time and Space travelling part of Harry's life a secret. It would create more problems that it would provide solutions and it would also give Harry the necessary reminder that no, he couldn't just take off whenever.

"Well, the Tardis has specialized wards protecting it. Mail doesn't get in unless we've approved the sender first, actually the sender needs to contact us before they can even get the location. It's not something I can actually dismantle, really. Part of her charm. She's very protective," the Doctor said.

"Tardis?" McGonagall said, tasting the word.

"That blue box we came out of? That's the Tardis. Only one like her on the planet," Rose said, interjecting whatever the Doctor was going to say. She had far more experience dealing with living in a single time stream for extended periods. "From what I understand, you, Dumbledore, have been inside her. Very spacious, wouldn't you agree?"

Dumbledore nodded, tipping back in his chair. "Yes, yes, from what I recall. Some very impressive expansion charms, especially since the outside was rather small in comparison. It acts like a portkey, a functional, live-in portkey. It was one of the things that drew me to you, Doctor, when I was thinking of someone to place Harry with."

The Doctor struggled to say something that wouldn't completely disregard everything Rose had just said. He took quite a bit of offense to the Tardis being referred to a mere object, something dead and inanimate. The Tardis was his home, everything he had left of his people, and his longest companion. She knew him like few ever had.

"She, Dumbledore. The Tardis is alive. In, I suspect, much the same way Hogwarts is." Rose gestured around her.

Dumbledore leaned forward, eyes twinkling. "So you sense it?" he asked.

Rose shrugged. "There are enough signs, Hogwarts is much like the Tardis in that regard. Moving staircases, windows that let in just the right amount of light to see by. I would suspect using magic on those things would be rather pointless considering the large number of windows and staircases and
The need to replenish the charms after a short time, but Hogwarts takes care of those who live within her. The Tardis is the same."

The Doctor grinned. Rose always knew what to say.

"Yes, you are correct. During the time of the Founders it was believed they sunk so much magic into building Hogwarts that there were already signs of sentience. As hundreds of years passed and more and more students practiced magic here, more magic clung to the building and it gained a personality, if you will." Dumbledore smiled at Rose. Then he turned to the Doctor. "That still doesn't explain why you are here three months late."

"Bad driving?" the Doctor said, a sheepish grin crossing his face. "Look, we're here in time for Harry to join his year mates, yeah? First year is mostly theory and such, isn't it? Harry has a good grounding in theory as it is. He should be fine."

McGonagall sniffed. "We will have to test him on what he knows so we can evaluate his level. He may need to join us for makeup lessons for a few weeks to make sure he is able to keep up. We are almost a third of the way through the year and much of the important grounding lessons were given at the start of term."

Rose laughed. "I am sure you'll find Harry up to your expectations," she said.

Dumbledore straightened. "Severus is at the Gargoyle. There seems to have been some initial trouble, but they will be here in just a moment."

"You think Stoney remembered Harry?" Rose whispered to the Doctor.

"Bet you he did," the Doctor replied.

"If he shows up with soot on his face, you'll have your answer."

And it was, indeed, a soot stained Harry who crossed the threshold, followed by a sniggering Jack and a perplexed looking Severus Snape.

Dumbledore was not sure what to make of his usually dour potions master's expression, but he was sure the story was going to be an interesting one.

~~~In Which This is a Scene Break~~~~

Harry and Jack raced from the Great Hall, Jack yelling out directions behind Harry. After his many years in Hogwarts, he knew the castle better than anyone alive. Only Harry, with his empathic connection, would do better, but only if he was able to create the connection again.

"Left, Harry, then take the next staircase until it stops. We'll be pretty close then. The underground portion is a bit further down, but there aren't any doors the troll could have gotten through in the underground area, so it'll be on that level, most likely."

Harry skidded around the corner and started down the staircase, excitement in his veins.

The excitement turned cold at the sound of a crash, followed by a high pitched scream. "Guess you're right! And someone's pissed it off!" Harry shouted back, pushing his legs to go faster. He stumbled off the stairs and rushed towards the racket the troll was making, the sound of broken stone and screaming easily reaching his ears.

"Harry, if I distract it can you go find whoever is trapped in there? I think that's a girl's toilet, so
check in the stalls. If they're smart, they'll be out of sight. Trolls aren't bright enough to tell exactly where a sound is coming from, even one close by."

Harry nodded. "Just remember Uncle Jack, technology works weird in Hogwarts!"

"I know brat, I lived here for sixty five odd years! Now go, before whoever it is get's hurt!"

Jack took off towards the troll first, taking out a small, compact pellet gun, one propelled by springs and mechanisms rather than electricity. On a human, or any species with a human-like physiology, it would leave wicked bruises and cuts at close range.

On a troll, it pinged off the skin as if it were stone. But it served it's purpose, momentarily distracting the beast so Harry could slip around the back and into the wreckage of the toilets.

Wreckage was probably too nice of a word for what had happened. The sinks were smashed to tiny bits of rubble, the first three stalls were knocked inwards from heavy blows delivered by, Harry guessed, the club the troll was currently trying to squish his uncle with. The last two stalls were still upright, but only just. Large gouges were taken out of the ceiling from heavy handed swings and the floor was a wasteland of stone and pipes and glass. Harry picked his way over the rubble towards the last two stalls. He could hear the sounds of panicked breathing now that Uncle Jack had lured the troll away from the interior of the bathroom.

"Hey, I'm heading over to you now. Don't panic, my uncle's dealing with the troll, so we can get you out of here no problem. Can you tell me your name?" Harry said, loud enough for the person to hear but not loud enough to draw the troll's attention to him.

"H...hello...? I'm Hermione. Hermione Granger," a small voice said, wavering. "Are you really here to save me?"

"Yes I am, Hermione Granger. Lovely name. Your parents must have really loved Shakespeare. Or been big fans of the Greeks." Harry crawled over a bit more until he reached the last stall where Hermione had taken refuge and pushed the door in gently. "Hello Hermione. Now, up and out you go. Gently now."

Harry reached a hand out and Hermione grasped it tightly. Her face was streaked with tears and her bushy brown hair shoved backwards under a band Harry often saw Rose using. "You're my age," Hermione said, keeping her voice down, the waver still strong.

Harry grinned. "Yeah, probably. I'm Harry. Nice to meet you. Now, let's get you out. My uncle can't keep the troll distracted too long."

~~~POV Change~~~

Hermione followed Harry over the rubble and out the door, behind the troll. Harry shoved her backwards, towards the stairs. "Go, hurry. Be quiet though. You don't want the troll to hear you. It's pissed off and they aren't very nice when they're pissed off. All the school officials are in the Great Hall, you can let them know where we are. I'm sure they have contingency plans for things like this." Harry pushed Hermione a bit more. "Go, hurry!"

Hermione stumbled backwards, unsure. The boy, Harry, he wasn't coming with her? She hadn't seen him in classes or the Great Hall before, and she didn't remember him being sorted, but he could be a year above her. But he didn't look old enough to be a second year. He barely looked old enough to be a first year, though he was tall enough to be one.

And was that man shooting a BB Gun at the troll? Hermione scurried backwards, but hovered at the
end of the hall to watch. If Headmaster Dumbledore knew about the troll, they would send someone to deal with it.

~~~POV Change~~~

Harry reached down to his side and stuck his hand through a small slit in his pants. His focus was easy to reach and he touched it.

Anything we can do?

"You find yourself in the most interesting situations, Our Child," his focus said, amusement in their voice.

Well, it's either figure something out now or Uncle Jack is gonna blast the troll with his stupid matter realignment gun.

"Trolls are notoriously resistant to magic and you don't know the proper spells to deal with it. You would have to overpower any created spell to make an impact, dangerously overpowers. You could cause more harm than good. You are trying to keep it alive, yes?"

That's the general idea. I don't think a troll wandered in here on it's own and it wouldn't be right to just kill it. Knocking it out would be the best case scenario.

"You'll have to overpower that spell. Focus on your need...oh, well, it looks like we are not needed after all."

Harry stared at his Uncle, who had taken out his small, compact gun and blasted the troll head on. The troll had wavered, it's image shifting and fading in and out of view, before it collapsed.

"Uncle! You weren't supposed to use that! Do you know what you've done? I thought we weren't gonna kill it!" Harry stomped around the collapsed troll pile and towards Jack, who was sliding the gun out of sight.

Jack rolled his eyes. "Calm down Harry. You weren't acting fast enough and I had run out of pellets. You're lucky that distraction worked at all. And I think it's still alive. There wasn't enough juice in the realignment ray to do much. It couldn't complete the shift. I think it knocked the troll out. Maybe a few organs mixed up and a limb might be in the wrong place or two, but it's still alive. The magic interfered and the troll was particularly resistant."

Harry turned to the troll, clambering over motionless limbs until he found its mouth. "Well, you're in luck, it's still breathing. Still, what were you thinking? You could have wrecked the entire hallway with that!"

"You're overreacting. You were taking too long and I needed to do something. I would really not liked to have regenerated after being hit by that club. Painful and we are trying to keep things not obvious, yeah?" Jack picked Harry up like a football and carried him a bit away from the troll before setting him down. "Now, have you seen your fill of troll? I think the old guy had something he wanted to discuss with you."

Harry straightened his clothes, shooting Jack a half hearted glare. "Oi. You can't go around saying old guy, ancient one. And I think that's Dumbledore. Headmaster of Hogwarts."

~~~POV Change~~~

Hermione had backed herself into a corner, hidden from sight around the backside of the staircase,
watching with wide eyes. Her rescuer was...weird. He had no shoes on for starters, and his clothes were odd. They weren't magical clothes, but they didn't look like the clothes she would buy from the store either. His hair was longer than most boys kept it and messy, and his eyes were a vibrant green. Something strange glittered on his neck too, but she couldn't see it well enough to figure it out.

"Oh, did you manage to get whoever was in there out?" Jack asked, pulling Hermione's focus back to the discussion.

Harry nodded. "Yeah, a girl. About my age, or she looked like she was about my age. Her name's Hermione Granger. I sent her back upstairs when I realized you weren't done handling the troll."

"Alright. Oh, looks like we have some company. A bit late, no?"

Hermione started as she realized Jack was right. Professor Snape and the giant man Hagrid were coming down the stairs. She squished herself up more into the corner to avoid being seen.

~~~~~In Which This is a Quick Scene Change~~~~~

Severus Snape stalked out of the Great Hall, Hagrid following close behind. He would have headed towards the forbidden corridor where he was sure Quirrell was heading, if the man had not been carted off by Pomfrey.

No, instead he was heading off that ridiculous child of James Potter's who had torn off after a troll, a TROLL of all things. Did that Doctor teach him no common sense? He wouldn't count on it, seeing as the man let the boy run off. If he got hurt, Lily would kill him.

He refrained from muttering obscenities under his breath, hoping they would reach the boy and that other man before the troll pounded them into pieces. Trolls were not to be trifled with. Hagrid kept up with his long, fast strides simply by virtue of his size. Snape was marginally pleased Dumbledore had sent the half-giant along. The man's insatiable love for dangerous creatures would be a boon when it came to dealing with the troll, not to mention his sturdy frame could take a hit or two and be fine.

He took the stairs at a trot. The dungeons were a decent number of steps down, opening out to the back entrance to the school, no doubt where that insufferable fraud had let it in.

He just hoped they weren't too late.

He reached the bottom of the stairs and turned, only to see Harry and the other man relaxing beside the fallen troll.

It seems they weren't needed. Snape scowled.

"What did ya do to the beastie?" Hagrid's voice rang out.

~~~~~POV Change~~~~~

"What did ya do to the beastie?" a huge, deep voice called down the hall as Harry and Jack turned to look at their company.

Harry blinked. The speaker was a tall man, very tall, nearly half again as tall as the man in front of him. "Wow, didn't know people could get that tall on Earth at this time in it's life," Harry muttered to Jack. "Hello, well, I would say welcome to the party but you're a little late," he said louder, grinning at the two approaching adults. "Uncle Jack already managed to deal with the troll. Though not in an approved manner," he said in an undertone, raising an eyebrow at Jack.
"Uncle Jack?" the smaller man said. "I take it that you are Uncle Jack?" He looked at Jack with narrowed eyes.

Jack puffed up, a grin spreading across his features, a grin Harry knew all too well. "Yep, Jack Harkness at your service. Any service, rea-oof!" He wheezed when Harry slammed an elbow into his side.

"Oi, not here, Mr I-Flirt-With-Anything-that-Remotely-Resembles-Life. You've lost your flirting privileges for using the MRG. Besides, have you forgotten? You're at a magic school. They'll turn you into potions ingredients instead of slapping you." Harry looked up at the two mildly shocked faces. "Sorry about him. He's notorious. I'm Harry. Glad you could join us, shame you're a bit late though." Harry poked the downed troll with his foot.

"How, exactly, did you manage to take down a mountain troll, Mr. Potter?" the smaller man said.

Harry just poked at the troll a bit more, leaning down to examine it closer. "Uncle Jack, I think you managed to put it's arms where it's legs belong."

"Really? I didn't think that would happen. Actually, well, anything other than complete obliteration usually means something weird happened." Jack rubbed his side. "And was that necessary? My ribs are sore."

"You shouldn't flirt with everyone you meet. It's unhealthy."

"Untrue. I'll let you know that I have quite the healthy…"

"Uncle!"

"Mr. Potter!"

Jack and Harry looked up. "Who? I thought you were talking to each other. Are you talking to us? He's Jack Harkness, no Potter here," Harry said, standing up. "I'm Harry. Also not Potter."

"But...but yer Harry Potter. Son ah Lily an' James Potter," the large man protested.

Harry frowned. "I recall something….dad said something about a Lily and James...those are the two who gave birth to me, yeah? Got my biological data, well, original biological data, from them. Never knew them though. Their last name was Potter? So it's supposed to be my last name? How does that work?"

Jack put a hand on Harry's shoulder. "I could have sworn we went over the tradition of the child receiving the birth father's last name with you at some point," he said.

"Maybe. Don't remember. Anyway, we've got other things to do right now! Where'd dad and Rose go? Oh, and we never got your names," he said, turning to the two other adults.

"I'm Hagrid, Keeper of the Keys and Grounds at Hogwarts. This is…"

"I am Professor Snape, Head of Slytherin House and Potions Professor. Your two other companions are in the Headmaster's Office, Mr. Potter. As soon as I assist Hagrid with the troll, I will escort you there."

Harry turned to Jack. "Slytherin House? There's houses now?"

Jack shrugged. "It was something Godric started when they got older. It was a way to cut down on
the number of students they oversaw. If they split them into four houses, then they had a smaller number to look after."

Harry nodded. "Ah, that makes sense. Well, it seems to be institutionalized now. Wonder how they divide them…"

There was silence for a moment as Professor Snape and Hagrid made sure the troll was unconscious before Snape turned to them. "Hagrid, I will leave the troll to you. It won't be awake for quite a while, I'm sure you can get it out of the castle."

"I'll get 'im out alright. Harry, when ya have some time, come talk with me!"

Harry waved, grinning. Then he turned to Snape, who had a cold, borderline sneer on his face. "If you will follow me, Mr. Potter, Mr. Harkness." Snape turned and swept off down the hall.

"Wonder what's crawled up his backside," Harry whispered. "And he keeps calling me Mr. Potter. I don't like it."

"You can protest the name later. For now let's get moving. We're already three months late to your magic school and you're probably gonna have to play catch up. Let's not get on the bad side of one of your professors." Jack yanked Harry down the hall and after Snape.

They made a brief stop at the hall they had landed in, Snape entering to tell the remaining teachers that the students could return to their common rooms, before gesturing them impatiently up the great staircase and higher upwards.

Harry protested silently all the way up the multitude of staircases until he realized where they were heading.

"Um, Uncle Jack, this is the way to the Founder's Office. Stoney doesn't particularly like me after I nearly blasted him off his perch when he wouldn't let me in…"

Jack laughed. "It's been a thousand years or so, I bet that old statue doesn't even remember you."

"Sure, right, when it flings fireballs at me, you're explaining the reason why," Harry muttered.

They reached the landing where Harry recalled the stone gargoyle residing, and sure enough, as soon as the gargoyle laid eyes on Harry, it's stone face twisted into a snarl and a fireball was flying through the air, landing just shy of Harry but still sending soot everywhere.

It was only the one fireball, though Snape seemed particularly confused. "What did you just do?" he hissed.

Harry coughed. "I don't know." A few more coughs. "Is it supposed to do that?"

Snape frowned. "I am...not sure..." He turned to the gargoyle, unmoving stone once more. He eyed it warily before giving the password and watching it jump aside. The stone staircase was moving, and he waved them onto it, following up with a sour look.

Harry edged past the gargoyle, but the stone being wasn't ready to let Harry go just yet. As he walked by, it turned it's massive head and blew a stream of soot directly into his face.

"Oi, what was that for you great lump of stone?" Harry coughed, wiping his face on his shirt.

"You're just lucky that thing didn't breathe fire at you," Jack said.
"It can't deliberately hurt me, only inconvenience me. And I don't get it. It's been ages since…"
Harry coughed some more. He wiped his face of as much of the soot as he could.

Harry glared back at his giggling uncle and stalked up the staircase. He was first through the door at the top, angling directly for his dad, pout firmly in place.

"I take it Stoney remembered you?" Rose said in an undertone.

Harry glared at her.

"You decide to get a makeover? Really rocking the streaky I-was-just-in-a-fire look," the Doctor said, a mocking grin on his face.

Harry decided to sulk away from his dad.

"Mr. Potter, I'm glad you could join us."

Harry whirled around at the voice, turning to look at the headmaster. "Ah, hello. You should really have a talk with your gargoyle. It doesn't like me at all." Harry gestured down to his clothes and face. "And really, do you have to call me 'Mr. Potter'? It's not my name."

Dumbledore raised an eyebrow, then looked at the Doctor. "Did you not tell him of his parents?" he asked, incredulosity in his voice.

Harry frowned. "That's my dad you're talking to, and Rose next to him is more or less my mum."

"I'm referring to Lily and James Potter, my boy. Surely you know of your parents?"

"Well, yeah, I mean, I know I'm not dad's biological son, I didn't get my genetic material from him, but to say he's not my dad is really rather shortsighted of you," Harry informed the headmaster. "And dad told me about Lily and James. I was told I get my eyes from Lily and this mop of unruly hair from James. I know they died protecting me, and I'll always be grateful, but I don't have any clear memories of them." Harry shrugged.

Dumbledore stared at the boy in front of him, not quite sure what to make of him. He hadn't known what to expect when he gave Harry to the Doctor ten years ago, but this was clearly a child who was not a typical eleven year old boy.

Harry was tall for his age, Dumbledore noted. His vibrant green eyes, brighter even than Lily's had been, shone with intelligence. He had wondered if Harry would inherit the infamous poor eyesight that plagued the Potter line, but he had avoided it. His hair was longer than James ever kept his, falling below his ears in a wave of inky blackness, hiding the scar that made him famous in the wizarding world. Other than the hair and eyes, there was little that struck truly of either James or Lily. A sharp nose and narrow face didn't seem to belong clearly to either parent, and his cheekbones were closer to his paternal grandmother's. His clothes were odd, clearly muggle, and shimmered in the light. His jacket was extremely intricate and he could have sworn it had magic imbued into the cloth. His eyes narrowed as he saw Harry's bare feet. He would be speaking with the Doctor about letting young children run about with bare feet in October.

"Alright then, we'll discuss your pare…" Harry shot the headmaster a look. "Lily and James Potter at a later date. Right now, Harry, we have a few things we need to discuss. You are three months late and have no supplies, it seems, which must be rectified immediately. It is much too late to go to Diagon Alley this evening, but tomorrow morning, I believe you have a free period in the morning, Minerva?" Dumbledore turned to look at his transfiguration professor and deputy headmistress.
"Yes, yes, I do. I have no classes until after lunch as my normal morning groups of seventh years have that time to prepare for special demonstrations. If we can get supplies sorted out in the morning, then you can join the first year class with me after lunch. I will be able to evaluate your skills and see how much catching up you need to do." Minerva looked at Harry. "I suspect since it isn't too late in the year, if you have either your father's skills or your mother's intelligence, you shall catch up in at least my class in little time."

Harry sighed. "Dad's the one with the intelligence and Rose is the one with the skills. If you're going to refer to to Lily and James, could you use their names? Please?"

"Oi, I have skills," the Doctor protested.

Rose raised an eyebrow. "Skills that involve causing civil revolts don't count, dear," she said.

"I do more than that!"

"You keep thinking that way." Rose patted him on the shoulder in an obviously condescending manner, a small grin tucked into the corner of her mouth. "Jack has more practical skills than you do, and no, Jack, that was not an invitation to list them," Rose said as Jack opened his mouth.

The immortal captain sighed. "You never let me have any fun."

"For good reason. You wouldn't have brain cells left if we let you run off at the mouth. How Sal managed to keep you human-shaped for so long is a mystery." Rose stuck her tongue out at Jack, enjoying the teasing.

"Um, Rose? Uncle? I think the professors are getting a little impatient," Harry said, looking between the raised eyebrows on the stern transfiguration master's face, the potion master's drawn and pinched expression, and the headmaster's narrowed eyes. "I mean, we were three months late and everything."

The three other members of Harry's family all fell silent.

"Thank you. Now, Severus, I trust the troll is taken care of? You returned much faster than I anticipated," Dumbledore turned to the potions master.

Severus scowled. "The troll was unconscious before I even reached it. Those two did something to it. There were little pellets all over the floor but no obvious source and there was something wrong with the troll. Hagrid will be able to tell you more when he gets the thing out of the castle."

Dumbledore looked over at Harry and Jack. "I see. And what exactly did you do to the troll? Harry here is too young to have used magic, and I don't recognize you," Dumbledore gestured to Jack.

Jack Harkness grinned and straightened. "Jack Harkness. Honorary uncle to the little troublemaker there. And a daft hand at BB guns."

Harry rolled his eyes. "He used the MRG. Knocked the troll out and possibly switched all of its limbs around."

"Jack!" Rose said, sighing.

"What, Harry here was…." he trailed off at Harry's glare.

Whatever else anyone might have said was interrupted by the arrival of the final two heads of house.
"The students have all returned to their common rooms. The prefects say everyone is accounted for, no missing students," a small man said. "Now, I see we have the missing Mr. Potter here. Has his house been decided?"

Harry sighed. "Can you stop calling me Mr. Potter? Please? It's not my name."

The small man frowned. "You are the son of…" Dumbledore held up a hand.

"We will discuss that later. For now, we have the requisite number of witnesses and a representative from each House to commence with a Sorting, however late it is." The Headmaster turned to his shelves and picked up the large, floppy brimmed hat.

Jack grinned, leaning over to Rose and the Doctor. "That old thing used to belong to Godric. He hated it, said it never sat on his head right and he didn't understand why his oldest son gave it to him in the first place. He didn't know Aeden had enchanted the thing to always slide right into the wearer's eyes as a joke."

Rose snickered. "Like father, like son," she said back.

"I am Professor Flitwick, Head of Ravenclaw. I teach Charms. I look forward to you in my classes, Mr…..Harry," the little professor said in his squeaky voice.

Harry grinned. "Nice to meet you."

"Professor Sprout, Head of Hufflepuff. I am the Herbology professor." The woman in all brown smiled at Harry.

Harry waved. He was going to kill so many poor poor plants in that class, he could already guess. He had no skill with plants.

"Now that introductions have been had, we can sort young Harry into his house. Are you able to do that?" Dumbledore directed his question at the hat.

Its fabric wrinkled a bit, until a mouth appeared. Harry raised an eyebrow, looking at Jack, who shrugged. "I can, though why are you calling me so late in the year? Firsties don't usually show up this late."

"Young Harry here is the exception, rather than the norm. His arrival was delayed by unexpected events."

"I see. Well, I shall desist with the song, as I haven't quite come up with a new one and the old one has faded. Suffice to say, young magical, that there are four houses, Ravenclaw, Hufflepuff, Slytherin, and Gryffindor, and all four have their own unique charms. Ravenclaw values knowledge, Hufflepuff values loyalty, Slytherin values ambition, and Gryffindor values bravery. Where you will be sorted will be your home in Hogwarts."

Harry grinned. "A talking hat that tells me my future. I guess there are things I haven't seen before."

The hat huffed. "Well, put me on, we don't have all day."

"Mouthy thing. I bet this is why people don't enchant hats anymore." Harry took the hat from Dumbledore before sliding it on. It fell in front of his eyes.

Well, now what is this? I can't see anything at all in here. Who are you, boy? Why can't I glimpse your mind?
Harry heard the voice and knew the slightly tinny quality meant it was in his mind. His magic, now in direct contact with the hat through his skin, felt out the enchanted piece of fabric.

He felt the enchantments that had been woven into it, guiding its choices over the years. Little pieces of Rowena, Helga, Sal, and Godric were all intertwined in the fabric, as well as something, someone, else, and it was dark and malevolent, twisting Sal's contribution to the Sorting Hat's matrix. If Harry had the time and the knowledge of how the Hat worked, he would unravel that malevolent little addition now, but he would have to wait. It felt like Sal, a little, one of his descendents maybe? Harry wasn't sure, Jack said they never knew what happened to Morwen, maybe she had children before vanishing?

Also woven into the magic was….Harry gaped. That was part of the Time Vortex! The little bit he had left in Rowena's chambers, she had captured it and woven it into part of the fabric!

*I see what your problem is,* Harry said silently to the hat.

*Really now? A first year knows why I can't see into their mind? I don't use Legilimency in the standard fashion, child. Occlumency doesn't block my search. There is something else here stopping me from Sorting you and it's puzzling me.*

*You were woven with a piece of the Time Vortex in your magical matrix. You won't be able to see anything about me because of that. I'm, well, it's a little complicated. I'm protected from Sight because I am, in some ways, part of the Time Vortex. You aren't allowed to know anything about my future because it's an integral part of my being. My personal timeline is always hidden from the sight of any seer from any species. It frustrates them all, but it's for everyone's protection.*

There was silence as Harry's words were digested. *I see. No seer can see your future? That is most unusual.*

*Comes with growing up the way I did. They don't like me much, say I make everything fuzzy, but hey, I can't help it. My personal timeline is invisible to any and all forms of future-sight.*

*Then I cannot function as I ought to. You do know why, don't you? You are much more intelligent than any other I have sorted.*

*Indeed. You use your mental search of the child, Legilimency, I believe you called it? Yes, you use that, and you link it to the Time Vortex to project their future path and judge which path would be best for them. I'm guessing for most people, it's not much different between houses, so you choose the one they wish so long as the path isn't detrimental. It must be a near instantaneous process, though.*

*You are a truly remarkable child. As it is, I cannot sort you if I cannot see your future. It is a requirement of my function.*

*Oh, wait, before you go, do you know if someone cursed you? It would have been a long time ago to you. There's something messing with Sal...Salazar Slytherin's contribution to your matrix. It's twisting the intention of the Founder's original desires.*

Silence for a while, then *I am....unsure. I do not have the ability to look at my own magical make-up. My functions are autonomous. What exactly are you implying? Did someone altar my function?*

Harry felt around at the malevolent magic, poking at it and trying to discern its nature. *It seems to be something twisting Slytherin House into a place where only those with Dark magic go. I mean, Sal was Dark-oriented, his magic was at least, but this is looking for kids who aren't just Dark but are...*
Old Bloods with their prejudiced ideals, or those with the same ideals. It almost always excludes New Bloods and Young Bloods if they appear to be against Dark magic, especially those Light oriented.

I see...this is grave...it must have happened when I was young, for my sentience wasn't quite what it is now. Hundreds of years of soaking up ambient magic in Hogwarts has given me my own being, but during the Founders Era, I was little more than a heavily enchanted hat with a smidgen of awareness, and only at certain times of the year. If this is as you say, then someone changed my enchantments and altered Slytherin House. I shall see if I can commune with Hogwarts and figure out what happened. Please, if you learn anything new, come speak with me. I would be glad to have such a wrong righted.

I will. Thanks. Still no luck with the Sorting? I mean, I'm not complaining, but wouldn't a conversation do?

No it would not. My Sorting cannot be circumvented. It will not Sort unless I can connect your future and your personality together with the House Enchantments.

Alright then. Bye.

Harry felt the voice vanish from his mind as the Hat spoke out loud. "I cannot Sort young Harry."

The small office exploded into noise as Harry took of the old hat.

"What do you mean you can't sort him?"

"This is outrageous. Never in all my time…"

"Potter."

"Harry, what's up?" the Doctor had edged closer.

"It's tied to the Time Vortex. A crude seer if you will. And you know how they always love me."

"Ah, I see. So it actually views the future of those who sit under it?" The Doctor leaned forward in excitement, wanting to examine the hat a bit closer.

"I think it merely does a quick projection of the future and ties that projection to the House Enchantments woven into the spells. With so many children and the nature of children, it would be rather tedious to map every single child's future."

Their discussion had been quiet, and in the din of the professor's confusion, it was lost in the noise. But Dumbledore quickly regained control of the room. "Quiet!" The noise subsided. "Thank you. Now, Hat, is there an explanation? This has never happened before."

The hat twitched until Harry set it down on the headmasters desk. "I cannot sort him. I cannot perform my function because he is, effectively, hidden from me. I require a set amount of information to sort a child, and that information is not available in this case."

"I don't understand. Your function is to send children into one of the four houses. What would you need? Surely a series of questions would do the same," McGonagall said, looking between the hat and Harry.

"That isn't it. A vital part of my function cannot operate around him. A game of 10 Questions will not solve the issue."
"What issue? Maybe it is a spell of enchantment of some sort blocking your function. If so, I can remove it," Dumbledore suggested.

The hat twitched a negative. "That is not the problem. Ask the child. He is far more knowledgeable about the issue. As it is, I will not be able to sort him ever."

They all turned to Harry, who sighed. "Really, it isn't that much of a problem. You must have some contingencies for something like this."

"No, indeed we do not. There has never been an unsorted student in Hogwarts history, not since the hat was first created."

Harry raised an eyebrow. "Really?"

"Yes. So can you enlighten us as to why the Hat cannot sort you?" Dumbledore pressed.

"Sort of. Hmm, let me start with this. There are students who are sorted quickly and those who take time, yes?"

"Of course. Sometimes there are students who take many minutes. It isn't frequent but cases of five and ten and even fifteen minute sortings have been observed," Dumbledore answered.

"Those students, I am sure, often go on to do rather remarkable things, yes? I'd wager a couple cycles of research that you, Headmaster, were one of those students. As were all four of you to some extent?" Harry turned to look at the other professors, watched them nod with varying degrees of confusion on their face. "The hat, in a crude sense, looks into your possible futures. Nothing more than a quick glimpse, that's the limits of it's ability to access Time, but it allows it to place students in the house that would best serve not only their personality and temperament, but also their future. You all would agree that a certain kind of student is placed into each house?"

"Well, yes," Professor Flitwick piped up. "Ravenclaw tends to get those who are more studious in nature, Hufflepuff tends to receive those who are more empathetic and caring, Slytherin receives the ambitious and cunning, and Gryffindor houses the stout and reckless. Those traits are shared, ideally, by all, but predominantly those houses gather those traits. But what does that have to do with this seeing business?"

Harry grinned. "Because one's future is often determined by one's family and friends. Those you involve yourself with and those who you oppose. If you surround yourself with a certain kind of person, you're more likely to adopt those traits, especially if you already have them in your personality. So whichever conglomeration of traits would suit you best shows in the changes to your future, and whichever one works the best for you becomes your new house."

There was silence in the room.

Then, "How would you even know all this, Potter? You're not even a first year student and you're talking about advanced enchantments and farseeing. How do we know this isn't just some fancy you've made up for attention?" the sneering voice of the potions professor rang out.

"My name is not Potter." Harry glared at the man. "And for one, the hat hasn't denied anything I've said. It's either agreeing with my assessment or it's gone back to sleep…"

"I am not asleep, thank you," the Hat interjected.

"So it's agreeing with me. And just because I don't know the enchantments or how to cast them doesn't mean I don't know how they work. My magic does operate and it can feel the magic in the
hat," Harry finished, cocking his head to the side.

"What do you mean, it can feel the magic in the hat?" Flitwick asked.

Harry furrowed his brow. "Well, can't you? I mean, I have to touch the hat to get a feel of it's magics, but I can work them out. Magic speaks to magic, after all."

Dumbledore's eyes twinkled. "Harry, can you tell me what enchantments are on this?" he asked, a whirling globe held in place on a stand in his hand.

"Really? I mean, what is this, a test? Why?"

"Because, if you can do what you say you can, it is a rare sensing ability. It's seen occasionally in muggle-born who aren't exposed to magic from a young age, but never as clearly as yours is. If you would, please." Dumbledore held the stand out to Harry.

"Alright. I mean, I don't get what you're trying to prove, but alright." Harry took the stand and let his fingers run over the globe. His magic, always pushing at the limiter, hovered at the edge of his skin and eagerly fed the information it received from the globe back to Harry. "It's a monitoring device. Keeps track of the well-being of Hogwarts' population. Not sure if it's keyed to a person or just the magical well-being of the school as a whole. There are a lot of enchantments on this. I'm surprised it's in one piece. I thought you could only put so much magic on stuff like glass before it dissolved." Harry looked up at the headmaster.

The beaming smile on the man's face was a bit disconcerting. "Very nice, Harry." Harry felt it was more condescending than was appropriate.

"So, now what? Do you all debate over which house I go in? Since the hat can't sort me, there must be some other way," Harry said. "Or you could just let me rotate and see them all. There are..." Harry turned thoughtful for a moment.

Rose sighed a laugh. "Bet he's trying to remember something time related," she muttered under her breath to the Doctor. "That the "I don't like time but I need it" look."

"We really should have drilled him harder on Earth time," he responded.

"There are four weeks in a standard month, yes? And four houses. Just set up my schedule or something so I see each house during a particular week. First year can't have radically different schedules week to week, so it shouldn't be much of a problem." Harry grinned. "Besides, I won't be staying in any dorms or anything with them, so you don't have to worry about that."

Dumbledore frowned. "That is the purpose of one's house. Not merely to have a group in which to share classes, but a Common Room and sleeping area. They are your family. Where else would you sleep? Surely not in the library, Madam Pince frowns severely on those who stay overnight outside of Exams."

Harry shook his head. "No, I'd stay with dad. I mean, there's plenty of room in the Tardis."

"Your father Potter? He's quite dead, isn't he?" Snape sneered from the back.

"Um...no? Dad, you're not currently dead, are you?" he asked the Doctor.

"Nope. Alive and well. Though I believe he was referring to James, Harry. Biological father." The Doctor raised an eyebrow at the sallow faced potions master. "And I would take it as a favor if you stopped sneering at my son, Mr. Snape."
Snape swallowed hard. The Doctor's face was hard and his brown eyes promised dire consequences. He desisted, leaning back against the wall. He had plenty of time to observe Potter. He could leave well enough alone in the presence of the boy's adopted father.

"Parents are not allowed at Hogwarts, Harry. Not unless they are a staff member or there are extenuating circumstances." Dumbledore peered over the rim of his glasses. "And the Doctor is not."

Harry crossed his arms. "Dad's staying. You already said you can't figure out how to sort me. Let my family stay at Hogwarts and then you don't have to. Besides, dad can teach things, and Rose and Jack are good at physical exercise and such. Doesn't Hogwarts have some sort of physical education class?"

"No, it doesn't. There isn't much need for one, considering this is a school for magic. Though the Quidditch players tend to keep in fairly good shape."

"That stinks faintly of lazy teachers. The body is the source of your magic. Keeping it healthy is only common sense. Why let your body wither away and possibly force your magic to keep it running when you could exercise and not need to?" Harry pointed out.

Dumbledore frowned. "I see." He did indeed. A witch or wizard's magic could sustain their body through serious injuries and illnesses, keeping them alive and functioning until proper care was provided. It was seen in those with heart conditions and poor fitness that magic could help sustain the body long past the point when a muggle would succumb to a disease. In St. Mungo's long term care ward, those whose bodies withered away were also kept at a relatively decent state of health through their internal magic. Maybe a physical fitness class could be helpful.

"You can't seriously be considering this, Albus," McGonagall said. "Parents are never allowed to stay at Hogwarts, and teachers who have students here have been few and far between. Why make the exception now?"

He looked at his deputy headmistress, then over at his other professors and heads of houses, all of whom were sporting looks of confused concern.

Then he looked at the Doctor, Rose, Jack, and Harry. There was a clear look of 'just try it and see' written on all four faces. And with the Doctor's ability to get through anti-apparition wards and, he would bet, anti-portkey wards, there was no feasible way to keep him from Hogwarts.

"We shall have this discussion tomorrow, after we get young Harry his supplies. I am assuming, of course, that you have not gotten supplies for him?" Dumbledore asked the Doctor.

The Doctor shrugged. "Depends. What's the list?"

Dumbledore rifled through a few stacks of parchment before finding an envelope he had kept on his desk, hoping it would show an address so he could send it off. He blinked. It was showing an address now, and a different name, of all things.

Mr. Harry

TARDIS

It was the shortest address he had ever seen. "Here is your letter. You should have received it this summer, shortly before your 11th birthday. As it was, it was never delivered."

Harry took the envelope, frowning. "My birthday is in the summer? Which months were those again? I'm absolutely horrid with dates and times."
McGonagall blinked, gaping. "Did you not tell him when his birthday is?" she demanded of the Doctor, horror in her face.

Harry waved absently. "Nah, not that. We just never knew the exact date. No point, really. We just picked a day about a year apart from the last and went and celebrated it then. Do the same for dad. He doesn't want to tell us his birthday anyway." Harry turned the envelope over, cracking the seal. "You all really go for the Middle Ages effect with this, melting wax and everything."

Looks of concern were traded around. "Harry, your birthday is July 31st. Five months ago," McGonagall said, voice soft.

Harry looked up at her, halfway through pulling the letter from the envelope. "Oh, really? Guess we have a date now...though I could have sworn we only celebrated it 19 cycles ago..." He looked up at his dad.

The Doctor shrugged. "Hey, you're the one who chooses the day. I just remind you when it's close to a year."

"Ah well, true enough." He opened the letter, reading through the introduction quickly before he got to the list. "Robes, really? Do I have to have robes? I like my jacket. Nope, we've got none of the books. Dad says keeping magic books around the Tardis is just an invitation for trouble. A cauldron, don't have a standard one, no supplies, a telescope!" Harry let out a snort. "Really? A telescope? And a wand...oh boy. That's not gonna go over well." He reached down and touched his focus, making sure to let them know he wouldn't be getting another one. "Also, I already have a...I have Pashti. She's a cat." Mostly, he added silently. He wouldn't even think about calling Pashti a pet. She would know and he would have to placate her and that would not end well.

"It seems, then, you shall have to get the whole set tomorrow, Harry," Dumbledore said, grinning.

Harry looked at his dad, gesturing down at his focus with a nod. The Doctor frowned, eyes narrowing. Rose nudged his shoulder, pointedly looking at the list and at the other teachers. The Doctor sighed, then made a 'go-ahead' gesture.

"Um, well, about the...wand. I, well, you see, I already...have one," he finished.

Dumbledore steepled his fingers. "I see. May I see it?"

Harry hesitated a moment.

"This is clearly a ploy, Headmaster. Ollivander himself said he hadn't seen the boy," Snape said. This proved to be all that Harry needed to reach down to his focus and pull it free of the holster, holding it in his hand.

The collection of professors let out a breath at the sight of it.

Dumbledore leaned forward, eyes wide. "That is...that doesn't look like any wand I have ever seen," he said.

Harry held his focus tighter. They were reassuring him, soothing voices calming his nerves and magic.

McGonagall and Flitwick peered over to look.

"Oh my," Flitwick breathed. "Are those...runes? Runes on a wand, why, I have never seen the like."
"Bathilda told me some time ago that ancient sorcerers would put runes on their staff to channel enormous magical power," McGonagall murmured. "More power than they could control safely."

"What is your wand made of?" Dumbledore asked.

Harry glared, tucking his focus closer to him. "Is't that a rather personal question?".

Dumbledore frowned. "This is an unusual occurrence. I must ascertain that your wand works well and functions. Where did you get your wand?"

"Are you a crafter?" Harry asked. "Cause if not, then how would you even know what works or doesn't? If it works for me, then why should its composition be of concern to you?"

Harry glared at Dumbledore, holding his focus tightly to him. There were several tense seconds of silence before Dumbledore sighed. "I shall send a note to Ollivander. He is the wand crafter in Diagon Alley and shall ascertain if your wand is suitable for your needs." He looked around. "Now, it is getting late. Are there any further concerns that cannot be handled tomorrow?" No one spoke.

"Then we shall reconvene tomorrow, before lunch. Harry's schedule shall be decided then as will living situations and his house."

"You're not sending dad or Rose or Uncle Jack away," Harry warned.

"We shall discuss it tomorrow. For now, there is an unused teacher's room that will serve as your rooms for the time being."

"There is the small matter of getting the Tardis to those rooms," the Doctor pointed out. "I'm not leaving her in the hall."

"I'll be able to move your Tardis to the rooms. Are there any spells that react adversely?" Flitwick asked. "I wouldn't want to unbalance anything delicate or blow anything up."

"Nothing overly powerful. Destabilizes everything," the Doctor replied, not actually willing to tell them the extent of the Tardis's ability to process magic. After having housed Harry for so long, the Tardis was quite acceptable to magic she recognized and reacted violently to magic she didn't.

Flitwick nodded. "Levitating charm should work just fine then." He headed down the stairs.

Snape stifled a glare, turning to the headmaster. "If you don't need me any further, I too shall take my leave. I believe there is a toilet in need of repair near the Slytherin common rooms." He swept out of the room.

"I shall see you in class sometime, Harry," Sprout said, before taking her leave.

Out of the Hogwarts staff that had been in the office, only Dumbledore and Minerva remained.

"Harry, I shall meet you at the portrait leading to your rooms tomorrow morning at 8. Do not be late," she warned.

Harry blanched. "Um…"

"Don't worry, I'll make sure you're up and ready in time, Harry," Jack said, a grin on his face.

"I would rather you not," Harry replied. "I remember the last time. Pashti nearly beheaded you, if you recall."

Jack winced, rubbing his neck. Pashti, it was to be noted, did not like water.
"I'll get you up in time," Rose said.

"We're going to have to do something about this issue of yours Harry," the Doctor said. "It's becoming more important than it used to be." Harry made a pained whimper. "Oh, don't complain. You can use your stone until you get the hang of it."

Dumbledore looked perplexed. "Is this something relevant?"

Harry violently shook his head no. He didn't need anyone else to tease him about his inability to tell conventional Earth time. "No, no. Not at all. So, 8 in the morning, yeah?" Harry confirmed.

"Yes. If that is all, I have a house full of students to check on. Good night." Minerva McGonagall took her leave.

Dumbledore considered the four in front of him. Harry had stood and joined the Doctor, Rose, and Jack, who hovered around him like protective hens. He could see that any argument he would form now would be useless. He would wait. He could wait. He had waited ten long years for Harry Potter to come back, and three months in a mild panic over his absence.

"I shall show you to the rooms. I take it you will be accompanying Mr. P...Harry on his trip tomorrow?" Dumbledore asked, climbing from his chair and leading the way out of his office.

"Wouldn't miss is. Besides, I want to find out if they have a Horizont Alley and Vertic Alley. Ouch!" Jack rubbed his arm, glaring at Rose. "Hey, they were asking for it. Come on, with a name like Diagon Alley, you can't seriously tell me they didn't expect it!"

"Doesn't mean you need to make poor puns about it," she said. "If you want to make puns, come up with better ones."

Jack pouted. "But puns are all about being bad!"

Harry tailed his dad, list and focus clutched in his hand. His focus was whispering soothing words to him, calming his magic and his mind.

Dumbledore led them down just a few flights of stairs until they reached a portrait of a young druid girl lounging in the forest. "Hello, my dear. We have new residents, at least for a short time." He beckoned them over. "This portrait requires a password. The password is currently unset, since there are no occupants. But as you will be staying here for at least a day or two, you may set the password."

The Doctor and Harry looked gleeful.

"Oi, you two, nothing me or Jack can't say. You know our tongues twist up whenever we try." Rose leveled them with a look.

Harry rolled his eyes. "You take all the fun out of this!"

"We still have to get in too. It's not just for you two."

"Fine, fine, alright. Well, hmmm..." Harry pondered.

"What about Raxacoracofallapatorius? We can all say that," Rose suggested.

"What a mouthful," the headmaster murmured. "Well, if you all have agreed, I shall set it for you." He tapped the edge of the frame twice, touching a particular rune Harry could see carved into the
frame. "Now, Doctor, if you would come stand directly in front of the portrait and speak the password? I am afraid it is beyond my abilities."

The Doctor smiled. "Of course." He stepped directly in front of the portrait. "Raxacorcofallapotorius," he said, clearly and without too much inflection.

The portrait went still for a moment, before the girl nodded and swung forward, revealing a room behind.

"These will be your quarters, until we can settle things tomorrow. Remember, Harry, 8 in the morning. Professor McGonagall does not like to be kept waiting. Professor Flitwick should be along soon with your Tardis. If you require food, please let me know, I can assign a house elf to you for a short time. You did, after all, come during the feast."

The Doctor waved a hand. "Nah, the Tardis has plenty of food. We'll be fine. So, tomorrow then?"

"Yes. If that is all, then goodnight."

"Goodnight," the four chorused, before stepping into the room and leaving the headmaster out in the hallway.

~~~Headmaster Interlude~~~~

Harry was not the child he expected, the Headmaster thought, walking back to his quarters. Though he wasn't sure what he had been expecting. Handing over the savior of the magical world was not an easy decision, especially after his only living family died. And the Doctor had been a choice made when there were none left. The end result of those ten years was a puzzle, and Harry was not just different but peculiar.

The powerful, mysterious, strange man he had left Harry with ten years ago had raised the child well. He was healthy, happy, and intelligent. Oh, was he intelligent, Dumbledore thought. That child was too smart. For an eleven year old to speak with such confidence, he rarely saw such maturity in the young. There had been many intelligent young witches and wizards to pass through these halls. Eager, bright young ones ready to show off what they knew in whatever situation possible. In fact, there was a bright young witch in Gryffindor now, a muggleborn. Most of the bright ones were muggleborns, he thought. Even Tom Riddle, though born from the Gaunt line, had been raised muggleborn.

But Harry, Harry didn't just speak with intelligence. Wasn't just showing off his knowledge to the adults. Children rarely were able to speak as if on equal footing with an adult, to come to the conversation as if they were an adult and know that they would be treated as such. Harry demanded such treatment, expected it, and was thrown off when he wasn't treated as such.

He could see why. Raised not just with the Doctor, a formidable intelligence in his own right, but with the blonde haired and young looking Rose and the strange Jack Harkness. They all treated Harry as a small adult, and Harry had never, it seemed, been treated as anything but. So he commanded the same in return. It was an odd feeling to have from an eleven year old.

He absently gave the gargoyle the password and headed up the stairs into his office. His rooms were just beyond them, a tradition of Hogwarts headmasters and mistresses. But he needed to have a chat first.

"Dumbledore, I wondered if you would be speaking with me," the hat said as Dumbledore turned it towards him.
"I was wondering about the boy you couldn't sort."

"Young Harry. Yes. Such an intriguing child. Shockingly intelligent. Out of the thousands of children I have sorted, rarely have I spoken to one so self aware."

"Yes, I noticed that about him. He didn't seem eleven. He didn't talk like he was eleven either."

"I couldn't tell you anything about him. Beyond the charms woven into me to prevent the future from being spoken, there was nothing there for me to see. It was as if I was in a void, sitting on his head."

Dumbledore steepled his fingers. "I see. Then his statement that you do see the future is an accurate one?"

The hat twisted itself. "In a sense, yes. Not in a clear sense and not in any way I can communicate, but my function of sorting does use a sliver of foresight. It is why there are surprise sortings. A child you expect to go to one house goes to another. The boy explained it well, if you were listening."

"I was. And it was a fascinating explanation. He is unsortable, you say? Are you sure?"

"I am. I cannot see anything in his head. It's blocked from me. You will have to figure this out on your own." The hat wondered if Hogwarts knew just what they were getting into. Harry was by no means a normal child, or even an extraordinary one. A child whose personal timeline was blocked from sight was one you wanted to be on the opposite side of the globe from, for their actions would have such lasting consequences that it was inconceivable by Time itself.

Dumbledore leaned back, considering. Harry Potter, the Boy-Who-Lived. Not that the boy even knew his last name. They hadn't even told him! To deny a child their last name...well, at least the Doctor had told him of Lily and James, though Harry appeared to carry no wish to know about his parents. No familial concern that his parents had lived and died, beyond being grateful they had kept him alive. Such a strange reaction, to not be concerned about one's parents. But Harry wasn't an ordinary child, and the Doctor had filled the role of caregiver more than Dumbledore could have hoped. To Harry, the Doctor was "dad" and Rose was, in some ways, "mum", though she barely looked old enough. And that strange, eternally smiling Jack Harkness was Uncle. This little family was odd and seemed somehow out of place.

Still, Harry was back at Hogwarts, a bit late, but if he was even half as good at magic as he appeared, Dumbledore doubted he would need more than a quick overview of the first three months. No doubt tomorrow his offices would be flooded with letters from the ministry now that he had reappeared. Children would send out the news to parents and guardians as soon as they were let out of their Common Rooms, or earlier if they were sneaky enough.

And he still had to sort out the housing issues. The Doctor, Rose, and Jack Harkness looked less than willing to leave Harry by himself. An issue he wasn't sure how to deal with. Tomorrow would be an interesting day.

~~~~Interlude Hermione~~~~

Hermione had left after Professor Snape and Hagrid came down the stairs, slipping up the stairs and heading for Gryffindor's Tower. She had been so close to getting hurt, or even dying! What would she have done if that boy, Harry, and his uncle, hadn't shown up? She didn't know.

She couldn't even think of any spells she could have used. Not a single one came to mind when the walls started shaking and glass was shattering. Her heart had been racing. Her mind had been blank. All of her studies, useless. What good was memorizing spells and charms and wand movements
when, at the time she needed them, she couldn't even think of a single one.

She huddled near the fire, waiting for her nerves to calm down. Her mind kept returning to that boy, Harry. He said his name was Harry.

Such a strange boy, she thought. He couldn't have been any older than her. He was about her height, just a bit taller actually, but she knew that girls grew a bit faster than boys when they were pre-teens and young teens. He could have been a year older than her, in his second year, but she knew she would have remembered those bright green eyes. They didn't look real.

So he was a first year. But she didn't remember any first years who looked like him either. His hair was nearly to his shoulders, longer than most boys she knew kept theirs. And his clothes weren't like any normal clothes she had seen before.

Her contemplations were interrupted by the portrait hole opening and the entirety of Gryffindor House came pouring into the room. Most split off to their rooms, avidly discussion something that had happened at the feast Hermione had missed.

Then Weasley, the boy who had been the reason she had been down in the toilets in the first place, sat on the couch just behind her, and she could hear the conversation now.

"Harry Potter! That was him, wasn't it? Can you believe it? Bloody git made an entrance, for sure. How did they all fit inside that box?"

"Dear brother, surely you know by now."

"Expansion charms!"

"Useful things, must be pretty extensive for all four of them to fit inside it."

Those were the twins, Fred and George Weasley. They were, for the most part, rather harmless. They pranked people, but they didn't go after the Gryffindor first years so she didn't interact with them much.

She was much more interested in the name Weasley had said. Harry Potter? The Boy-Who-Lived? Wasn't he supposed to be starting in their year? From all the stories she had read about him, he was eleven this year. He should have been starting Hogwarts. In fact, the school had been a constant stream of whispers about where he could have been.

Hermione wished she had paid more attention to gossip at this point, rather than considering it frivolous and useless. Her roommates, especially Lavender and Parvati, were the gossip queens of the first years. Instead, she had holed up in the library whenever she had free time. Her peers in the wizarding world, she had discovered, were much the same as her peers in her non-magical school.

They didn't particularly care about studying. How could you not care about studying? Hermione had thought. You're at a MAGIC school! Learning MAGIC! But none of her fellow Gryffindors had particularly cared about what she said, so she ignored them. She did well in class, though Potions was awful. Professor Snape took points for the silliest things and Neville had problems every class.

But Harry Potter was at Hogwarts? Could the mysterious boy who saved her be Harry Potter? He was about the right age, and he said his name was Harry. She only knew that Harry Potter was supposed to have a scar on his forehead from when You-Know-Who (she still wasn't sure she knew who, she would admit in her mind) tried to kill him. But the Harry who saved her had long hair, so she couldn't see any scar or anything.
She steeled her resolve. Weasley would know what he looked like. He had been in the Great Hall when Harry Potter had arrived.

But no one was behind her when she turned around. She had been lost in thought for so long that there were only a few scattered upper years in the common room, and Professor McGonagall. Hermione shrunk back into her chair. She didn't want her head of house to know she hadn't been at the feast.

She could find out tomorrow. If it was Harry Potter, he would be a first year, and probably in one of her classes. Though she didn't know what house he was in…

~~~Back to Harry and co.~~~

Their new rooms were, in a word, bland. A round room housed a couple chairs and a fireplace, currently unlit. A desk and a chair were pressed against the far wall. A doorway to the right led to a bedroom with a single bed in it and a chest of drawers for clothes. A doorway to the left went to a bathroom.

"Well, I guess I should be saying I'm glad we have the Tardis," Rose commented, peering around their new rooms. "For four people, this wouldn't be big enough."

"I don't think they're intended for four people," Harry said. "I mean, Dumbledore knows we have the Tardis, so I think this is more of a way to get the Tardis out of the Great Hall and so they know where to find us tomorrow."

"Shopping trip tomorrow. You up for it?" Jack ruffled Harry's hair.

Harry batted his hand away, ducking under it and away. "Oi, leave the hair alone. It's a pain as it is to get it flat."

"You're hair is never flat, Harry."

"Well, it is when it's this long. 's Why I grew it out this long. I mean, I know dad likes looking like he stuck a finger in an electric matrix, but I don't." Harry fussed over his hair, before just huffing and pushing it back from his face. "Besides, so long as I keep it long, I can do cool things with it."

The Doctor huffed. "Yeah, stringing beads in it and dying it bright green. I remember when you let those shamen from Giffri turn it into a thousand little braids. You looked like a puffed up cat when they all came out."

"I liked my braids, thank you. And what's that sound?" There was a distinct echoing noise, before Rose sighed.

"That's someone knocking at the portrait. Remember, the little professor, Flitwick, I think, went to get the Tardis?"

Harry brightened, racing over to the door and opening it. "Hi! Can you bring her in here?" He looked out at the professor floating the Tardis behind him. "She'll fit right in the main room."

"That should be no problem. Remarkably reactive to magic, this Tardis of yours. Took to the levitation charm much easier than I anticipated." He waved his wand in an arc and the Tardis rotated to fit through the portrait hole. A few more careful waves later, and the Tardis was settled into the middle of the main room.

"Thanks!" Harry grinned, heading towards the door.
"You are most welcome. I look forward to your contributions to my class. Goodnight." Professor Flitwick waved then headed out the portrait hole, closing it behind him.

"Alright, to bed, Harry, or at least to your room. You have to get up in just a little bit," the Doctor said, shooing him into the Tardis.

Harry groaned. "I know. Rose, can you wake me up? I don't know if I want to use Merlin's stone. Pashti nearly beheaded me last time I used it."

"I already said I would. Now, off you go."

Harry meandered from the room, Pashti slinking out of the shadows to join him. He probably wouldn't go to bed just yet, but he would at least head to his room.

"So, tomorrow. Anything you want us to do?" Jack leaned back in the console chair. "I mean, they already think we're weird, so it shouldn't be such an issue to have some strangeness going on."

"Your stunt with the troll probably didn't help. They're going to think your magical after all that."

"They already do, Rose. I mean, they think we're all magical. I don't think Dumbledore would have given the Doctor Harry if he didn't think he was some powerful wizard, I'm sure." Jack nodded over at the Doctor.

Rose ran a hand through her hair. "True. But how will they react when they figure out we're not?"

"You two are close enough to magical creatures that it should be fine. I'm odd enough that they couldn't tell what I am. Might as well join you two in the magical creatures category," the Doctor said. "I don't register as human and I don't think the magical world is ready for a universe full of other forms of life. And we all look human."

"But there's another version of both of us running around in this time," Rose pointed out. "I'm...I'm a toddler right now, and Jack is working for Torchwood."

"Well, we're in the magical world. They keep completely separate from the non magical world, so there shouldn't be much issue there. You're younger self is too young right now to worry about, Rose. It's UNIT that I'm worried about. They've got feelers everywhere. I wouldn't be surprised if they had someone in the magical world. They might know about it, thinking about it. They've got a huge network. If they don't I've got something to hang over Alistair for years." The Doctor grinned.

"Any plans on if they don't let us stay at Hogwarts?" Rose asked.

"You forget, there aren't any spells they know right now that would block the Tardis. It's not like they could kick us out of Hogwarts, not if they want Harry to stay. And they really want Harry to stay. So they'll either figure something out or we'll be slightly unwelcome guests for a while." The Doctor looked at the two of them. "You think you could handle either teaching or being unwelcome guests?"

Jack snorted. "Of course. I mean, what's the fun of it if they just let us waltz in here? Besides, teaching would be interesting. I used to do the PE classes back with Sal and the others. They wouldn't let me teach much else."

"You'd scar the children," Rose said.

"That's why Sal never let me do anything but get them to run around and exercise. Though to be fair my knowledge of math and history was much too advanced to be much help there."
"We'll work it out tomorrow. Right now, I'm going to go read up on recent magical history for this time. I've got a couple books I bought when I was here before, sometime before I got Harry, actually. Might be useful." The Doctor waved as he left, leaving Rose and Jack in the console room.

"I'm going to go for a run. You wanna join?"

Jack grinned. "I'll bet you ten cycles of laundry I beat you."

Rose smirked. "You're on."

Jack lost.

~~~~In Which this is an Ending~~~~

Chapter End Notes

So there you go, the first part of Hogwarts done. I'm mostly happy with it, considering I've had most of this written for quite a while...sigh.

I can't promise when I'll update next as I don't know and parts of the next chapter (which at the moment is 60+ pages...) are getting increasingly difficult to write, but as my summer break as arrived and as I reorganize my life so I can actually be a productive member of humanity rather than a couch potato in my spare time, I look forward to getting stuff up quicker.

If you have any ideas about Harry's interactions with his fellow students, let me know. If you have any ideas about anything Hogwarts related, let me know. I've got a lot of stuff outlined, but the little things haven't really been cemented so those are fair game to whoever's ideas I think fit best.

To all my reviewers, I adore you. Thank you for all the kind words. To the Followers/Favoriters, thank you for letting me know you read this story and want to read more, that means so much to me.
In Which There is Shopping and Mishaps

Chapter Summary

Diagon Alley is Here. McGonagall isn't ready for Harry though.

Chapter Notes

I am back! And I deeply apologize to all who have waited for this story. I have no excuses except for life. So here’s an extra long chapter. I hope it makes up for some of the wait!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

~~~~~~In Which This is a Beginning~~~~~~

Harry was woken by Rose, who, instead of dumping water on him and Pashti, pulled off blankets and turned on lights while cheerfully informing him, in a loud and high pitched voice, about the wonders of the morning and the brightness of the sun.

Pashti protested with a huffed mreow, but obliged to the wake up call, sitting up on Harry’s chest and stretching. Her slowly warming emotions clashed against Harry’s desire to sleep and tangled into her companion. Harry sighed and pulled Pashti closer, before relenting and sitting up. He rearranged Pashti onto his lap, mouth twitching as Rose grinned at him from the door.

“You up? Not gonna go back to sleep?” she asked.

Harry shook his head, swinging his legs out of bed and lifting Pashti up as he stood up. “I’m up. Let me get dressed and I’ll be out. How long until McGonagall get’s here?”

Rose laughed. “It’s 7.”

“So an hour yeah?” Harry confirmed.

“Look, you can tell time!”

Harry scowled. “I can do math, thank you. Just cause I know the unit doesn’t mean I know how long that is in the real world. Time doesn’t care what you label it.”

“Your continued refusal to learn how to tell conventional Earth time fascinates me. You could, I know you could. You suck up languages and math and science and history like you were a sponge. But throw time at you and all of a sudden you get this blank look of incomprehension. How could you live in the Tardis for ten years and not learn how to tell time?” Rose looked over the boy. “It’s
Harry stuck his tongue out at her. “There’s no point to it, not in the Tardis. This is sort of a timeless environment. I mean, sure, time passes, but its importance isn’t really measurable in units. Why give something so ephemeral units, why define it? It doesn’t care about them, it’ll exist whether you do it or not, time isn’t something that can be defied. Sure, you can travel along it, change things about it, hope from point to point, tangle it all up, but you can’t stop time. So why bother to measure it in such infinitesimally small units? I get the days thing, those are useful, I can do cycles, or days, or whatever term you want to use, they separate sleeping from being awake, but all those little ones in between? That just seems so...pointless. That implies there is a definitive end to it, an answer, some sort of finality to time, and there isn’t. I just don’t get it.” Harry shook his head.

Rose considered him. “Well, you’re going to either have to learn how to tell time or get really good at programming things to tell it for you. Cause I’m fairly certain schools run on a time table.”

“Argh...” Harry contemplated getting back in bed, but Pashti leaned up onto his chest and licked his face. “Alright, alright, fine. I’ll get going. I’ll figure out the time thing. Right now I’m hungry.”

Harry shooed Rose out of his room. “Let me get changed in peace. I’ll be down soon.”

“If you’re not, I’ll send Jack up here,” Rose warned.

“I’ll be down.”

Harry waited for Rose to leave before gesturing his door shut.

Shopping. He would have to go shopping. He loved shopping for tech stuff, for books, for interesting gizmos, but the process for anything else was painful.

Pashti sat on his bed as he changed out of sleep clothes and into something he could wear for the day. Comfy, loose trousers and a wrap around top went on, followed by his beloved jacket.

They were not making him trade in his jacket for a robe. He had spent way too much time on his jacket.

After he had gotten it from Prysh and she had told him all the things she had been able to add, Harry had taken some of his father’s old notes and tech on transcendental spaces and went to work on his jacket pockets. Transcendental dimensions was one of the few advanced physics work his dad would let him have free reign in, mostly because the most he could do was accidentally make something bigger than it was supposed to be, or get stuck inside it. Unless one seriously messed up, it was a relatively safe way to play around with physics concepts.

His pockets, all six of them, were dimensionally transcendental. He had shoved in some things to handle the strain of the added weight, and had only been able to expand the interior space to a few meters square each, but until he knew how to balance magic and technology more, that was the most he could do without shorting out every single circuit he used.

He stared at his feet, wondering if, since it was rather chilly, he should find some of those shoes his dad kept stashed around in case he ever needed them, then shrugged. He could survive. Shoes weren’t really that important. He usually never needed them, only when they were somewhere especially cold or hot, or especially dangerous. Hogwarts was none of them.

As soon as he finished his morning ablutions, including running a brush through his hair and contemplating putting some beads in it when he got back to the Tardis (since he wasn’t sure he had the time now), he tilted his head at Pashti.
She jumped onto his shoulder immediately, hunger radiating from her. Harry agreed. He had grabbed a bite to eat before he had gone to bed but that had been a while ago. Food was a must.

He headed for the kitchen. Inside were Rose, Uncle Jack, and his dad.

“You’re coming with me still, yeah?” he confirmed. Head nods all around. “So how are we supposed to buy all of these supplies? It’s not like we have conventional money. What do magical people even use?”

The Doctor looked up from his tea. “No need. James and Lily left you money, I’m pretty certain. From what I remember on magical history, James was from a wealthy family, what Jack calls Old-bloods. Sort of like magical royalty or something. Lily was some sort of spell inventor if I recall the histories correctly. But unless they used it all before they died, which is somewhat unlikely, they’ll have left money for you.”

Harry raised an eyebrow. “Really? So I’m now a royal celebrity?”

“No, not like non magical society. Think more dukes and earls from Earth history. A decent amount of money but there were slews of them.”

Harry breathed a sigh of relief. “Well, at least I’m not that. Don’t need even more attention.” He pulled out some raw fish for Pashti and set it on a plate for her. She promptly jumped off his shoulder to devour it.

Rose looked at the Doctor, concern on her face. He shook his head. They would deal with Harry’s wizarding world celebrity status later today. If they told him now, chances of actually getting him out of the Tardis and to Diagon Alley would be slim.

Harry ate fruit slices and some strange, jelly-like mound that shivered and seemed to shift colors. He had grabbed some vivid pink drink that smelled oddly like watermelon with a hint of ginger, downing it and grinning at her.

His teeth were pink.

“If that doesn’t come off you’re going to be walking around with bright pink teeth for your first day. What an impression,” Rose pointed out.

Harry laughed. “It fades after a few minutes, but it’s pretty awesome. There’s a whole bunch of drinks like this, all of them different colors. If you mix them just right, you can get each tooth a different color. Or you can turn your mouth a muddy brown.”

“That sounds appealing.”

“It’s fun!” Harry glanced around. “What time is it?” He harrumphed at the looks he got for the question. “What? I figure if I get in the habit of asking the question, it’ll be easier to figure out the whole bloody mess.”

Jack snorted into his coffee. Rose sighed but obliged. “It’s 7:40. You have twenty minutes. Or about the amount of time it takes you to rush and brush your teeth and put fun things in your hair.” She knew he liked to put beads and bobs in his hair when he had the time. It was one of the reasons he grew it out. His dad had never been too sure why his son liked to decorate his hair, but nevertheless Harry enjoyed it.

“Thanks Rose!” Harry took off down towards the bathroom.
“You know he’s gonna come back with beads in his hair,” Jack said. “Clanging all day and if he puts bells in they’re gonna ring.”

“Hey, we won’t lose him at least,” Rose pointed out. “Better than himself over there, who can wander off with the best of them. ‘Don’t wander off!’ he says, then goes and wanders off.”

“Oi, at least I manage to get myself out of any trouble I wander into! I remember that time you wandered off and brought back a boy. Several times.” The Doctor raised an eyebrow at Rose.

“‘S not like you were doing anything back then. All leather jackets and northern accents and I can’t dance.” Rose stuck her tongue out at him.

“You were nineteen!”

“I ran off with you, didn’t I? Figure you could take a hint.”

The Doctor rolled his eyes.

Just as Rose’s watch touched 7:59, Harry skidded back into the kitchen. His hair, indeed, had a collection of beads strung into it. Not many, he hadn’t had a lot of time, but he had added a number of brightly colored jewels to the hair that hung down beside his face on each side. If he ever decided to wear make up, Rose thought, he would look rather like those rockers her mom enjoyed.

“Am I finished in time? I rushed, and Pashti let me know when it was getting close. I think she might be able to help me with the time issue, if she’s right.”

“What a novelty, the cat learning to tell time before the human,” Jack muttered, amused.

“You’re in time. Now, let’s head out. I’m sure McGonagall will be there. She sounded like a punctual person. Doctor, you joining us?”

The Doctor set down his tea cup and pushed the history books to the side. “Yes, yes, I’m coming.” He pushed up and headed out after them.

Harry skidded out the Tardis and pushed open the portrait. “Hello!” McGonagall was indeed standing on the other side of the entrance. “I’m on time right?”

McGonagall looked down at him. “You are. It is just 8. Are the rest of your companions joining us? And is that a cat?” She was looking at Pashti, sitting on Harry’s shoulder.

“This is Pashti, she’s my companion.” Harry rubbed a hand down Pashti’s back. “She was sleeping the last time.”

“Pets are allowed, but is it wise to bring her with us to Diagon Alley?” McGonagall looked closely at the tiny cat. She was beautiful, and while McGonagall knew personally that cats were rather intelligent, this one seemed a step beyond.

Harry shrugged. “She wanted to go, so there’s no persuading her otherwise. She’ll just stay with me the whole time, so no worries about her running off.”

McGonagall stared at the little cat, and the little cat stared back at her. For a long few moments, there was silence as the two of them bored holes into the other. Harry looked back and forth between his companion and McGonagall. Pashti seemed unconcerned, if he was reading her emotions correctly. A sense of possessiveness, though that wasn’t unusual. A touch of challenge, which was also normal, and a flair of amusement, as if this professor amused her. Harry wondered why.
“Are we interrupting something?” the Doctor said, breaking the silence. McGonagall looked away first.

“No, no, I was just wondering why you were bringing a cat with us, but it seems as if she’s overruled my decision. You are all coming?”

“Of course, can’t let Harry have all the fun!” Jack reached out to mess with Harry’s hair, a favorite tease.

Harry ducked his hand, moving out beyond his reach. “No, not my hair. I just put my beads in it! You’ll get them all tangled.”

“What is it with pre-teens and this sudden obsession with their looks?” Rose asked. “I mean, you weren’t so concerned just two years ago. Aside from that jacket, you could care less what you looked like.”

“Oi, I spend a long time to get my hair looking like this!” Harry protested.

“Why are you not wearing any shoes, Mr. Potter?” McGonagall asked, interrupting the banter. “It’s November. You shouldn’t be running around without shoes.”

Harry looked down at his feet, then up at the transfiguration teacher. “I don’t like shoes,” he said.

“It’s November, Mr. Potter.”

“So? And my name isn’t Potter.”

McGonagall frowned. “Really now, this is absurd. You need to put shoes on. It’s cold out and we’ll be going outside.”

“Just give it up. If it’s really that cold, the Doctor will make him put on shoes. His feet can take it. He’s sworn off shoes for near on five years.” Rose shook her head, smiling.

“You just let him wander out with bare feet? What if he steps on something dangerous?”

“Let me worry about my son, Professor. I think after ten years I am capable of this, correct?” McGonagall was faced with the direct stare of the Doctor, and she backed down quickly.

“Well, let’s get going. We only have a few hours to get all this done.” McGonagall held out a diving ring. “This portkey will take us to the Leaky Cauldron. We’ll go to Diagon Alley from there. Everyone has to be touching the ring. Including your...companion, Harry.”

Harry looked at Pashti, and then the cat seemed to nod. Harry touched the ring, and Pashti walked down his arm until her paw came in contact with the portkey. McGonagall felt she should have been more surprised by this.

Rose, Jack, and the Doctor crowded around, reaching to touch the ring.

“Fizzing Whizbee,” McGonagall said, and Harry felt a hook around his navel jerk him backwards. His finger remained glued to the ring, but all around him colors streamed by at nauseating speeds. His stomach swirled around and the hook felt like it was tugging on something uncomfortable.

When his feet finally hit the ground, he rocked, trying to keep steady as the world swirled around him.

He really didn’t like this form of transportation, he discovered. It made his body feel uncomfortable
and squished.

As he regained his composure, Pashti complaining loudly about her dislike of that portkey, he looked around.

Rose looked as uncomfortable as he did, Jack was sprawled on the floor, and his dad looked like he was contemplating trying it again. Only Professor McGonagall remained unfazed.

“What was that? It felt like it was digging into something inside me,” Harry complained.

“It hooks onto your soul to pull you along. It’s useful, even muggles can use a portkey.”

“Muggles?” Rose asked.

“Non-magical people.”

“That sounds rather demeaning a name,” Jack said. “Sort of rude, if you ask me. Why not just use non-magical?”

McGonagall pressed her lips into a thin line. “Come on now, we have to go to the bank. Your par...James and Lily Potter left you their vaults. I have the key, the Headmaster gave it to me. We’ll pull out some money, then go and get you your supplies.” She headed out of the small room they had landed in. Harry and his family followed her, Pashti curling up under his ear.

The bartender waved at them as they passed through and towards the back door into a small alley.

McGonagall tapped her wand on several of the bricks and waited a second. Harry wondered what for.

When the wall opened to reveal the street beyond, Harry blinked, impressed. That was certainly an interesting spell. He would have to learn how they did that later. It would be cool to replicated in some fashion.

McGonagall didn’t stand by and wait for them to take in the street, hurrying them towards a large, white building halfway down the road.

“This place looks like it’s from some Old Earth town,” Harry muttered to his dad. “They’re still using thatch roofs and old-style doors and building techniques, especially for this time.”

“You did your research, you read up that they were horribly behind in technology. Their shopping centers would reflect that, don’t you think?”

“Yeah, but this, this is really old.”

The Doctor shook his head. Harry had been used to extremely advanced technology his entire life. Only occasionally were they in places that didn’t use such tech and even then it was only for short periods of times. More often than not, there was more running than shopping being done in those places.

“This is Gringotts. The Finest Wizarding Bank. Up here, if you please. And don’t stare at the tellers. They’re goblins and don’t take kindly to being stared at.”

Harry exchanged looks with his uncle, Rose, and his dad. Really, they thought.

As they passed through the two doors, Harry caught sight of the poem inscribed on them
Enter, stranger, but take heed
Of what awaits the sin of greed
For those who take, but do not earn,
Must pay most dearly in their turn.
So if you seek beneath our floors
A treasure that was never yours,
Thief, you have been warned, beware
Of finding more than treasure there.

"Bet the Tardis could get in and out without a problem," Harry whispered to Jack. His uncle gave him a small grin and a thumbs up.

The goblins were, indeed, different from what Harry had imagined, but Harry had seen species whose appearance was so far from humanistic that the goblins strangeness barely registered.

The Doctor, however, was muttering under his breath. Rose placed a hand on his arm. "What is it?"

"They bare a striking resemblance to a species from Halliprex, a species that thrived in heat and rock. Loved crafting things out of the metals they found and building massive underground structures. There were rumors of a ship heading out towards this quadrant to try and find new areas to mine and live, but they lost track of the ship. It was in the early days of their space travel and they hadn’t perfected long range travel yet. Maybe the ship got lost, landed on Earth way back when and they integrated into the magical system here to survive. Found a purpose. It would be interesting to see their history, check it out for sure." His eyes gleamed. "It would be brilliant to be able to solve that mystery."

"Wasn’t that program you were watching the other night called something like “Greatest Mysteries of Space Travel?”" Rose asked.

"Yep. I love that show. Always gives me good ideas."

Rose shook her head.

"Harry, please come here. The goblins need proof of identity." McGonagall was gesturing him up.

Harry trotted up next to her. "Yes?" he asked, looking the goblin straight in the eye.

"You are Harry Potter, son of James Potter, Lord of the Most Ancient and Noble House Potter, and Lily Potter nee Evans?" the goblin asked, voice bored and nasally.

"If you insist on using Potter, then yes, my birth parents were James and Lily Potter. I mean, I don’t know about all this ancient and noble house business, but I assume it was James’, yes?" Harry stared up at the goblins. "What’s your name?"

The goblin blinked at him, before smiled a wide, toothy grin. "I am Griphook. You are brave, young Lord Potter."

"Harry, please, and you really don’t need to use the lord bit. Dad’s got that covered already." Harry thumbed over his shoulder.
Griphook looked towards the three standing a bit further back. “I see. Your father, Mr. Harry?”

“Yeah, the guy with the spiky hair and suit. He’s my dad, the Doctor.” Harry wondered if the widening of Griphook’s eyes was the typical sign of recognition.

“The Doctor? Is that so. Who are the other members of your...family?”

McGonagall stared at the unusually friendly goblin with astonishment. Rarely did they do much more than terse conversations, wanting to whisk any magical folk out the door as soon as possible. Goblins and wizards rarely got along.

“That’s Rose, dad’s mate, and that’s Jack Harkness, uncle, when he’s not too busy trying to charm his way into anyone’s bed.” Harry pointed out his family.

The goblin paused at Jack’s name, giving him a terse once over. “Jack Harkness, Lover to Sa…”

“Yes, yes, that’s me,” Jack said, rushing to cut the goblin off before he could let out a bit too much about their history. “How did you know?”

“Your name has been a curiosity in the bank, ever since, well, ever since their possessions came under our purview, or the key to their possessions along with individual requests. All four of them spoke of you and you feature heavily in those requests, but your name is in no other document, none that have survived. I assume you wish to see what was left?” Griphook was, Harry marveled, rather quick to pick up hints.

“Of course, yes. Where…?”

Griphook rang a bell, and a goblin came out of a side chamber. “Nagnok will take you to their possessions and return you here when you are done. Nagnok, this is Jack Harkness.”

Nagnok’s eyes widened in sudden understanding, and he gestured Jack to follow him. Jack took off with a grin and a wave back to them, then was gone.

“What is going on?” McGonagall asked. “We came here to get money for Mr. Po...Harry’s supplies. I wasn’t aware you had an account under Mr. Harkness’s name.”

“It is a special account, Professor. We can now take care of Harry’s account. Mr. Harry, I will tell you, your friend, Arthur, left you some things through his mentor. It has been a great mystery to us all as to how you would know such people, but your father is well known here. The goblins, after all, pay attention to the outside world.” Griphook bared his teeth in a wide grin. “It is a privilege, Sir Doctor, Dame Rose.”

Rose and the Doctor winced. “Ah, yeah, hello. You are well informed.”

“We feel it is prudent to pay attention to the non-magical world, as they often have wonderful advances that we may be able to use.” Griphook stepped off the high stool behind the counter and gestured for Harry to follow him. “Professor, you may wait here. We have a couple stops to make, and you are not a magical guardian nor do you need to get anything from your vault.”

McGonagall stood in shock as she was left in the lobby of Gringotts while Harry Potter and his strange little family followed the goblin to the carts.

“They know who you are, dad,” Harry said. “Apparently Arthur left things for me through Merlin. Didn’t know how I could know Merlin until I told them your name.”
“I gathered,” the Doctor said.

“Anything we need to do about it?” Rose asked.

“I don’t think so. When he realized we were trying to not let the professor know, he didn’t say anything incriminating. So it’s probably fine. Besides, I think he likes you dad.” Harry grinned up at his dad.

“Here, this is the cart to take you down. I have your key from your professor. The vault from Merlin requires a password. I was assured you would know what it was.”

Harry blinked, confused. “A password?”

“Indeed. It was a puzzle when it was discovered. Gringotts was built here nearly four hundred years after Merlin’s time, but it was in the same place many people stored treasures and valuables in the first place. It was just decided that there should be a system to deal with it all. Merlin’s vault, along with the room Nagnok is taking Jack Harkness too, were here long before Gringotts was originally set up. We built around them, along with the vaults from several other ancient lines.” Griphook climbed into the cart in front of them. “Hold on,” was the only warning they were given, before the cart shot off downwards at high speeds.

Harry cheered in glee. Rose laughed and the Doctor joined her as the cart took them on a roller coaster of a track.

It skid to a halt in front of a vault, and Griphook climbed out. “Your vault, Mr. Harry. James and Lily Potter left this trust vault to you. It contains the money they possessed before they died. The Potter Family vault will be available to you when you are of age. It contains the heirlooms and relics of the family.” Griphook inserted a tiny golden key into a slot, then the wall seemed to melt away.

Harry stared at the piles of gold and silver and bronze beyond. “What’s all this then?”

“This is wizarding money. The gold ones are Galleons, the silver ones are Sickles, and the bronze ones are Knuts. 17 sickles to a galleon, 29 knuts to a sickle. I would recommend a decent amount of money, as you are buying school supplies,” Griphook informed him.

“What’s the normal cost of things? I’m crap at currency and exchange rates until I get the math all sorted.”

Griphook leered. “Books cost anywhere from 5 sickles to 100 galleons for the extremely rare and valuable books. Average is about a galleon. A trunk of passable quality will cost you about 13 to 15 galleons, and a good quality trunk with some interior space will run you about 50. The nicer trunks can be hundreds of galleons, but unless you plan on living in one, they’re rather impractical. As for your other supplies, under fifty galleons for high quality supplies, though if you like high quality robes you’ll be looking at a hundred or more.”

Harry stared at the piles of coins, picking up a few and fingering them. “Well, I guess I can just shove a ton in my pockets for now, figure it out later then.” And he started picking coins and shoving them into his pockets. In no time, he just resorted to grabbing handfuls of the gold coins and pouring them into his pockets. Faster the better. He wanted to see what Arthur had left him.

Griphook stared at him as he left the vault. “Where did you put all that money?” he asked.

Harry patted his pocket. “Here. It’s got a transcendental dimension. Not huge, but it lets me shove a ton of stuff in it without it affecting the outer dimension.”
“I see. That is a rather handy design. Much like our bottomless bags.” Harry’s eyes lit up. “You can find them in the shops that sell trunks, though of course Gringotts has special personal bags tied to one’s vault, though they are expensive,” Griphook told him, correctly interpreting his look. “And impractical for young wizards and witches who have just discovered their wealth. There is a standard policy to wait until after their coming of age to give a child such a bag.”

Harry didn’t seem concerned with the goblin’s pronouncement and bounced out of the vault and back into the cart. “They have dimensionally transcendental bags here! Made with magic!” He looked at his dad. “I have to get one! I could use it to figure out the spells they used!”

“Well, make sure you ask the professor to take us to the shop. Did you grab enough money?”

“I think so. I mean, I ended up just shoving handfuls of the gold coins in my pocket until I diminished a small hill, so I probably did some damage on the number of coins in there.” Harry took a few of them out. “They are rather large.”

Rose took one, examining it. “Wow, it’s gold. It would go for a fortune on the open market.”

“It couldn’t be sold there. There are extensive enchantments woven into the coins that make them appear as useless copper disks unless someone is knowledgeable about the wizarding world. And you can’t melt the coins down, so there isn’t an easy way to get rid of the enchantments,” Griphook explained.

“Ah, that makes sense. Otherwise you all wouldn’t have much of an economy if a money oriented new blood gets the idea to sell these to non-magicals.” Rose handed the coin back to Harry.

Griphook started the cart up again, and they enjoyed the ride deep into the bank, further than Harry thought it was reasonably safe to travel into the Earth.

A long while later, the cart came to a stop beside a large, stone door that looked stuck fast to the surrounding stone.

There were carvings on the door, Harry could see, and he lept up to get a better look at them.

“To gain entrance, speak the word of Light that grants its true vision,” Harry said. “Dad, Merlin’s password is in Old High Gallifreyan. Can I use it?”

“Well, that’s one way of making sure no one can get in but him,” Rose murmured.

“Merlin had always been a clever chap. He probably used his memory to set the password, so it has to be Harry saying it.” He raised his voice. “Be careful. Make sure you aren’t holding your focus at the time or thinking about the magic behind the word. Just use the word, Harry.”

Harry nodded, breathing in deep. Then he placed his hand in the stone and spoke the word from those many years ago. It echoed around him, reverberating off the walls. Griphook, sitting in the cart, felt the word rattle his bones and wondered what kind of child Harry Potter was, to know such a language that made his entire body rattle.

Under his hands, the stone seemed to melt into mist, and he had to pull back or risk falling on his face.

Old air escaped the confines of the cave, and he choked at the dust. “Merlin really didn’t bother with airing charms,” he said.

“It was hundreds of years ago, I doubt they would have lasted this long,” the Doctor said.
“If he had carved them into the walls, then they would have. This stuff is hard, it would have lasted.” Harry tapped the walls.

“Stop complaining and go see what your friend left you,” Rose said, shooing Harry into the vault.

Harry stuck his tongue out before heading into the darkness. Well, it was dark until he stepped foot into it, then a soft light seemed to radiate from the stone all around him.

“Welcome back, Harry. We have been waiting for you.”

Harry started at the voice. “Merlin?”

“In a sense, I am Merlin. Though only an impression, left here to give you instructions. Arthur insisted. He was sure you would need them, though I never knew why. He was such a strange child, after you left. That journal never left his hands, and you all talked to each other for years. I believe you had more impact on the future of this world than you ever realized, through King Arthur.”

“Really? I mean, Arthur was always strong headed.”

“Yes, but you were his first real friend, and he valued your words. Do not let him down.”

“Not that I could,” Harry muttered. “Not after hearing you say that. Do you know that you’re basically causing a paradox loop by telling me this? Now I have to fulfill it simply because it has already happened, though it hasn’t happened yet?”

There was a chuckle. “I am aware. I gathered as much from a note you wrote to Arthur once about this.”

“Great, now another thing I have to do. I hate having to follow the laws of time, sometimes.”

“And yet I see you still carry my enchantments that tell time for you.” Merlin’s voice was amused.

Harry sighed. “Alright, so what did I come here for? It wasn’t just for the witty banter.”

“No, though that was enjoyable. Arthur left you a few of his possessions. I have enchanted them to remain timeless until you touch them, so I would suggest taking good care of them. Arthur valued them, and he insisted that you would need them at some point and time.”

A bright light shone from further within the vault, and Harry headed towards it, wondering what his friend would have left him.

A chest sat at the back wall, alone but for a tall staff standing next to it. Harry peered at the staff closely. “That….that staff’s yours, isn’t it?” Harry asked.

“It is, young mage. I left it here, knowing you might find a use for it. I could no longer use it in my old age and circumstances forbade me from passing it on. So here it remained. I would trust you to not let on its secret. There are many in this world who would abuse its power.”

Harry nodded. “You can trust me. The Tardis is probably the safest place for it. I mean, I have my own focus, so I don’t really need another one.”

“You may one day need it, young mage. Now, the chest is from Arthur.”

Harry leaned down, touching the locking mechanism and watching it pop off. Convenient.

He lifted the lid and looked inside.
Oh. Well, he hadn’t expected Arthur to leave that behind.

He reached inside and pulled out the twin to his journal, the one that sat beside his bed. He tried to lift the cover, but it was stuck fast, so he couldn’t open it, but he would treasure it. Arthur had left it to him, he would imagine that at some point he would need its messages.

There were several other strange items within the chest. A scabbard for a sword, but no sword. A dagger intricately carved with runes he couldn’t read. A stone bowl with more runes. Bottles with odd floating mist inside them. A few more books. And a cloak of deep red.

“The scabbard is for Arthur’s sword. When you need it, it will come. The dagger is a ritual knife imbued with enough magical power that it should be sufficient for any ritual you will ever need to perform. The bowl and the bottles go together, though you will learn their use later, and the books as well. That cloak was Arthur’s. He wanted to leave you something to remember him by.” Merlin’s voice was soft and filled with affection for the boy he had helped raise.

Harry touched the cloak, smiling. “He got sentimental in his old age,” he murmured.

Harry looked over the objects, then decided the trunk would be easier to carry out than bringing everything out on its own.

He shut the lid, grabbed the staff, and headed back out towards the entrance. “I need some help. I’ve got a chest back here, and I’m supposed to keep everything in it. Arthur told Merlin that it was all important and I would need it. Someone mind helping me haul it out? It’s sort of heavy. Oh, and here’s his staff. He said I could take it.” Harry held out the staff.

Griphook’s eyes were wide. “Merlin...Merlin’s staff...you are in possession of Merlin’s staff,” he said, a daze in his eyes.”

Harry looked at the staff, shrugged. “Yeah. He said I could probably use it at some time. Dunno why. I mean, it’s awesome and it’s powerful, but I could probably do the same with my focus.”

“Don’t underestimate that staff’s power. There has been much curiosity over it’s location, young mage. I have felt the searching probes of their magic for centuries,” Merlin’s voice echoed.

Harry sighed. “Then I’m really going to have to keep it hidden. Hey, how long does this spell work for your semi-conscious spirit?”

“It will last until you close the vault. It was a one time enchantment and after you leave, it will never be used again.”

“Huh?”

“I had to drain nearly my entire magical core to leave this echo of myself for you. I was near death, it wasn’t such an issue, but most magicals do not like to do such things.”

“Ah, I see. Well, um, thank you? I mean, really, thank you. You didn’t have to do that. Is there any way I can make it last longer, or take it with me? The spell, I mean,” Harry said, feeling a little awkward that the great wizard had done this for him.

Merlin chuckled. “No, young mage. It is alright. I merely wished to make sure you received all the necessary information about these items so you would understand the importance of the things you will be taking.”

Harry looked back at the chest. “Ah. I see. Will I understand in time or something? I don’t even
know what half of that is.”

“It will be useful when the time for its use is upon you. You will need it at some point and it may save your life. I am unsure. There was a period of time that is unclear in my memory, so I don’t really know.”

“Well, at least there’s something temporally important to look forward to,” Harry said. “Alright, so is anyone going to help me with the chest? It’s large and awkward.” He looked at the staff, measured it with his hands, then nodded. It would fit into his pocket. He shoved it in.

Rose climbed out of the cart and walked over. “Alright, let’s see this chest of yours. Any way you can store it like all that money or something?”

Harry shook his head. “The staff is fine in my pockets, but I don’t know how to compress something as hard as that chest into a small enough space to fit into my pockets, and I think the chest is important as well. So I’ll just have to bring the whole thing up. Maybe the professor can make it lighter. I don’t know that spell yet.”

The two of them headed to the chest, one on each end. “Wow, this is heavy. You better hope your professor can lighten it. I don’t think you could carry it around if it isn’t lighten.”

They struggled with it back to the cart, where the Doctor had engaged Griphook into a conversation about getting ahold of the goblin historical records. Harry heard the conversation end with Griphook’s assurances he would ask his superiors.

“Will that even fit in the cart?” the Doctor asked, looking at the chest.

Griphook smiled. “No need to worry. The carts are designed to expand to fit anything a customer may wish to bring. Now, let’s get you back up to the surface. Your professor is probably wondering if we have stolen you.”

Harry laughed. “Wait, wait, I need to go say goodbye to Merlin. He’s gonna vanish when we close the vault, so I want to say bye.” He dashed back. “Merlin?”

“Yes, young Harry?”

“I’m, well, I’m leaving now. I wanted to say thank you, for doing this for me. And leaving me your staff, and for helping with my magic. I don’t think I would have been able to do anything without your support.”

There was a soft chuckle. “Young mage, it was a pleasure to teach you. I missed your presence when you left. It was an experience I would never forget, and your support and lessons to Arthur raised him to be a great king. I hope you teach him as well as I remember you doing so.”

“Well, now that you’ve said it, I don’t have much choice,” Harry joked, grinning. “I’ll be sure to tell Arthur to tell you that I say hi when I write him this evening!”

“Thank you, Harry. Goodbye, and good luck. May your path be prosperous, and remember, young mage, to tell your Uncle Jack that it was not his fault. You will learn why soon.”

Harry groaned. More cryptic message. But Merlin’s presence had faded and he couldn’t get any answers.

He headed back out to the cart and climbed in. “Alright, let’s go. I’m sure Professor McGonagall is pacing the lobby wondering where we are. We’ve been down here quite a while. She’s gonna
complain we’re wasting the day away. And I still have to go shopping and everything.” He made a face.

The cart ride back up was fast and exciting, but Harry was going over the words Merlin had told him. He wondered what was so important in the future that he would need so much from Arthur now.

He would have to wait though, as both Uncle Jack and McGonagall were waiting.

“Where have you been? It’s been almost forty five minutes!” McGonagall fussed as soon as she saw Harry. “It shouldn’t take so long to go down to your vault!”

Harry sighed. “We had another stop. Can you lighten this for me?” Harry gestured to the trunk he was dragging.

McGonagall blinked, looking behind him for the first time. “What...where did you get that?” She had never see the like before. It looked positively medieval.

Harry shrugged. “Down in another vault that belonged to me. I needed it, so I’m bringing it. But it’s heavy and I don’t know how to lighten things get. So, can you lighten it?”

“But, why hasn’t your...father lighten it for you?”

“Sorry, can’t do that! Different kind of magic,” the Doctor said, wiggling his fingers at her.

She narrowed her eyes, but obliged since she was more focused on getting Harry the rest of his supplies. She would discuss this with Dumbledore later.

“Wow, awesome! Thanks! Any chance you could shrink it? I can stick it in my pocket that way.”

McGonagall sighed but shrunk the chest, then gestured at them to follow. “If you have all the money you need, let’s get going. We don’t have all day.”

Harry waved to Griphook, who was slipping a ream of parchment to the Doctor, before they all headed out. “Uncle Jack, what did they have for you?”

Jack smiled down at Harry. “A key for a special room in Hogwarts. I was wondering if I would see it again.”

Harry’s eyes widened. “You’ll take me, right?”

“Of course.”

They had to trot to keep up with the transfiguration professor who, they discovered, walked way too fast for comfort.

“Here, the headmaster wanted Ollivander to test your wand to make sure it works for you. It’s standard. Our students must have a wand they can use.”

Harry sighed. They were standing in front of a wand shop that, if the plaque was to be believed, had been around for over a thousand years. Ollivanders.

“Guess we might as well get it over with,” he said, then opened the door.

The moment they all stepped in, there was a startled yelp from within the shop and the sound of something crashing.
A moment later, a small, pale man came from within the depths of the store, eyes wide and full of confusion. “Who...what are you?” he said, awe in his voice. “You aren’t...you clearly aren’t human.”

McGonagall cut a look at him. “What do you mean?”

“Minerva McGonagall, fir, dragon heartstring, 9 and half inches, stiff. How lovely to see you. You have brought some strange company with you. Is the littlest one to go to Hogwarts? You glow with the shine of time, child. Pray, what is your name?”

“Harry. Can you actually see time?” Harry asked, curious.

“You glow in it, and the young woman, my dear, do you know you have a wolf inside you?”

“Yes, I do.” Rose touched her chest. “She’s been with me for a long time.”

“A...a werewolf?” McGonagall stammered. Had they really let a werewolf around the Wizarding World’s Savior?

“No, no, nothing of the sort. She is Time’s Chosen. The Bad Wolf. An honor.” He turned towards Jack. “What are you? You...you don’t...you don’t have...it flows around you. So strange…A rock in the eddy. You repel everything.” Ollivander, Harry figured, then turned to the Doctor. “And you, oh, wow. My eyes…” He blinked. “I can’t seem to make you out. You are bathed in time. It clings to you, a child to their parent. So strange.”

Harry looked at his dad. “Well, it comes with the title,” the Doctor offered. “I’m the Doctor, if that helps.”

“I see. I think, yes, it fits you. How odd. Well, young Harry, are you sure you need a wand? I would expect one such as you to not need one.”

Harry shook his head. “I need one for now at least. I have one, if that helps. The headmaster wanted you to take a look at it for some reason.”

“Ah. Well, that makes my job much easier. I would fret over having to match you to one of my wands, I fear none would accept you. May I see it?”

Harry reached down to his focus and pulled it out of it’s holster, holding it out. “I wouldn’t touch it. I don’t know how it would react,” Harry warned.

Ollivander quickly put his hands down. “There is an immense amount of power coming off that wand...are you sure it is a wand?”

Harry furrowed his brow. “What are you? You see things much too clearly,” he said, voice bordering on a whine.

Ollivander grinned at him. “I am a tied to a wind spirit, child. My family must be, you see. To maintain our bond with the animals we gather parts from and the trees we harvest branches from, we must be part of nature. Many many generations ago, one of the first Ollivanders performed the ritual. Since then, all Ollivander wand makers are matched with a wind spirit at birth, and over time we merge. Connected to nature and energy.” He looked closely at Harry, scrutinizing him and his wand. “My word, are you...are you Harry Potter?”

Harry groaned. “No, no, no, I don’t, ugh really?” He sighed. “Why do you know that name anyway? I mean, really, I understand why the teachers at a school I’m supposed to go to know that name, but why do you?”
“You mean, you don’t know?”

“Obviously, otherwise I wouldn’t ask.” Harry frowned.

“My dear child, you are not as I expected you. You are, there is only a small part of that is Harry Potter, child of Lily and James Potter. You survived the Killing Curse, and in doing so you defeated the dark lord. Your survival bolstered the wizarding world and you became their savior.”

At this, Harry glared at his dad. “You know, you should have just told me I was some sort of savior to them. I wouldn’t have run away.”

“You sure?” the Doctor asked. “The last time I told you something like that, you hid from me in the Tardis for two whole cycles. I wasn’t risking it again.”

Harry grumped. “Well, I’m going to have to deal with this in any case, I have to stay here after all. So, anything about my focus….wand. I mean.” Harry looked at Ollivander.

“May I cast a spell to see what its components are?” he asked, a wand in his hands, held loosely as he waited for permission.

Harry shrugged, not really seeing the downside to that. “Sure.”

Half a minute later, Ollivander looked like he had been standing in the center of an explosion. “That was not the expected reaction,” he coughed.

Harry looked down at his focus. “Um, I guess those kinds of spells out of the question too, then,” he muttered. He would have to chat with his focus a little later, to see what the fuss was about.

“Did you learn anything?” McGonagall pressed, wondering if this was perhaps beyond her knowledge.

Ollivander coughed again, shaking soot from his hair and clothes. “It is a functioning wand, though it wouldn’t work for any but young Harry here. And that is about all I can tell you.” He looked at Harry. “Your wand is possessive child. I would not let it out of your sight.”

“I wasn’t planning on it,” Harry replied, holding it close.

“Then, if that is all, we need to get going. We are on a tight schedule.” McGonagall was wondering if this odd group she was escorting would perhaps lead to her downfall in some way or other. Ollivander found them strange, and that was cause enough to worry.

With a wave back to the bedraggled wand crafter, they left the shop.

“So, where to? I mean, Harry here’s already blown up one shopkeeper, we might as well keep the ball rolling,” Jack said, grinning.

“The trunkshop. Better to have a place to put all your purchases before actually buying anything. Then we’ll grab all the rest of the things you need before we go to the bookstore. And no, we will not be spending all day in the bookstore,” McGonagall said, choosing to ignore Jack’s words about blowing up shopkeepers and correctly interpreting the look on Harry’s face.

“Ah, well, I guess I’ll just have to grab as many as I can,” he said.

The trunkshop was much as they would expect. Trunks lay on shelves with signs listing their properties. Various colors, from dull black to, for some reason, a literally fuzzy pink, ranged around
“Any recommendations?” Harry asked the teller behind the counter.

The girl grinned at him. “What do you like? Clothes, books, potions, or quidditch?”

“Books,” Harry said firmly, not sure what quidditch was.

“Ah, well then, first year yes? You look tall enough for a first year. Muggleborn?”

“Hm?”

“Yes, definitely muggleborn. Now, let’s see. A muggleborn first year who likes books. First trunk? I’ll take that as a yes. You have your wand? Another yes. A little odd, coming after the school year started, we don’t get many Hogwarts kids around this time. Almost none in fact. Ah, yes, here we are!” And she pulled a card out. “Here, this section has the best models for your needs!” She held the card out to Harry.

Harry took it, looking at the neat script in elegant calligraphy. “Area 6B?” he queried.

“Just through this door is area B. Just look for the six, and take your time! Trunks are an investment. A good trunk can stay with you your entire life!” She beamed at him.

“Um...alright then. Thanks...what’s your name?”

The girl looked a bit surprised. “Oh, wow, um, my name’s Jamie. This is my uncle’s shop, and he’s been teaching me how to make trunks! It’s quite fun!”

“Well, thank you Jamie. When we’re ready do we come back out here? Also, how do you add spells to trunks? Things like making it easy to carry or to make it smaller when you need to? And how to keep other people out of it.” Harry was thinking he could store some of his experiments in it, away from his dad.

“Trying to keep your roommates out of your stuff, huh? I guess it’s a problem everyone has. It’s rather late in the year for a first year to be getting a trunk,” she repeated, leaning in and aiming for an answer this time.

Harry shrugged. “Just arrived. I was a bit late, you see.”

Jamie nodded. “Well, some of the trunks come with the spells already placed on them, triggered with key phrases. If you buy one, I’ll give you the manual. It’ll tell you everything you need to know about it. The spells each trunk comes with will be listed in the description affixed to each trunk.”

“Got it.” And with that, Harry headed through the door and into the back part of the shop.

Just how could there possibly be this many trunks in one shop? was Harry’s first thought. Trunks were piled high and probably held there by magic, if his knowledge of physics was any judge. Otherwise he might have been buried in trunks at the slightest movement.

He looked around, searching for the number 6. It took a bit, but he found it, surrounded by plenty of trunks.

How was he supposed to choose one? It seemed absolutely absurd to have a trunk really, when he wouldn’t be staying in a dorm and there would be no need for it. Not unless the headmaster forced him. But he had to get one, it said so on his list.
So he went through each trunk, looking at the descriptions before discarding them.

Too frivolous, why would he need three separate library rooms with enough space for chairs?

Was it necessary to have a living space in a trunk?

Too small; if he was any judge, he would be getting a lot of books, either today or over his years at Hogwarts.

No charms, he was not dragging the behemoth around with him.

Why would he need something made out of dragon skin? That seemed wasteful and unnecessary.

Alright, this one was absurd. A full sized chandelier as a feature? The magical world, he decided, was insane.

Finally Harry knelt down next to a rather plain looking one with a simple iron lock on it. The placard told him that it was a one compartment, 3 meters by 4 meters by 3 meters, trunk with basic weight reducing charms and a locking spell opened only by password and magical signature. It didn’t shrink, but it was the tamest Harry had seen yet. He wondered if most students bought the strange and weird trunks.

He dragged it behind him, heading back out to Jamie. He was done with trunks.

~~~McGonagall POV~~~

“Why did you send him back there? The standard Hogwarts trunks are out front, if I recall,” the transfiguration professor said, eyes narrowed.

Jamie beamed. “He’s not a standard first year, is he? I mean, coming in this late, with that adorable little cat on his shoulder and that sparking aura around him. A standard trunk would be a disservice. All our back room trunks are special. They take care of their owners.”

“You are an odd young girl, aren’t you?” Rose said. “More to you than just what the eye sees.”

“My uncle says the same. Says they’ve never had sales like I make. I think it’s the magic in here. It speaks to me.” Jamie lifted her hand up to caress something in the air.

The Doctor raised an eyebrow but didn’t say anything.

McGonagall sighed. This trip really couldn’t get any stranger. Really, it couldn’t.

This child, Harry Potter, was not what she was expecting. She had been expecting a small James Potter clone, or a little Lily Evans, uncertain, intelligent, a bit shy, but eager to learn, or trouble making and a bit dim on social niceties, or some combination of the two. But this little boy was, he was….

She wasn’t sure. And she would have to teach him. She wanted to cradle her head in her hands, but that would be unbecoming of a teacher.

First his wand, which she had never seen the like of, blew up Ollivander. Then he’s sent back for a special trunk, which first years at least were never sent back for. There was no need for a child to have a trunk they could enter, or that they could store incalculable amounts of things in. If the Weasley twins had such a trunk, she shuddered at the amount of trouble they could get into.

The rest of this trip would be a trial of her patience, and she had already agreed to let him into her
afternoon first year class with the Slytherins and Ravenclaws. At least it wasn’t a Gryffindor/Slytherin class. She had those in some of the upper years and they were a nightmare.

So when Harry came out of the back room dragging a pitch black trunk with an iron lock on it, all McGonagall could be thankful for was that he hadn’t gone for a gaudy and silly looking trunk.

~~~~Harry and Co POV~~~~

“So, this one’s good yeah? I like it.” Harry gestured back to the trunk he dragged out with him.

Jamie grinned. “An excellent choice! The Black Steamster used to be a very popular choice, but it’s fallen out of favor as better expansion charms have come into existence and the widespread use of dragonhide in the making of expanded trunks.” Jamie dug under her counter for the manual, pulling out a dusty and old looking slim book. “This will tell you how to use all the features on it, there are a few more than advertised, special Traveler's Trunks like the Black Steamster have all sorts of little handy spells worked into its construction.”

Harry grinned. He had chosen well, if he had to get a trunk in the first place. “So, how much for the trunk? Probably more than the normal ones, if it was in a special section of the store.” Harry raised an eyebrow.

Jamie coughed. “A bit yeah. It’s not as extravagant as some of the trunks we provide, so it isn’t as expensive as some of the trunks back there, but it’s pricey. Traveler’s Trunks are typically a bit pricier than standard expanded trunks because of the useful spells woven into them designed for travelers. Is that okay?”

Harry waved a hand. “Yeah, it’s not a problem. I mean, I was left a lot of money by my biological parents, so I’m almost literally swimming in the stuff. I never know what to do with money, really.”

Jamie breathed a sigh of relief. “Alright. So, the trunk will be 150 galleons.”

Harry blinked, then chuckled. “Wow, that’s quite a bit. Oh, wait, Griphook also said you sell bottomless bags.”

“Oh, yes, we do! A popular item amongst students and researchers!” Jamie beamed. “Also, your cat is adorable. And very well behaved.”

Harry stroked Pashti, who preened under the praise. “She’s amazing. Wouldn’t know what to do without her.”

“She’s a lovely cat. Is she still a kitten? She’s very small.”

Harry shook his head. “Nope. She just prefers remaining small. I think if she wanted to she could get pretty big, but right now she’s comfortable being able to sit on my shoulder.”

“Adorable and intelligent. Alright, now, our Mokeskin bags, that’s the proper name for them, aren’t cheap, but they aren’t as expensive as a trunk. You good with that?”

“No problem. What styles do you have?” Harry wanted to make sure whatever he chose he liked. He would use it for a long time to come, and a better product tended to stand up to experimentations well.

“Over here then.” Jamie led Harry over to a wall filled with various bags of all colors and shapes.

“Wow, that’s a lot of bags,” he said.
“My mum specialized in expansion charms! She made it possible to change the shape of the fabric so it didn’t have to be just one shape for the charm to work. We have standard bags over here,” she pointed at a simple sling bag on a nearby rack. “These are common, but they don’t come with many features, other than theft protection and a basic retrieval spell. They’re popular for students though since they aren’t as expensive as the more customizable versions. But the ones you seem to be looking for are these. They’ve got most of the standard spells for item retrieval and theft protection worked in as well as protection charms on the bag itself, along with a handful of others that will be detailed in the pamphlet that comes with them.”

Harry grinned. “Sounds awesome!” He immediately disregarded the normal ones. He had the money and his family had never been all that good at saving money, or even using it properly. They rarely had the need for money in the first place.

The bags were many different colors, but he had always liked green. Green jacket, green hair, green clothes. He was probably influenced by his eye color, but it made it so much easier. So he narrowed in on the green bags that hung near the bottom.

One was a muddy green and he decided against it. Another was a pastel green and he flinched. Pastels. Just, no, not after that run in with the society that resurrected some ancient Earth tradition involving giant rabbits and painted eggs.

Rose watched from her spot back with the Doctor and Jack. “He’s extremely picky when it comes to clothes and bags, isn’t he?” she asked.

The Doctor snorted. “You have no idea. He’ll agonize over colors and shapes for hours, then promptly go jump in every single mud puddle he can find after he puts them on. I’ll never understand. Clothes are clothes. You wear them so you don’t get cold and you use bags to put stuff in, why should the outside matter?”

“Says the man who wears the same exact jacket and suit combo and has for years,” Rose replied.

“Oi, at least I found something I liked and stuck to it. He still can’t decide if he wants to wear shoes or not.”

Jack laughed. “You give him as much leeway as he wants with things. Of course he’d run wild with it. No guidance means he had to figure it out himself.”

“Well, he should. It’s his life.”

Rose chuckled. “Most parents only let their kids wear certain things. A lot of clothes are off limits or unacceptable. My mum certainly let me know when I went over that line.”

The Doctor waved a negligent hand. “He can choose what he wants. Only time I make him wear anything specific is for safety reasons. Otherwise, his body, his rules.”

Jack and Rose exchanged grins and raised eyebrows. They did see McGonagall looking over at them with a narrowed expression, having heard the conversation. “Students are required to wear robes during class times,” she said primly.

The Doctor sighed. “Good luck getting him to agree. If he has to take off that jacket of his, deal breaker right there.”

“You’re his...his father, you should be able to persuade him to wear the robes,” McGonagall said.

“I’ve never managed to get him to wear anything he hasn’t wanted to since he knew how to choose
his own clothes. After a bit, it didn’t seem to matter. If he wanted to wear something, then he could wear it.”

“But…”

“Later, guys, later,” Rose said. “Harry, you got a bag yet?”

Harry turned at the sound of her voice, holding a couple bags up. “Nope, but I think I might have one!”

Harry ~~~~~

He looked at Pashti. “Any opinion? I mean, I like these two,” he gestured at the two in his hands. They were both green, one a vine green, bright and lively, the other darker and deeper. They had a single strap for him to carry them with. The bright green one had leafy designs worked into the fabric while the darker one had intricate knots.

Pashti looked them over, before indicated the darker green one. Harry grinned.

“Chosen one?” Jamie asked.

“Yep! This one.” Harry held out the dark green bag.

“An excellent choice! I’ve always loved the celtic knots in it. So, the bag works by using vocal commands to call up anything you want. So long as it’s in the bag, you can call for it. I’ll need a small blood sample to tie it to you. Wouldn’t want anyone else to get their hands on it, yeah?” Jamie grinned.

Harry frowned a bit. “Blood sample?”

“Oh, don’t worry. I have a special device for that. No need to go slicing up fingers or anything. It’ll call out the right amount of blood for the enchantment to recognize you then burn anything remaining. Quite useful.”

“Alright then. That’ll work. Um, you think I could tie Pashti into it? She’s helpful and all.”

Jamie furrowed her brow. “Well I could tie her in, but I don’t know how well a recall would work for her. She doesn’t speak human, does she?”

Harry shook his head. “No, but she’s intelligent enough to figure it out. It would save a lot of trouble for me later. Do you have to speak English for the recall to work?”

“Alright then. Not the most unusual request I’ve had. Well, let’s go over here and we’ll get everything set up.” Jamie grinned at Harry. “And unless you find an enchanter, yes the word has to be in English, or the name of the thing as recognized in the English language, since the charm for the recall uses the caster’s own language knowledge. In Italy, if you bought such a bag, you would need to use Italian, and such and so on. But I know you can tweak the spell if you can find an enchanter who speaks the language you want the bag to recognize. I’ve heard there was once an enchanter who could tie the retrieval spell into the owner’s native language, but it was just a rumor. Such things are notoriously hard with the restrictions on blood magic.”

A few moments later, after Harry had gotten blood drawn from his left ring finger and Pashti had chosen her tails, tightly winding the two together so they looked like one, Jamie tied them both into the bag. “Thanks!” Harry said. He would enjoy looking at the spells woven into the bag. He could feel them through his magic, but picking them apart would be enjoyable.
“Alright, so the total will be 200 Galleons and 12 sickles!” Harry reached into his pocket, pulling out a handful of galleons at a time.

“Um, you have any way to count these?”

Jamie snorted. “And here I thought you would have it all in a special Gringotts bag,” she remarked.

Harry shrugged. “Eh. I have pockets. No need. Also Griphook said they don’t let underage kids have those bags.”

“Ah. I do suppose the only kids who have had one of those are the kids from wealthy families, and I think their parents just let them borrow theirs. Useful things though.”

“Ah, well. I think the Mokeskin pouch will be just fine. Don’t need my entire fortune on me at all times.” Harry started dropping his galleons into the large bowl Jamie had pulled out from under her counter. Numbers started popping up over it.

14
27
50
87
99
110
140
157
188
210

“Oh, 210,” Harry muttered, taking out galleons until it read 201. “There.”

Jamie beamed again. “Thank you! Here’s your change, 5 sickles!” Harry dropped them into his new Mokeskin bag. “Have a nice day, and enjoy your purchases!”

Harry waved as he turned back to his family and the professor. “Alright, where to next?”

McGonagall thought it best to leave things like robes and books till the end, so she led them to first the potions shop and ordered a standard first year potions kit. Harry added that he would like a nicer set of knives than those offered, remembering Salazar saying that how one chopped/diced/sliced/whatever something was very important.

His professor gave him an odd look.

Harry then proceeded to reject three sets of knives the Apothecary owner showed him.

“Don’t you have anything that doesn’t lose it’s edge and can be used on all ingredients, or includes the knives that you need for them?” Harry complained.
“How old are you, Harry?” the Doctor asked. “I remember you being more agreeable when you were five than you are now.”

“When I was five I wasn’t buying something so integral to my education,” Harry retorted.

The owner was wondering if the child he was serving was actually eleven. Most eleven year olds didn’t care one way or another about knives, and rarely did they know that knives affected potions. “Well, I do have, I mean, it’s rather expensive and only experienced potioners every bother with them. They aren’t really suitable for a first year…” he trailed off.

“I can still use them as a first year, yes? I mean, they aren’t impossible for me to use. I was taught that preparation was utmost when it came to making potions and my teacher was rather strict about the whole process.” Harry huffed at that. “So I would rather have the nice ones and not hear his voice haunting me for poor choices in my sleep.”

“Well, yeah, you can use them. If you’re sure.”

Harry nodded.

McGonagall sighed and wondered how Snape would react hearing about Harry Potter being interested enough in potions to buy the highest quality knife set they sold in Diagon Alley.

Harry grinned at her then put the potions kit in his new bag and dropped the cauldron into his trunk.

They stopped by the stationery store and Harry moaned over the parchment rolls and quill/ink combo sets.

“Really?” he complained to his dad.

“Well, you want to change all this, yeah? So get some here, then just used things from the Tardis. Though I will say the idea of writing with a quill and ink is just fascinating.”

“If you don’t mind your hands being splotchy and ink covered when you’re done,” Harry commented.

“Just takes some practice,” Jack replied.

Harry groaned. This was so unfair.

“Besides, it looks lovely when you write well,” Rose said, enjoying the dawning look of horror on Harry’s face as he realized they weren’t backing him up.

“You guys, come on!”

“They require parchment and quills, so get going!”

Harry groaned, but reluctantly picked out a set of quills and a couple ink bottles, before grabbing whatever parchment he put his hands on. He didn’t bother checking the prices.

McGonagall stopped him with an outstretched square of white. “Here, this will erase any mistakes. It’s an Ink Remover. So long as you get it within a few minutes of the mistake, you don’t have to Vanish all the ink. It’s useful for those just learning how to use quills.”

Harry took the little square. “Um, thanks. That’s helpful.” Not that he would be using quills.

“No problem. I’m glad to be of some assistance.”
Harry dropped seven galleons on the counter for his purchases before dropping the unwanted quills, ink, and parchment into his bag.

“What’s next?”
“A telescope.”
Harry laughed. “Really?”
“Harry,” the Doctor said.
“But I mean, I know all the names of the stars and planets. Is it really necessary?”
“Do you know their names here in the UK?” Jack asked.
Harry frowned. “Aren’t they the same?”
Rose sighed. “No, no they aren’t. So dazzle them later with your knowledge and just get a telescope for now.”
They trudged after McGonagall, Pashti making sure Harry knew her amusement at his situation. Harry just moaned back.

The telescopes they were to be using, Harry discovered, were ancient.

“These are old,” he informed McGonagall. “How do you expect to see anything of importance through these? You do know that by this time the Hubble has already been put into orbit. There are better telescopes in the non-magical world!” Harry glared at the telescopes that sat on display around him.

“The Hubble?” McGonagall asked, hesitant.

“The large, multi-spectrum telescope in low Earth orbit. It’s outside of the planet’s atmosphere so it can take high resolution photos of stars and planets that you can’t see from the planet’s surface. I mean, it was one of the most significant advancements in astronomical science humans made in the 20th century.” Harry rolled his eyes. “How separated are you from the non-magical world that you don’t even know about the Hubble? You do know humans have been to the Moon, yes?”

McGonagall blinked at Harry. “Of course. Are you implying we are completely ignorant? Wizards have, on accident or through some odd spell, been to the Moon as well, long before Muggles ever made it there. I don’t quite understand how they made it there, they don’t have magic and I don’t understand their technology, but we were informed of their trip. The Moon is quite inhospitable without advanced enchantments, but it’s not impossible!” She sounded outraged.

Harry held up his hands in surrender. “Well, forgive me for the assumption, but looking at these models, I could be forgiven for it. These look like they’re straight out of the pre-circumnavigation era.”

McGonagall sighed. “Just...just choose a telescope. They have runes and enchantments woven into them to improve visibility.” She kneaded her temples. The child was insufferable.

“Fine, fine.” Harry picked through the models until he found one he didn’t mind being seen with and paying for it, before shoving it in his trunk.

“So, just robes and books left,” the Doctor commented.
They walked out into the bright, sunny daylight once again. There were a few people wandering the streets, but they weren’t packed. The day after Halloween wasn’t a popular day for shopping, and since students were at Hogwarts there weren’t people out getting supplies for school and filling the streets.

“They’re both towards the beginning of Diagon Alley. We’ll get robes first since I’m sure the bookstore will be of great interest to you,” McGonagall said, eyeing Harry. “And I would rather only have to drag you all out of one store to get to Hogwarts.”

“You know bookworms rather well,” Rose commented.

“I know that look. It’s an unmistakable gleam at the mere mention of books. There’s a young first year with the same exact look. I was surprised she was sorted into Gryffindor, to be honest,” McGonagall said. “You’ll get along with her quite well.”

Harry tilted his head, the beads rattling against each other. “What’s her name?”

“Hermione Granger.”

His eyes widened. “Really now,” he murmured. Hermione was the name of the girl the troll had almost squished. It was unlikely there would be a second girl with the same unusual name.

“What’s that look?” Jack whispered to him.

“That’s the name of the girl who was in the toilets the troll was ripping up,” he replied in an undertone.

Jack blinked. “Really?”

“Yeah. Makes me wonder what she was doing down there. They’re sort of out of the way for Gryffindors, yeah? Library and the grounds are the opposite direction, and it was feast time, so there wouldn’t have been classes.”

“Indeed. Godric claimed the North Tower overlooking the grounds for his students. The dungeons were always Sal’s. He liked the cool temperatures, especially since it helped preserve his ingredients longer. Rowena found a tower room that hadn’t been there before and claimed it. Helga set up shop near the kitchens, mostly because she was the only one out of the four of them who remembered to eat at regular intervals and had any skill at cooking.” Jack smiled.

Harry loved hearing about his Uncle’s time with the Founders. He remembered them, but he had only been there for a little while. His uncle lived there for years! More years than he had been alive.

In his musings, Harry nearly ran into McGonagall’s back. “This is Madam Malkin’s. She has been providing robes to Hogwarts students for many years.” The transfiguration professor looked Harry over. “So be polite.”

“Oi, I’ve been nothing but polite!” Harry protested.

She raised an eyebrow. “You fought with the Apothecary owner over knives, you blew up Ollivander, you fought the shop owner over a telescope, and you whined at the quill shop the entire time we were there.”

“She’s got you there Harry,” Rose quipped, smirking. “One would think you were five instead of eleven, but I have it on good authority that you weren’t nearly this irritable at five.”
Harry sighed, hanging his head. “Alright, fine. Let’s just go get this over with. I don’t have to wear them all the time right? I can wear my jacket yes? I mean, robes are rather impractical and this jacket is rather special.” Harry fingered his jacket.

“Robes are required,” McGonagall informed him.

“I’m not taking my jacket off for some robes that get stuck in door frames and on desk legs,” Harry retorted.

“Do you have to be the most difficult student I have ever taken shopping?” McGonagall just barely resisted calling him Mr. Potter. She didn’t think she could deal with the boy’s reply about his name. “Just get the robes and complain to the headmaster about it!” And she sincerely was hoping the boy wouldn’t be in her house. She glared back at Harry’s family. “You all could help out you know?”

Rose put her hands up. “I have long ago learned that Harry will do as he pleases. Take it up with his father.”

The Doctor smiled a wide, unnerving grin. “So long as he isn’t endangering others, doing unauthorized experiments, or causing unnecessary chaos, he’s got free reign to argue for his stance. Though he has to abide by the reigning authority on the matter, in this case the Headmaster.” The Doctor looked at Harry. “And he is well aware of this requirement.”

Harry rolled his eyes, absently petting Pashti. “I know, I know. I’ll plead my case to Dumbledore. It’s odd, not having to appeal to you. I know what to say to get you to let me do something. Dumbledore, I have no idea.” He shrugged his shoulder. “Ah, well, it’ll be fun.”

McGonagall stared in astonishment. “You allow an eleven year old to argue for what he wants to do?” she said, shock in his voice.

“Of course. How would he ever learn to do anything on his own if he wasn’t given the choice? I mean, I might not like everything he wants to do, but if he has good reasons for doing it, and can express them articulately, than he’s got the right to at least try.” The Doctor shoved his hands in his pockets. “How else would children ever learn how to survive in the world?”

McGonagall wanted to argue that Harry was eleven and that he wasn’t old enough to logically make decisions like that, but stopped herself. Harry was far and away more mature than any first year she had ever taught. “Then you can argue with the headmaster about the robe requirements later. For now, just get robes.” She glanced at Pashti. “And Pashti will have to go somewhere else. You need to take your jacket off for the measurements to work.”

They entered the store, and a middle aged woman in well made purple robes bustled over at the sight of McGonagall.

“Minerva! It’s wonderful to see you! And who’s this? A Hogwarts student? A little late in the year for robes? Did they not get winter robes? It’s getting rather chilly out, though why you wouldn’t owl order them…”

“No, not that. This is Harry...Harry. He’s a new first year. There was a mix up and he arrived a little later than expected. So we need to get him the full set. Is that alright?”

The woman blinked. “Oh, of course. It is really late, though, isn’t it? Alright then, young man, over here.”

Harry held his hand up to Pashti, who stepped onto his palm, and he transferred her to Rose. “Um, alright. Here?” Harry stepped onto a platform in front of the woman. “And what’s your name?
Professor McGonagall already told you mine and it feels weird for you to know mine but I don’t know yours.”

The woman laughed. “I’m Madam Malkin. This is my store but I rather find I like working with customers over all the tedium of the business side of things. Your jacket is amazing dear. Where did you get it? It has a lot of spells woven into it, I don’t think I’ve ever seen the like.” Madam Malkin fingered the coat.

Harry grinned. He loved it when his jacket was complemented. “I got the fabric from the non magical world, but I had it specially made for me by a rather eccentric friend. She put protection spells and a charm to make it grow with me, along with a bunch of others. I had to model for her as payment.” He scrunched his nose in memory.

“It’s quite a work of art. You’ll have to take it off for robes though dear.” Harry sighed but shrugged out of his jacket. He handed it carefully to his uncle with a look promising dire consequences if he let anything happen to it. Jack chuckled in response.

“So, what do you do? Is there a spell or something for measuring someone for robes?” Harry asked, curious.

“Oh, of course there are spells, but they can be woefully inadequate unless you’re completely nude, and most people don’t really want to stand naked in a store just for robes.” She chuckled at Harry’s wide eyes. “I actually measure a bit closer to how muggle tailors do. Oh dear, why aren’t you wearing any shoes? It’s just November, you’ll catch a cold!” Madam Malkin looked at Harry with concerned eyes.

“Don’t like shoes, and it’s really not all that cold out. I’m sure dad’ll make me put them on when snow starts falling, but until then, I’ll enjoy the freedom.”

Madam Malkin looked between Harry and the trio of adults standing over near the chairs, worry plain on her face. “Well, I suppose it’s not really my place. Let’s just get your measurements.” She summoned a tape measure and a large robe.

The robe she slung over Harry, urging him to slip his arms into the sleeves. “This is stuffy,” he commented.

“In that drafty castle, you’ll be glad for it. Now, let’s see. Tall for a first year, but you’ve got no meat on you. Whip thin. You should eat more.” She tutted.

“I like to run, thank you very much,” Harry said, feeling a tad self conscious.

“Well, boys,” she said absently.

Harry felt mildly insulted on Rose’s behalf. Half the running she did was for pleasure and he joined Rose for those runs. She was fast, wicked fast, and would tease him if he couldn’t keep up. Harry didn’t think it was fair, seeing as how she had over a century of running practice on him. She beat Uncle Jack five out of six times and even dad had trouble keeping up!

For longer than Harry really felt comfortable with Madam Malkin prodded and poked at him, adjusting the robe’s length and tucking in bits of fabric here and there.

“Alright then dear, you’re good. I’ll have the standard set ready for you in an hour. You’ll still be in Diagon Alley in that time, right?”

Harry’s eyes went wide and he cast a mildly panicked look over at his family, but before he had to
worry Professor McGonagall answered for him.

“Yes. We should be just leaving. I’ll stop by and get them right before we head back to Hogwarts.”

As Harry thanked Madam Malkin and took his jacket back from Uncle Jack, he ignored the snickers from all three of them. Pashti jumped on his shoulder the moment he had slid on his jacket, tucking herself up by his ear and resuming her silent observation of the world around.

“So, bookstore now, yes?” Harry asked, gleam twinkling in his eyes.

McGonagall sighed. “Yes, the bookstore. You have one hour. One hour to find all the books you would like and pay for them, before we must be heading back to Hogwarts. Lunch starts in an hour and half and there are a number of problems to sort out before you join classes this afternoon. Your schedule for one, your house for another, and your family for third.” McGonagall looked at the four strangers, Harry Potter was a stranger at this point as she had no idea what to make of him, the boy who had plopped right into the ordered life she had been enjoying.

The moment she pointed out the bookstore, just a ways down from the robes, Harry took off, his trunk left in the hands of the tall and grinning Jack Harkness. That green coat McGonagall knew would be the source of controversy later flapped around the thin boy.

“Anyone want to go after him?” Rose asked, raising an eyebrow.

“It’s a bookstore, how much trouble could he get into in a bookstore? Wouldn’t he be more concerned about the books to be causing problems?” Minerva questioned.

Rose gave her a pointed look. “This is Harry we are talking about yeah? He could get in trouble in an isolation cell.”

The Doctor huffed, then took off at a steady trot after his son.

McGonagall stared at the two remaining strangers. “We’ll be at the bookstore in maybe five minutes,” she pointed out.

Rose shrugged. “Five minutes is enough time for Harry to not only create a wormhole in space and time but to destabilize the local reality for ten kilometers. There is a reason he is the Doctor’s son, and most of that has to do with just how quickly he can either find, make, or stumble into trouble.”

“Surely you’re joking. The child is eleven.”

“You have never been stuck in the same room as a bored, restless, and impossible to entertain Harry before. Just wait, you’ll see.” Jack hummed, recalling an incident with the roller coaster Harry had finally convinced his father to let him build. Something went wrong with the stabilizers and the entire construct nearly collapsed on itself before the Doctor could initiate a shutdown sequence to see what had gone wrong. Harry had been told to go wait in the lab and to not touch anything, and Jack had been sent along to make sure he didn’t get into trouble. It had lasted all of five minutes before Harry had turned Jack fuzzy and orange and himself a jelly purple.

McGonagall looked with skeptical eyes at the two, who just gave her identical, creepy smiles. She turned her attention to the bookstore, Flourish and Blotts, instead, hoping to catch sight of the young wizard she was supposed to be escorting around the alley.

She walked into a scene of chaos.

Well, as much chaos as could happen without explosions, fire, or spells.
There was a small crowd of customers crowded near the entrance, holding books they had possibly wanted to purchase but had yet been unable to. The reason was obvious, and the transfiguration professor blinked.

“But….he hasn’t even been in here for seven minutes....” she breathed.

“That’s four minutes longer than Harry really needed to start causing a scene,” Jack commented.

“That’s being generous. I’ve seen him get an arrow pointed at him in under two.”

“It’s been seven minutes….seven minutes, how can an eleven year old manage this is seven minutes?” McGonagall seemed to be in a state of shock, staring at the scene in front of her.

The path leading up to the register was littered with various stacks of books, haphazardly gathered in unspecified piles but blocking the way just as easily. Several shelves had been ransacked and though the books were placed with care, the furniture suffered in return. And among it all, a small boy rushed back and forth, flickering between the aisles. Despite the speed he was moving with, he managed to not step on any books in the process.

“You’ve unleashed the monster,” Jack said, shaking his head.

“I forgot he was this bad around books,” Rose murmured. “We haven’t hit any new bookstores or the like in a while.”

“It’s been seven minutes,” McGonagall repeated. “And he’s eleven!”

“Eight minutes, actually, and Harry loves books. Never been otherwise, not since he was able to hold one and read.” The Doctor popped up next to the deputy headmistress.

McGonagall turned to stare at him, eyes wide. “How...what is going on here? He’s a first year, he’s eleven! He shouldn’t ever need this many books!”

The Doctor laughed. “He’s actually cheating a bit right now. He’s been starved for information on the magical world, I wouldn’t let him get anything of significance so now he’s touch reading. Well, reading’s a bit of an exaggeration. He’s….he’s touch skimming. I’ve let him do it this once since he doesn’t have to worry about having the money to pay for it.”

Rose gave the Doctor a concerned look. “But doesn’t that mean he has to take his necklace off?”

“Why do you think everyone’s over in the corner? After I let him take it off, I made sure everyone in the store was away from the stacks.” The Doctor gestured at the huddle of maybe ten people. “Very confused but understanding lot.”

McGonagall looked over at the small group. Half of them were employees, she realized, and the other half looked like housewives or night workers. Then she looked back over at the flickering figure of Harry Potter, fluttering through the shelves like a fairy. “You said he was touch...skimming? And something about a necklace?”

The three members of Harry’s family cast wary looks at each other. “Touch skimming is...” the Doctor trailed off. “You know how Harry was able to tell the enchantments on magical objects he holds?”

“Yes, it’s a rare sensing ability. I’ve never seen someone so young with the same level of sensitivity but it isn’t uncommon for muggleborns to come to Hogwarts with a glimmer of it.” McGonagall wondered where this was going.
“Well, Harry uses it to cheat at books sometimes.”

“Cheat at books?”

“He can use the same sensing ability to sense the ink or whatever writing material was used on the pages and he can read that way. Takes less time, but I think it’s cheating since he’s not actually reading anything. And he doesn’t remember things as well when he does that and he’s more likely to get things wrong. But since he only has an hour here, I let him skim. Five seconds a book or less is skimming.” The Doctor didn’t see McGonagall’s mouth drop open in shock.

“He’s doing what?” she managed to get out.

“He’s using his magic to identify the differing compositions of the ink and the paper and letting his magic read the ink,” the Doctor repeated.

“But that...that’s advanced level wandless magic!” she stuttered. “He shouldn’t be able to do that!”

Rose huffed a laugh. “Don’t tell Harry he can’t do something or you’ll turn around a few hours later to see him having either done that exact thing or nearly blown up the nearest solid object in the attempt.”

“He’s eleven!”

“You seem to be stuck on his age for some reason. Really, if you stopped thinking that just because he’s eleven he shouldn’t be doing any of this, then you would be having a much easier time of it. Less stressful that way,” Rose assured her.

McGonagall stood in silent contemplation for a few moments, turning this over in her mind. Really, from everything she had seen today, Harry Potter did not act like an eleven year old. Sure, he whined over the quills and ink, he protested at the telescope, he fought over knives and robes but he did it with both the attitude and the vocabulary of someone already reaching maturity. If she had just heard him in passing without having seen him, she would have mistaken him for a high pitched 7th year.

She put her head into her palms, massaging her temples.

“There there, it happens to everyone who meets him eventually. No one’s exempt from the stress headaches induced by the Doctor’s son. Not even the Doctor’s son.” Rose grinned brightly at her when she lifted her read.

“That doesn’t help,” McGonagall muttered.

“I didn’t think it would.”

Minerva McGonagall moaned softly.

~~~Harry POV~~~

He had an hour and an entire bookstore to go through, not that he really knew what that meant in practical terms. But he knew he had a while. Time enough, maybe, to get a bit of everything.

He wondered where he would start.

“You can touch skim, Harry,” his dad’s voice came from behind him. “Skim only. I’ll move everyone out of your way.”

Harry turned around, eyes wide. “Really? I can skim?” He grinned at the nod he received.
“Awesome! Pashti you hear that? I can skim!” He reached up for the clasp on his necklace and Pashti mreowed in pleasure.

As his necklace fell away and his magic spread out around him, tasting freedom once again, Harry’s eyes lit in pleasure.

He was unaware they glowed a soft green, though the Doctor had seen them and he wondered what that could mean.

Then he was off, avoiding the areas he knew had people in them until his dad could get them out of the way. Revealing his touch empathy was not on the menu for today.

His hands touched spines of books and their topics flooding his mind. He grabbed three off the shelf and headed towards the register, starting his first pile. His dad was convincing the last of the customers to stand over in this corner, please, and yes, it really was important. It wouldn’t take long, really.

Harry grinned. He had the store!

He took the aisle closest to the register first, letting his fingers skim the books closest and allowing his magic to touch those he couldn’t reach, the reason he needed his necklace off in the first place.

A dozen books were taken off the shelves. He had decided to stick with at least introductory basics for things, figuring he could order the more advanced ones later and he would be getting enough books as it was already. Also, Hogwarts had a library, there should be plenty of useful advanced books in there.

Alright, he took both the introductory basics and the next level up. Really, he would be bored with just the introductions, he figured.

He turned the aisle quickly, taking down more books as they caught his fancy and missing the entrance of Professor McGonagall and the rest of his family. He was mostly down the second aisle and into the third, some sort of story section, he believed, when something stuck out in his mind.

His magic had highlighted a specific phrase, “Harry Potter, Savior of the Wizarding World”. He stumbled to a halt.

What?

He pulled the book out and looked at the title. “Harry Potter and the Hundred Headed Hydra,” he read out. His magic skimmed through the story, pulling the main passages out for him. “Oi, what’s this? Is this supposed to be about me?” He looked back at the shelf. “Harry Potter and the Bothersome Banshee. Harry Potter and the Vicious Vampire. What is all this?” He pulled a few more of the “Harry Potter” books off the shelf, frowning.

“What?”

Harry looked down at the books in his hands. “These. What are these dad?” Harry held one out to
his father. “I found a whole shelf with them!”

The Doctor took the edge of the book, making sure to keep his hands away from Harry’s. “Is this...about you?” he said, voice rising in confusion.

“It’s got my name and my supposed last name, and a kid with green eyes and that stupid scar on their forehead on the cover. Though it doesn’t really look much like me, other than the black hair and eyes.” Harry rubbed absently at his fringe where he had taken to hiding the lightning bolt they hadn’t managed to get to fade away.

“Professor, what are these?” the Doctor asked, turning back towards the transfiguration teacher. “Harry found a shelf of them, but are they supposed to be about him?”

McGonagall came closer, looking at the book in the Doctor’s hand, then the ones Harry was holding. “Let me see those,” she said, reaching out.

Harry backed up a bit, putting a bit of space between him and the professor before holding the books out with the edges of his fingers. Pashti watched the exchange with narrowed eyes, ready to interfere if anything happened.

But other than an odd look from the professor, Harry was able to hand the books over with little issue. He retracted his hand back quickly. He would like to leave Diagon Alley without a splitting headache and the need for the mediation room.

“So?” Harry asked. “Are they?”

“I think...these were published some...two, three years ago. A children’s fantasy series that used your name and basic description. Very popular, since its target age was actually your peers. I don’t recall much about them as the Headmaster quickly stopped their production. He allowed the ones already written and published to be sold but wouldn’t allow any new books to be released. There were only maybe six of them released.”

Harry groaned. “Really? Why me? I mean, why couldn’t they have used a kid’s name that actually had some sort of alliteration scheme since they’re so fond of it?”

“You’re famous, Harry, and you’re still a child. It makes it easier for kids to relate to you, since they know you’re real and you’re their age.” McGonagall smiled as Harry’s face fell and he moaned.

“Oh, this is brilliant. Just what I wanted. You know what, no, I’m not leaving my room when we get back. You couldn’t bribe me with anything to make me go to school with a bunch of kids who grew up hearing all about me, or at least the lies they were fed about me. I refuse.” The chagrin on his face was real and deep.

“See, this is why I didn’t tell you. You’d just become all melodramatic about it. And you don’t have an option, remember our discussion?” the Doctor said.

Rose and Jack snickered behind them. “I’m willing to turn into tiny shards of time energy if it means avoiding a whole school of people who grew up hearing my name,” Harry retorted. “And you two, you’re too old to be snickering like a couple of children sneaking cookies!”

“You’re utter disdain for hero worship is adorable,” Rose said, covering a grin.

“I grew up with him, it’s easy to see how quickly it turns,” Harry said, jerking a thumb at the Doctor. “Besides, why would I be famous for something I didn’t even do? It was probably some spell or time causality or something, nothing I did.” Harry moaned, rubbing his temples.
McGonagall reached out to put a hand on Harry’s shoulder, ready to offer a bit of comfort to the young boy who was just really finding out the extent of his fame, trying to ignore the building confusion over mentions of things she couldn’t explain.

She wasn’t ready for the sudden and complete retreat of the boy, Pashti on his shoulder hissing softly, and her wrist in the iron hard grasp of the Doctor. She looked up at him, startled and ready to let him know her displeasure at being grabbed so suddenly, but her protests died at the look of panic and worry on his face. “Um...what? Did I do something?” she asked, unsure.

The Doctor dropped her hand, looking at her. “Not...precisely no. It’s just…” he struggled to find the words he wanted to say.

Harry backed up further down the aisle, keeping his hands behind him. “Pashti doesn’t like sudden movements,” he said. “She get’s a bit upset if someone tries to grab me or touch me without warning me first.”

The Doctor sent his son a relieved look.

McGonagall bit her lip, not sure if she was really going to believe that or not. Pashti had been quiet all day, far more silent and composed than any other cat McGonagall had ever seen. Willing to sit on Harry’s shoulder, accepting treats and sips of water from various things Harry kept in his mysterious pockets, and generally making the transfiguration mistress wonder if she was an animagus. Still, there wasn’t another reasonable explanation she could come up with for the sudden fear she had seen flash across Harry’s face as he moved away from her, shoving his hands behind his back and putting a good couple meters distance between them.

“Well, as it is, you’ll have to deal with a bit of idolatry or jealousy from some of the purebloods and halfbloods at Hogwarts, or at least everyone recognizing your name. Though if you don’t use Potter, you don’t look much like the Harry Potter people were expecting.” McGonagall squinted at him. “Your hair’s a bit long, and your eyes aren’t quite the same shade of green as your mot...as Lily’s were. And you don’t really look like either James or Lily, not fully. Though you weren’t much more than a year old when they died and the Doctor took you, so no one could really say for certain how you would look when you came back.”

Harry breathed a sigh. “I’ll pretend I’m someone else then. It’s not like anyone can see that blasted scar since I grew my hair out and anyone who asks to see it has no tact.” He glared at the books McGonagall was still holding.

“I’m afraid that pretending to not be Harry Potter would be rather impossible, as everyone was in the Great Hall when you arrived and the headmaster announced your name,” McGonagall told him, not mentioning that just the name Harry on a boy with green eyes and black hair would have been enough.

Harry groaned. “This sucks. Now, since I’ve unhappily discovered my fame, you mind if I continue my perusal of the bookstore? I still have four more aisles to go and then I need to decide if I need every book I’ve picked out. How much longer do I have? You said there was an hour or something right? How much of that do I have left?”

Rose glanced at her watch, a special one designed by the Doctor to match the local time based off of the Tardis’s readings. “Well, we got here at 10:55, and it’s currently 11:25, so you have half an hour, or thirty minutes.” Harry gave her a blank stare. “The amount of time it takes you to make and eat those silly blue pancake things that fluff up and then explode if you don’t eat them fast enough.”

Harry grinned. “Awesome, thanks!” and he raced off back down the aisles.

“Harry….Harry’s got a bit of a time telling issue. It’s something we’re working on,” Rose muttered.

“I see.” She didn’t.

For the next twenty minutes, Harry was a blur of motion, piling books ever higher and blocking off more of the walkway. She was grateful his piles never seemed to reach much above thigh height, she didn’t think they would stay standing if that happened.

Still, when he was finally finished with the aisles (she was having a hard time believing he had ‘skimmed’ every single book in the store), he hovered over his piles.

“Ten minutes Harry. Or about the amount of time it takes you to eat in a hurry,” Rose reminded him.

Harry blinked. “Crap. Alright, let’s get this over with.” He wished he had more time to go through the books, but that didn’t seem like it was happening today. He was really getting tired of imposed time limits. Stopping a revolution, a civil war, something disastrous, those were limits imposed by huge and oppressive forces and most of the time they were on the move and doing something so he never paid attention. Now though, a teacher was imposing the restrictions and it was chafing.

He sat, cross legged, in the middle of the aisle and closed his eyes. His magic, still free from the confines of his limiter, spread out around him and delved into the books, matching them with his desires and discarding those that didn’t fit well.

To McGonagall, it seemed as if Harry had gone into a trance, eyes closed and quiet, far quieter than any first year meditating had a right to be.

It passed in just a couple minutes, and Harry began to dash around again, removing books from piles and setting them aside, and then collecting the ones remaining.

“Allright, done.” Harry grinned. “I even remembered to keep the ones from the school list, though they weren’t really interesting at first glance, well, most of them weren’t.” Harry looked at his dad. “Ready. Is the cashier one of the ones over in the corner?”

“Harry,” the Doctor said, pointing at Harry’s pocket.

“Ah, yes. It’s been awhile since I…”

Harry turned around, pulling his necklace out of his pocket and slipping it back on, before tucking it under his shirt.

McGonagall stared at the faint shimmer of gold she could see, wondering what was so special about that necklace. It was obviously important but she couldn’t fathom its purpose. Most of the boys she had ever interacted with never wore anything so gaudy as sold gold necklaces, most girls didn’t either, especially not at eleven.

But as she looked around at the other members of Harry’s family, she realized the question would not be answered. At best, they would ignore it, at worst someone would give about as lame an excuse as Harry gave when she went to comfort him.

In a few moments, Harry had gathered his books and the Doctor let those who had decided to remain in their confined corner back to their browsing. All but one customer had left, deciding to come back when the crazy people were gone.
Grumbling but unable to really complain seeing as they were selling quite a number of books to the strange group that had come in, the employees went back to their jobs, most of which now consisted of restocking and organizing the shelves Harry had left in disarray.

While Harry was finishing buying his many many books (McGonagall once again wondering what an eleven year old was going to do with that many books), a courier from Madam Malkin’s came down to let them know the robes were ready for pick up. McGonagall told Harry he had five minutes to finish everything, to which Harry just blinked at, before Rose mouthed “Hurry up” at him. Harry quickly dumped coin after coin into a bowl similar to the one they had at the trunk store until he had paid for everything, then promptly piled all the books into his trunk. He would enjoy having a space for just his books.

“Finished, let’s go. I’m going to have to face the students at some point, might as well get it over with sooner,” Harry muttered. “The quicker they figure out I’m not some hero to be gawked at better.”

Rose muffled a giggled in Jack’s shoulder. Harry not a hero. Well, child of the Doctor and all that, she supposed. Jack gave her a sly smirk.

Harry took the bag filled with robes from Madam Malkin, shoving them into his trunk. Then McGonagall fished out a sock from her pocket and held it out. It was bright green with magenta stripes and Harry raised an eyebrow.

“What’s this?”

“A Portkey.”

“Ah. I didn’t know they came in sock shape,” Harry replied.

McGonagall frowned. “Portkeys can be anything. It’s a spell, not an object oriented enchantment.”

Harry heaved a sigh. “Alright, but really, a sock? Didn’t we use a hoop or something coming here?”

“That one was keyed to Diagon Alley. Use it now and we’ll just end up back at the beginning of the alley. For long lasting Portkeys, there can only be one destination.”

Harry nodded, a thoughtful frown taking over his face. “Wouldn’t there be a way to key different destinations based on passwords or word cues?” he asked.

“Some high level enchanters can, but it’s expensive and time consuming and most people don’t need to have a multi-destination portkey. The portkey spell is difficult to do but not impossible, though most people don’t bother learning it. But those who need to use portkeys frequently do take the time since it’s much more cost effective to make your own portkey when necessary,” McGonagall informed him. “Now, if everyone would touch the sock, Pashti included. Hold on to your purchases, they’ll come with you. 3, 2, 1.”

The familiar jerking sensation accompanied their journey again, and they landed in a crumpled heap (well, most of them did) in the Headmaster’s office.

Jack groaned. “I swear, magical transport is literally just trying to see how closely it can replace my atoms with those of a couch,” he complained from his spot on the floor, right next to a squashy armchair. “It’s highly discomforting.”

“You’d survive the replacement,” Rose assured him, climbing to her feet. “It would just make taking you down a much more comfortable experience.”
Harry laughed.

“Shopping finished Minerva?”

The four looked over at Dumbledore’s voice, seeing the headmaster sitting behind his desk, smiling.

“Yes. Classes start in an hour and a half, so have you decided anything?”

Dumbledore looked at Harry. “I’ve received a lot of letters about your reappearance. Quite a few people are wondering where you’ve been for ten years and why you were late to school. I’ve turned down a number of interviews but don’t be surprised if you start getting requests. The Minister also wishes to have a word with you sometime. Saturday or Sunday would be ideal.”

Harry blinked. “Um, what? Why? And when?”

Dumbledore steepled his fingers. “Surely you know of your status within our world?”

“About that,” Harry started.

McGonagall sent him a look. “Don’t even start. You’ve made yourself very clear on what you think of the matter.” She turned to the mildly perplexed headmaster. “Harry knew nothing of his fame, though he happened to discover those books published a few years ago about him. And he is, in a word, unimpressed. I’m sure he will voice his displeasure plenty of times in the near future. For now, we need to sort out his House, his family, and classes. Though after today, I’m not sure if he needs much remedial work. He should catch up to his peers fairly quickly, if what I saw today was any indication.” And surpass them, but she kept that to herself for the moment.

Dumbledore nodded, having figured as much. “Then we shall sort out the current issues and worry about others later.” He steepled his fingers, staring at Harry. “We’ve never had an unsorted student. There are no contingencies for such a case. Only before the Sorting Hat’s creation were students not placed in houses. There must be something we can do with you. Also, your...family.” Dumbledore looked over at the three adults. “I will admit that I don’t know how to keep you out of Hogwarts if you want to be here and I cannot remove you from the grounds as you have done nothing wrong by just being here, since it is only school policy to not allow parents to stay in school rather than a rule.”

The Doctor shoved his hands in his pockets. “So, what are you going to do?” He said it with a hint of challenge in his voice.

“As pointed out by Harry yesterday, there is a severe lack of physical education at Hogwarts, something I hadn’t quite considered before. We can begin to hold mandatory sessions for all years once a week, if Ms. Rose and Mr. Jack would be willing to teach them.” The headmaster looked at the two immortals. “I feel that such classes would be beneficial to the health and well-being of the students. It would also give you reasonable cause to be at Hogwarts.”

Rose flashed him a grin that was more than a little intimidating. “Oh, don’t worry, we’ll have your pack of wand wavers in shape in no time.”

Jack chuckled. “They probably won’t enjoy it, but they’ll be all the better for it. Besides, any rule skirting I can be part of is a bonus.”

“Those poor children,” Harry said, laughing a little.

“Don’t say that, you’ll be joining the first years when they start.”

Harry waved a hand. “Please, I’ve been running with you since you joined us, Rose,” he said. “And
before that I learned how to keep up with dad.”

“As for you, Doctor, I have been looking for someone to hold extra classes in history, something aside from goblin rebellions. Professor Binns is a tenured professor and they are notoriously hard to get rid of, and in the magical world death doesn’t end a contract if the deceased’s ghost continues to exist and work as they had before. Unfortunately this means a poor showing on OWLs and NEWTs from many Hogwarts students as few take the initiative to study outside of class, and Professor Binns has regrettably forgotten most of everything aside from goblin rebellions. If you could hold several sessions a week for those willing to work on their History, I could consider you in good standing as a teacher here, and the ministry would be less likely to raise a fuss over you being here.”

Harry stared at the headmaster in wide eyed wonder. “You want him to teach history? Are you sure?”

“Oi, I can teach history just fine!” the Doctor replied, huffing at his son.

“If you can remember the proper century, galaxy, and planet,” Harry muttered under his breath. “And you never do manage one of those.”

“You’re good at history!” the Doctor protested.

Harry stared at him slowly, blinking. “We live in the Tardis,” he deadpanned.

The Doctor just pouted, before turning back to the headmaster, who was watching them with a half smile, amused. “So what about the house issue you seem so invested in? Is it really that important?”

Dumbledore frowned. “It’s a long standing tradition that students join one of the four Houses upon entering Hogwarts. Houses provide structure and support as well as giving youngsters a group of peers with which they can grow up. Houses become a base for many witches and wizards joining society as it is a group of friends you can call upon for help.”

Harry snorted a bit, trying to keep it quiet. It was beyond just unlikely that he would be staying in this timeline for any period of time beyond what he had to be here for, it was not going to happen, flat out. He refused to stay in one timeline for the rest of his life, especially not one so...insipid as this one was turning out to be. He supposed he was a bit spoiled having been to Haleyso and seen a functioning and advanced magical society, but he would not hang around in this world just because some expected it of him.

He was Harry, son of the Doctor; he lived to defy expectations.

But telling the headmaster that went against his own outline for his plans on Hogwarts, so instead he asked “What are you going to do then, if you can’t sort me properly? I mean, I think it’s rather ridiculous, sorting eleven year olds into Houses in the first place, but if you think it’s so important I’m not really fitting into the mold here.”

Dumbledore gave Harry a beaming smile Harry felt was wider than was appropriate. “I have set up a schedule for you, where you will take classes with each house. At the end of a week, you will have hopefully found a house to join and we can sort you there. You can then join your housemates schedules and dorm.”

Harry scoffed. “I am not sleeping in a dorm.”

“Every student sleeps in the dorms, and though your family will, for now, be part of Hogwarts staff, staying with them is strictly against protocol.” Dumbledore frowned at Harry. “When you have a House, you will sleep with your housemates.”
“I look forward to seeing you make me,” Harry muttered, softly enough that the headmaster couldn’t hear.

“I’ll have your schedule for you for the next week on Monday. First years only have one class after lunch on Fridays, so you’ll be joining Professor McGonagall in Transfiguration with the Ravenclaws and Slytherins. After that, she will determine your skill level and if you need any catch up lessons in that class. Professor Flitwick agreed to meet with you after Transfiguration for Charms, and Professor Snape has agreed to finish up your core classes this evening before dinner in Potions. Astronomy, Herbology, Defense, and History of Magic are currently not magic based classes, so much of the necessary catching up can be done with textbooks.” The headmaster peered at Harry. “Professor McGonagall will give you your schedule and directions to get to Professor Flitwick’s class after you are finished in Transfiguration. Professor Flitwick will tell you how to get to Professor Snape’s class after he is finished. You should be done in time for dinner. The next two days are, of course, the weekend so there are no classes, though I believe I will let the Minister know he can come by tomorrow to make sure you are actually real.”


Rose rolled her eyes, sighing. “You left a lot out of his upbringing,” she muttered to the Doctor.

“Well, there wasn’t much need for named days of the week when there are no days of the week in the Tardis,” the Doctor defended.

“The weekend, Harry. No classes, thus you are free to get to know your peers and explore the castle.”

“You have two whole days where you don’t teach classes? What? Why?”

Dumbledore looked a little bemused. “They are traditional days of rest. Saturday and Sunday have been that way for many years.” He looked over at the three adults who had raised Harry, eyes wide. “What is this? I assumed you raised him with a proper education.”

The Doctor cleared his throat. “Yes, but having days off from learning wasn’t really a thing. For one, Harry would be learning whether you decided to actively teach him or not, and two, it was always better to keep him occupied with books and experiments. Left less time for mischief and possibly blowing things up.”

Harry glared at the headmaster. “You don’t need to follow a traditional schedule to learn anything anyway. It’s silly. Learn when you want, what you want. It makes more sense, that way you always want to learn.”

“I for one am curious as to this minister you’ve mentioned twice now. You said he is coming tomorrow? Who is this?” the Doctor interjected.

“Cornelius Fudge is the Minister for Magic and is responsible for running the magical community here.”

“And why does he want to meet me? I’m a student,” Harry said, then stopped and groaned. “It’s because of that famous thing isn’t it? Ugh. I hate fame.”

Rose patted him on the shoulder with little sympathy. “It’s alright, you’ll survive. I have every confidence in your ability to strive through this hardship.”

Harry glared at her. “You’re not helping.” Pashti meowed on his shoulder, amusement seeping through their connection. “You aren’t either. In fact, none of you seem to be the least bit sympathetic
Jack shrugged. “You should have gotten used to this long ago. He’s your dad, after all.” Jack jerked a thumb at the Doctor.

“And it’s unsettling and irritating every time.” Harry slouched down in his chair. “I hate it.”

“It’s not going to up and vanish in thin air, magic boy,” Jack said, grinning.

“Well, the minister will be here tomorrow, unless you have any objections that are of merit.”

Harry attempted to say something, but a glance from the Doctor shut his mouth and made his slump back down into his seat. “Fine, fine, whatever. Gonna have to get used to it anyway. Might as well start with the head guy>”

Dumbledore frowned but decided to forge on with his speech. They had under half an hour until lunch ended and Harry needed to have the basics down before he was shuffled off to classes. “Now then, you will be following a schedule here. Since you will be missing lunch as we sort out the details, I have taken the liberty of having the house elves prepare something for you.”

The four watched in mild bewilderment and curiosity as a small, greenish being popped into existence, holding a tray filled with sandwiches and fruits, followed by another with a pitcher and classes.

“Headmaster sir has requested lunch?” the being said, voice high and squeaky.

“Thank you Lottie, Bopsy. You can leave the trays on my desk.”

The little beings, Lottie and Bopsy, left the sandwich and drink trays on the desk before bowing and popping back out.

“Who were they?” Rose asked. “You said they were house elves, but what is a house elf exactly?”

Dumbledore smiled a bit. “They’re a magical race of beings. Highly dependent on the magic from wizards and witches to survive so they form pacts of a sort, trading their services for a bond of magic. Their magic is geared towards quieter tasks and they function well as cooks, maids, and general maintenance.”

Rose frowned. “Sounds like the Ood, Doctor,” she muttered.

“We’ll see what’s up later. We have far more time here than we would normally have,” he replied.

Jack gave them both a look.

“Please, enjoy lunch. I have a few questions for you. I am curious as to how much magic you know, seeing as you have a wand, however unconventional it is.” Dumbledore leaned forward.

Harry looked back at his dad, eyes wide and a bit unsure. “Dad, what now?” he asked in the only language he knew the Tardis never translated, Gallifreyan.

Rose and Jack groaned. “Now we’ll never know what they’re saying,” Rose complained.

“They always do this. You’d think after seven years you’d get used to it,” Jack added, tone sulky.

Harry shot him a look. “Dad? I mean, I can’t just say Emrys taught me,” he continued.
“Well, you have a tendency to show off, and your focus doesn’t help matters much. What do you want them to know?”

“Well, I don’t want them to think I’m incompetent with a focus, wand, whatever word they use, but I don’t think they really need to know everything. I mean, my necklace for one is definitely an off limits topic, and the specifics of my focus.”

“I would also recommend you don’t show off your solar system. It’s impressive, but considering the reaction we’ve received before, I don’t think Hogwarts is quite ready for that level of strangeness. Give it a year or so. They’ll have gotten used to you by then.”

Harry sighed. “Alright, I guess that’s fine. I have some experience but not formal training will be the standby. Can’t exactly say the founders or Emrys taught me.”

“I tried learning that once,” Rose commented softly as Harry and the Doctor exchanged words. “I figured, hey, I got pretty good at languages after so long, I managed to get a good half dozen learned without the Tardis’s help, how bad can his language be.” Rose shook her head. “The tenses, stars above, I nearly got dizzy just looking at them. I mean, they have a tense for ‘happened-yet to happen-after then-before this-perhaps-nonpresent first person’. Just one tense was that...that nonsense. After a few feeble attempts I just threw my hands up and gave it up as a bad job.”

Jack blinked, a little stunned. “They have time tenses like that?”

Rose shrugged. “They made Tardises, I’m sure they needed a tense at some point to describe something that happened, yet it hasn’t happened yet, but it happened before this important event but not this one, but that one was before this one in memory due to things so really it was about here, and I wasn’t there to see it.” She shook her head, trying to clear it of the fuzziness. “It’s insane. I think the only reason Harry’s fluent is because the Doctor raised him speaking that as his first language, and taught him the rest later. You ever hear him when he gets deep into his research, he’ll mutter in Gallifreyan and draw complex circles all over the place.”

Jack nodded. “Yeah, I remember finding those circles everywhere. Seems too complicated for daily writing though.”

“Who knows what’s going on in his head. Half the time I don’t think he even uses English but the Tardis translates whatever he says for the rest of us.”

Dumbledore watched the proceeding conversation with mild bewilderment. He prided himself on his language skills, knowing nearly all the magical languages and a good deal of nonmagical ones, and an ear to recognize a language even if he didn’t know it. But he couldn’t even begin to pinpoint what language his newest student and his father were speaking in. It sounded beautiful, rounded and circular, falling in and in on itself as they spoke. But it’s origin was as much a mystery as any of the ones surrounding Harry Potter.

The conversation trickled off and Harry turned back to the headmaster. “I have some basic experience with magic, I had to to get my f..wand. I’ve never been to a magical school before though so no formal training.”

McGonagall wondered if that was really it. Harry seemed far too comfortable with magic, his wand, and things in general, as well as derisive about things that seemed commonplace and normal. She would evaluate his skill soon enough, then she could place him properly.

“Well then, we will take into consideration the evaluations this afternoon and then decide whether you need any remedial lessons. Hopefully by this time next week, both your House and your
Harry sighed. “Whatever.” He glanced to the side. “It’s not like I wanted to come here anyway,” he muttered in Gallifreyan. His dad whacked his head.

“If you’re going to complain, do it in a language people here understand,” the Doctor said.

Harry glared at him. “You’re going to regret this soon enough, I know it. We’ve never been in one place for so long. You’re going to go stir crazy and blow something up.”

“Before you?” he asked with a raised eyebrow.

Silence.

Dumbledore stood up. “Well, as we have a plan for the near future, please, enjoy the sandwiches and then Professor McGonagall will take you down to the Transfiguration classroom. We will discuss your positions and lessons while young Harry is in classes, if that is acceptable.” He looked at the three.

“Sure, let the little magic tyke go play while we hash out the details.” Jack grinned at Harry. “He gets a bit fidgety if you keep him in one place too long.”

“Idle hands, idle minds,” Harry said, Pashti climbing down into his lap to nibble at pieces of ham he fed her from the sandwiches. “These are fairly good sandwiches, all things considered. Pashti likes the meat.” Pashti purred loudly as she snatched another piece from Harry’s hand.

“Don’t give her too much. She’ll enjoy it now then complain later,” Rose warned. Pashti turned her head to look at Rose, eyes narrowed, before she flicked her tail and went back to eating the ham. “Don’t come complaining to me when your tummy hurts, Pashit,” Rose said. Pashti ignored her.

McGonagall felt this was not making her believe Pashti wasn’t an animagus any less. If it were legal to throw around the revealing spell as you wished, she would have already used it on the tiny kitten, but it was only allowed to be cast with reasonable suspicion in hand. Right now, she had none.

She exchanged looks with Dumbledore, raising an eyebrow. The both looked at the current source of turmoil in Hogwarts devour a few more sandwiches and down a glass of pumpkin juice, the cat in his lap devouring another slice of ham.

The headmaster just sighed, gesturing at the time. Clearly they would be discussing it later. McGonagall cleared her throat. “Harry, it’s time for class. We have just enough time to make it to the transfiguration classroom. You can leave your supplies here. Your family can bring them back to the rooms we provided you, and you shouldn’t need anything for these review lessons.”

Harry let Pashti finish the ham she had before placing her back on his shoulder, where she curled up and seemed to blend into the shadows under Harry’s hair. “Cool. Let’s go. I want to see if you all teach cool things to first years. You seem to think eleven year olds can’t do much, so I wonder what sort of magic you even trust them to do.” He left his trunk with his uncle, waved to his dad and Rose, then skipped out the door ahead of the professor. The green Mokeskin pouch stayed slung over his shoulder, McGonagall noted. She wondered what he had shoved in there.

McGonagall kneaded her temples. Harry was like a smart ass genius teenager, all sass and cheeky questions and back talk, but with the intelligence to back up anything he said. He was going to be one of those irritating, smug students who got everything right first try, at best. At worse, she would have to spend half the lecture devoted to either refuting whatever he said or backpedaling to see if it was even possible in the first place.
This first class would tell her which he was.

She hoped it was the first one. The second type were rare, she’s had maybe two in her entire career, and always left her perplexed, frustrated, and wondering if she had really overlooked something so obvious.

Harry was down the stairs and out the gargoyle, having dodged, of all things, a ball of flame and was standing at the end of the corridor, tongue stuck out at the gargoyle.

“Mr. Po....” she sighed. “Harry, if you would cease whatever it is you have done to the headmaster’s guardian, the Transfiguration classroom is this way.” She swept ahead of him, ignoring his eye rolling theatrically. “And first years learn basic transfiguration in my class, inanimate to inanimate. If I deem them ready to advance, I will start to cover animate to inanimate near the end of the year.” She gave him a side glance, briefly wondering if the first year curriculum would be difficult enough for this child.

Pashti opened her eyes, slitted bright irises that glowed from beneath Harry’s hair, before she decided all was well and went back to sleep. McGonagall resisted frowning at the tiny cat who seemed far too intelligent. Staying not only silently but happily on a small boy’s shoulders for well over four hours was not just unusual but weird and a bit creepy. Then again, Harry wasn’t exactly the type to attract normal, not strange friends.

She sighed as they arrived at the classroom. The Ravenclaws and Slytherins had already started to file in and take their seats as she strode to the front of the room to prepare for the lesson. “Sit wherever there is an open seat, Harry,” she told the boy.

Harry looked around. Everyone was wearing those silly robes and carrying heavy looking bags, holding their focus in weak hands. He wondered if they knew how precious foci were. He doubted it.

“Potter? Finally deigned to show your face here. Figured you were too good for Hogwarts.”

A loud, irritatingly high pitched voice grated on Harry’s ears and he turned to glance at the source, a boy with white-blonde hair and a green tie, but since Harry had resolved to ignore anyone using Potter as his name, he didn’t even acknowledge the remark.

“Are you deaf Potter? Oi, look, the Boy-Who-Lived, deaf and dumb. Guess that’s why you came late.”

Harry snorted. Really, insults were so pointless when not accompanied by realistic threats of death. He further jeered the blonde haired menace by continuing to ignore him and sitting next to a boy with some kind of complexion Jack would liken to coffee. Harry rather thought he suited the colors his genetics gifted him with. The green tie around his neck seemed to indicate something though, as the students in class all wore either a blue or green tie of some sort.

Probably one of those House things Harry was planning on not joining.

“Mister Malfoy, five points from Slytherin. I will not hear such language. Now, sit down. Quills out, wands away for the moment. Your essays as well, pass them forward. Thank you. As you all are aware, we are covering inanimate to inanimate transformations. Now, who can tell me the properties we have covered regarding this form of transfiguration? Yes, Ms. Chang?”

Harry looked over at the girl wearing a blue tie who was in possession of long black hair. “For the spell to work correctly, both the wand movements and the spell’s pronunciation must be perfect.”
“Correct, a point to Ravenclaw. Mr. Zabini, what can you add?”

Harry’s deskmate stood up. “It’s also important to take into account the size of the object and its weight to account for the amount of magic it will take to transfigure the object.”

“Excellent, a point to Slytherin.”

Harry grinned. His deskmate sounded intelligent. Maybe there would be some intelligent conversation amongst his year mates. “Professor, I have something to add,” he said, raising his hand. He remembered Godric and Sal’s lectures on transfigurations and Merlin’s very practical demonstration.

McGonagall only looked surprised for a moment before gesturing towards him. “Very well, Harry.”

“Well, with transfiguration, as with most magics, intent is far more important than however you flail your fo...wand about or spout latin. You can say the spell to turn a rabbit into a hat all you want, with as many brilliantly perfect wand movements and variables taken into account, but if you really aren’t sure you want to turn that bunny into a hat, a brilliant joke by the way, then all that’s going to happen is squat all. Or your bunny target might get bored and hop off. Visualization is key. Desire and magic go hand in hand.”

McGonagall gave him a considered look. “You are correct, intent is half the work, but a spell doesn’t need perfect visualization to be performed correctly.”

“If you don’t mind half transfigurations, or weak ones, or dangerous ones, sure. Lack of visualization is probably why half of the students struggle with the magic. Magic is a deeply personal thing, tied to your very being. If you don’t use your whole being in every spell, your results will always be half assed.” He shrugged.

McGonagall restrained a sigh. He was going to be one of those students who turned class into a debate club. “You can prove that to me later. Today, we are going to be introducing the Scribbifors spell.” She used her wand to write the name of the spell on the board. “Can anyone tell me what they think this spell is used for?” She looked around, ignoring the knowing smile on Harry’s face. “Mr. Prewett?”

“Is it related to writing?”

“Correct. This is used to transform any small item into a quill. Like so.” She set a fork on the table in front of her and held her wand over it. “This is the motion for the spell,” she said, before waving her wand sideways then curling it up at the end in a half circle. “The incantation is ‘Scribbifors’. Pay close attention to the emphasis.” She repeated the incantation and wand movement.

Harry watched the fork turn into a beautiful feathered quill and immediately realized what his problem was going to be. He hated quills.

Really really hated quills.

His magic would never cooperate with him on this spell. He wondered if he could even get the spell to work or if he would end up just staring at a fork for the rest of the period.

As everyone else in the class waved their wands in loops and circles and said the silly faux latin word over and over again, Harry laid his head down on the desk and sighed.

“Were you paying sufficient attention to the demonstration, Harry?” Professor McGonagall asked as she set a fork down in front of him.
“Yeah, I got the silly latin and the movements.” I only lack motivation, he thought.

McGonagall gave him a long look before moving on.

“Are you really Harry Potter?” a hushed voice came from his deskmate.

Harry sighed. “I’m Harry. No Potter. I suck at growing plants and really, plants do just fine themselves without ever need a pot.”

Zabini, if Harry remembered correctly, blinked at him. “So, you’re not? I mean, when you appeared yesterday, the headmaster said you were Harry Potter. I didn’t think he could get that wrong.”

“I don’t have a second name so no, I’m not your Harry Potter. Just, just Harry.”

Zabini held up his hands. “Okay, okay, sorry, didn’t know I’d touched a nerve.” He rolled his eyes. “So, what house are you in? I mean, you aren’t wearing robes but you’re in here with the Slytherin and Ravenclaws, so…”

Harry shook his head. “No house. The Sorting Hat had an issue sorting me so the headmaster has me with all the classes to see where I fit in.”

“That’s weird. I’ve never heard of someone not being sorted.”

“I’m a bit of a special case. Now, about this spell.” Harry moved the topic off himself.

“Oh, yeah, you’ve missed all of the basics, I forgot. You sounded like you’d been in class when you spoke earlier.”

Harry waved a hand. “I know magic. But this spell, is it only supposed to be a quill at the end?”

“Um, I believe so, why?”

“I hate quills. I’m never going to want to turn the fork into a quill, and my magic will know.”

Zabini stared at him. “You’re a little strange.”

“Well, yeah, what’s the point of not being strange? The universe is full of the ordinary so why not try to be different?” Harry grinned. “Also, is your name Zabini? That’s what Professor McGonagall called you, but I know people tend to have more than one name on Earth.”

“You’re really weird. Like, more than just trying to be different weird. But you can call me Blaise. Zabini’s my last name and when you say it it sounds weird.”

“Alright then Blaise, let’s see you make a quill from a fork. Even though quills are pointless writing instruments.”

Blaise looked like he was contemplating ignoring Harry, but seeing as how the point of the class was to do that exact thing, he sighed before focusing his attention on the fork.

“Scribblifors,” he said, waving his wand. The fork shuddered and seemed to struggle, before one end turned pointy but overall remained fork shaped. “Not bad for a first try. Your turn.” Blaise looked at Harry, eyes expectant.

Harry sighed, then reached down for his focus. “Alright. It’s not gonna work though,” he warned, focus in hand.
Blaise’s eyes went wide when he saw the focus. “Wow, that’s your wand? I’ve never seen a wand like that. What’s all that writing on it? What’s that shiny thing at the end?”

Harry let the wave of questions roll over him, feeling the amusement from his focus. “You finished?” he asked. Blaise flushed. “This is my wand. Do you want to tell me all the details about yours? I was under the impression that wands were rather private things.”

Blaise scowled. “Sorry, it’s just, you showed up in that blue box yesterday with those other strange people, you took off after a troll, you don’t have a house, you won’t even acknowledge your last name cause I know you’re Harry Potter, and now you’ve got a strange wand and it’s just...what’s that on your shoulder?” Blaise was suddenly distracted by Pashti sitting up, yawning.

“Oh, this is Pashti, she’s my companion. Lovelier friend you will never meet. She’s always with me.” Harry was grateful for the distraction.

“McGonagall let you bring her to class?”

“She didn’t really seem concerned. Pashti’s been with us all day. We went to Diagon Alley for supplies and such.”

Blaise looked at the cat, who stared right back at him, until he decided Harry Potter was weird and he would collect weird friends, even if one of those friends was a strange, tiny cat that sat on his shoulder. “Alright then. Still, it’s your turn. I wanna see what you can do.” He pointed at Harry’s fork.

Harry sighed, gripping his focus tighter. He would never make a quill, but this spell was for quills. ‘So long as you focus, Our Harry, the end result will be a writing utensil. From the wording, there is nothing about it having to be a quill, that is merely a preconceived notion. Scribblifors takes its root word from the word “writing” so that is the goal of the spell.’

So my point about intent is correct, Harry replied, feeling a bit of satisfaction.

‘Of course. Magic is merely a tool. You must focus and point it. We are here to help, but the desire must come from you. Now, your spell. You remember the movements?’

Yeah, alright.

Harry followed the wand movements as McGonagall had demonstrated before, focusing on his favorite fountain pen. If he was going to make a writing utensil, he was going to make one he liked.

“Scribblifors,” he intoned, and felt his magic rush out of him, enveloping the fork.

A moment later, a green and black striped fountain pen sat where the fork had been.

Harry grinned.

“Wow...” Blaise whispered, awed. “You actually did it.” He turned towards the Professor, who was helping a Ravenclaw boy with the pronunciation. “Professor, Professor McGonagall! Harry did something strange!”

McGonagall heard what she had half been expecting all class. She sighed. “You alright on your own, Mr. Fordsworth?” The boy nodded, so she headed over to where her newest headache was sitting. “So, what have you done?”
Blaise Zabini pointed at a father fancy green and black pen sitting on the desk. “He turned his fork into that.”

She blinked. “Excuse me?”

“He said the spell and waved his weird cool wand and the fork turned into that weird pen thing!”

“Fountain pen, Blaise. It’s a fountain pen.”

“Whatever. It’s cool!”

She resisted the urge to knead her temples. “That’s not possible.”

Harry raised an eyebrow mockingly. “Want to see?”

McGonagall frowned, but retrieved another fork from the many she had acquired and set it in front of the boy. “Alright, let me see.”

Harry smirked. He raised his wand and his eyes slipped half closed as he followed the wand movements precisely and said “scribblifors” just as he should.

So when another...fountain pen, this one gold and silver, appeared instead of a quill, she felt like she shouldn’t have been as shocked as she was.

“That spell isn’t supposed to make a pen, Mr. P….Harry. It’s only use has been for quills.”

“And I hate quills and think they’re not only an ancient relic to this time but also horrid for handwriting. I’d never be able to take notes with a quill.” Harry shrugged.

McGonagall picked up the pen, turning it over in her hands. “This is a spectacular pen for sure. Really. But how did you manage to create a pen?”

Harry sighed. “I explained before. Magic makes up for the difference in mass and chemical properties, so really the direction of the magic is your intent, and it’s focused with words and movements, in this case the swish and curl of the wand’s motions and the word ‘scribblifors’. Since I don’t particularly like quills, my intent was on a writing instrument I prefer. You probably think it’s only for quills since that’s all you have. A good pen and you’d never look at quills again.”

McGonagall held onto the pen. She felt like Harry might just be a bit too advanced for the basics but also felt that moving him up would be dangerous to her sanity and other students learning. It would be better to keep him here, where she could keep an eye on him and guide his learning, than to throw him into an upper level class and watch him tear apart transfiguration laws in the middle of lessons. Not that he wouldn’t do that anyway, but among his own peers there would be less collateral damage.

His intent theory sounded like the basis for wandless spellwork, something she had little aptitude for. But Harry would probably excel at it, if she was any judge of talent. Should would have to mention it to Dumbledore.

“Mind if I keep this for now?” she asked, holding up the pen.

Harry grinned. “Sure, I’ve got a ton laying around.” He gave McGonagall a look. “So I passed your test?”

“We’ll talk after class, Mr….Harry.” Not using Potter was going to take some time, especially when
in class, but so long as the boy refused to acknowledge that as his name, she would have to stick with Harry.

When she left with the fountain pen, Blaise looked at Harry. “You know, I said you were weird before but now you’re really odd. Like seriously, I’ve never seen or heard of a student talking like that to Professor McGonagall, especially a first year.”

Harry ignored the blazing look of curiosity and confusion in Blaise’s eyes. “Just because someone’s a teacher doesn’t mean they know everything. No one knows everything. But I do know more about how my magic works, it’s mine. It's been with me since I was born.”

Blaise frowned. “Think that focusing thing will work with my magic too?” he asked, a bit hesitant.

Harry's smile was wide. “Only one way to find out!” He gestured at the fork with a pointy end. “You have to try.”

Blaise easily reversed the partial transfiguration. “What do I do?”

Harry’s mental plan for his taking of Hogwarts ticked off a box. He would start here, with a young curious boy in a green tie who thought he was strange.

Well, there were always worse places to start a revolution.

By the end of the class, Blaise not only managed to turn the fork into a quill, but after trying Harry’s cool ‘fountain pen’ and enjoying the smoothness, got a second fork to turn into something resembling the pen.

McGonagall wondered when first years started breaking fundamental understandings of transfiguration. If it had just been Harry, she could have passed it off as something special to him, the Boy-Who-Lived, but with Blaise Zabini’s successful pen transfiguration, she needed to have a talk with the boy who hadn’t even been here a day and was already shaking things up more than she was comfortable with.

So when the class filed out, Blaise extracting a promise from Harry to meet him for dinner at the Slytherin table (it’s green, Harry, it’s hard to miss), it was just her and her most troublesome student.

“Harry,” she started, sitting down in one of the abandoned chairs. “How good at magic are you?”

The boy shrugged, opening his mouth.

“Not some absent phrase like you gave the headmaster,” she interrupted him. “You didn’t tell him anything. What you just did today, that wasn’t the magic of an inexperienced first year. If I’m to judge your abilities, I need something more substantial than a single, albeit impressive, lesson. A comprehensive understanding of your magical knowledge would be a good start.”

Harry regarded her with bright green eyes. “The answer you want implies I have formal training, which I don’t have, just a few stray lessons here and there. My magic and me are intimately connected. I can always feel it, right at the edges of my skin, struggling to break free. I’ve been told that’s unusual.” Harry raised an eyebrow at her.

McGonagall stared at him. “You’re joking,” she said, tone flat. “That’s impossible. Your core is located centrally within your body.”

“I’m sure for you it is, but mine’s not. There was some kind of accident when I was younger so now my magic lays just under my skin. Makes it easier to do magic but I have to want to do something,
otherwise my magic is too close to everything and knows. You can’t hide intentions from something
that’s everywhere.” He looked at the pile of half transfigured forks. “I figure most magis is like that,
though mine’s a bit extreme. I mean, if you don’t want to do something, your magic might only half
heartedly perform the spell but it’ll do it. Mine won’t even work at all. If I don’t want to do it, I
literally can’t.”

The professor eyed the boy again, taking in his thin frame, long black hair with those silly beads in it,
the odd clothes and jacket he fought so hard over, the tiny cat curled up on his shoulder, and those
piercing green eyes that were brighter than even his mother’s. “I’m not sure how to go about
teaching you Harry,” she finally said. “If you master spells as easily as you did this transfiguration,
then the most you will ever need from me is a short demonstration. The theory taught here may even
be counterproductive to your casting.”

“Well, it is just theory, there to be disputed. If I attend class, at least I’ll have the advantage of
knowing that I can debate the theory with you, yeah? There’s always something to be learned with
magic, it’s not all about spells.”

“You might be one of the first first years to have that opinion. Most of them are far more interested in
how many spells they can learn,” McGonagall mused, a smile on her face.

Harry spread his hands out, palms up. “Well, I have a taste for learning what’s behind all the waving
and faux latin. I mean, you do know you only use latin because that’s what you believe will work? If
you believed that only, say, Chinese would work, you would have to say every spell in Chinese.
Belief is a powerful thing when it comes to magic.”

“There have been a few theories floating around about that idea. Mostly from those who visit the far
East and return, telling us stories of wizards and witches who use a different tongue to cast their
spells in. But there are differences in the spells,” McGonagall said.

“Of course. Different cultures perceive things differently. Each culture would have a spell for light,
but that idea, light, differs slightly. It might be an electric torch here, but in India it could be a lamp,
and in China a flame, or in Canada the burning of oil. So light will manifest closer to how their
culture perceives it, though they are all using a spell for light.”

McGonagall pursed her lips. “That makes quite a bit of sense, I’ve never heard it put in quite those
words before.” She regarded the young wizard. “I have a feeling you are going to be quite the
student, Harry. Whether that is good or bad will have to be seen.”

“I’m here to make things exciting,” he returned, grinning.

“That’s what I’m afraid of. Also, your impossible magical core, what exactly happened? When you
were a baby your core was normal according to the scans taken by the mediwizards and witches.
Even after the attack on your family, your core was still fairly standard if more powerful than
expected in a small child.”

Harry fidgeted. “I was too young to really remember,” he finally lied. He would never really forget
that night, no matter what he told his father. “Dad says there was an accident and my magic
responded to the situation, but he’s never really told me what happened. I think he was really
scared.” He knew for a fact his father was terrified. And terrifying. He didn’t know what happened
after he passed out, but from the looks Uncle Jack gave him, it couldn’t have been good.

McGonagall pursed her lips. “I see. I shall speak with him then. I will also have to inform our Healer,
Madam Pomphrey. She may wish to run some diagnostics on you.”
“I expected something of the sort. Well, can’t really help it really. I’m gonna be stuck here for a while,” he said, sighing. “Let me know when to report.”

“You are extremely blase about this, Mr. P...Harry.” McGonagall sighed heavily. “Are you really not going to use your last name? It’s quite frustrating.”

“I don’t have a last name. I understand you all have this custom of using your….mother’s? Father’s? second name as your second name, but it’s rather pointless, yeah? I mean, what if you really don’t like your parents? You’re still stuck with an identifying mark of some sort saying you’re theirs. What if you don’t care for the sound? Do you have to keep it? Really, it’s all just too much trouble. I like Harry just fine, and I was given the option to choose a name I liked. Harry seemed to fit, so I kept it.”

McGonagall resisted the urge that was becoming more and more prevalent to rub her temples. “Your questionable knowledge about your own cultural heritage is troubling, but that isn’t the reason for this discussion. Your magic, however...odd...it seems to be, is. I am curious as to how you will hold up as lessons get more difficult. You’ve said your magic relies heavily upon intent and you cannot perform a spell if you don’t want to. That may become a severe issue. You’re here to learn, whether you enjoy the topic or not, though I would hope you would find most of your studies here to be interesting.”

“I mean, I can work with the given problem, like how I managed to make my favorite fountain pen instead of a quill. It isn’t that I must want to cast magic for a spell to work or want to cast a spell. I’m magical, my magic wants to be used. What needs to happen is that my desire for the spell has to match up with the spell’s outcome. I couldn’t have used the spell we learned today to do anything more than turn a fork into a writing instrument, because the purpose of that spell was a writing instrument. That is the meaning behind “Scribblifors” and the movements. But my idea of a writing instrument isn’t a quill, which is why the end result was different from your intended result.” Harry tilted his head to the side. “I suppose it’s a bit like different cultures and their idea of light. In a distant sense.” Harry scratched his head. “Do you get what I’m trying to say?”

McGonagall pursed her lips. “So if I gave you a spell with no explanation on the end result of the spell, could you still perform it?

“Sure, but it would be what my idea of the spell was. And once I have that belief, I won’t be able to do the spell with that word the supposed proper way. So maybe that isn’t such a good idea.” Harry mulled the idea over in his mind. “It would also take quite a bit of my magic to make work, since I would have to create the focus of the spell rather than using the conventions that culture has given it. Might also cause an explosion. It would be worth trying though…”

“No, no, you will not be trying anything regarding such...experiments.” McGonagall shuddered at the thought. “If you want to try such magics, I would request you have one of the professors with you, to reverse whatever damage you may cause in the process.” She couldn’t believe she was saying this to a first year, but she needed to head this off before Harry blew up part of the castle or himself.

“So, are we done here? Anything else?”

McGonagall sighed. “I want you to try out a few of the basic spells before I send you off to Professor Flitwick. You’ll be his problem then.”

Harry grinned. “Cool. So, what’s the plan?”

“Our first lesson was turning a match into a needle. It’s standard practice for first years and is the first spell taught.” She pulled a match out of a drawer on her desk.
“Not exactly useful, unless you happen to have a lot of matches on hand and you need to repair some
clothes, or stitch up a wound, though cauterizing it would be better, and you wouldn’t want a needle
then, the match would be more helpful,” Harry commented.

“Then think of this as an exercise not in usefulness but in control. Can you make the match turn into
a needle, that is the question. Not whether it is a particularly useful spell to you, but whether you can
master that particular bit of magic.” McGonagall hoped that this would be a useful avenue to steer
her new troublesome student down. If he took it as a challenge rather than a need to actually use the
spell for something pertinent he might actually do the spell as instructed.

Experimenting, in her mind, could be done when students were less likely to blow themselves up.

Harry pursed his lips. “Alright, that’s a useful thought. I think M...my former teacher used that
method. He would set me a task just to see if I could do it. Levitated glasses through town for ages. If
I broke them cause they fell I had to levitate the pieces in the right shape. He was working on my
control, which was probably a good thing. Before I used to blow things up or cause minor
catastrophes.”

McGonagall raised an eyebrow. “Levitate? That’s quite advanced for a young child. How old were
you?”

“Hmmmm, that time my birthday was at the Galleria Fantastica, so I was probably seven.”

“Yes, that is unusual,” McGonagall said faintly. “Highly.” Not that Harry seemed to understand that
concept, she noticed. This was going to be a long seven years.

“So, how does one turn a match into a needle with a conventional spell?” Harry asked. “I
could figure it out on my own, but if you’ve got a way, that would probably work out better for
everyone. Less explosions.”

McGonagall hurriedly set about explaining the principles and spell, before watching the boy attempt
it.

Unsurprisingly, he was successful his first attempt.

As were the next few spells she had him do.

So, with a sigh, she assigned him an essay on the basic principles of Transfiguration and how they
are used in spellwork. Possibly advanced for a first year, but Harry seemed like he would be up to
the task.

With his assignment jotted down on a spare sheet of paper with the pen he had transfigured, she gave
him directions to the Charms classroom where Professor Flitwick would be waiting.

Though if his claim about the levitation spell was true, she doubted he would be there long. But hey,
he wasn’t her problem at the moment so she let out a relieved sigh as he left, staring at the small pile
of transfigured items he had left on the desk.

She felt a small amount of sympathy for Flitwick. Harry wasn’t exactly the easiest to deal with.

~~~Harry~~~

“I’m actually gonna learn magic, Pashti,” Harry said, a grin on his face. “Even if I think it’s all rather
backwards here, I get to learn magic! Spells and enchantments and potions and everything!” His
excitement bubbled up and Pashti purred against his ear. “Somewhere I can actually use magic and
experiment without possibly blowing a hole in the time-space continuum!”

Pashti mreowed against his ear.

“Alright, with a less tangible chance of blowing a hole in the time-space continuum. But hey, I can use magic all the time! How brilliant is that?”

Harry skipped down the halls towards the charms room. There weren’t any students populating them, making Harry wonder if there was perhaps some event taking place he wasn’t aware of. Classes perhaps? Dumbledore mentioned that the next two days were weekends and there weren’t any classes, so maybe class ended early today?

He still didn’t get the reason why there were two whole days with no classes at all. It was learning, why would you want to take a break from it? And magic too!

He sighed. Well, just because everyone else took the weekend off didn’t mean he had to ignore everything. There was so much to learn and never enough time, no matter how long you spent travelling through it.

The charms classroom was just ahead when Harry took the time to observe his surroundings, and he grinned. Apparently he hadn’t lost all sense of where things were in Hogwarts.

Professor Flitwick was hovering behind a desk at the far end of the room, looking over what appeared to be a collection of essays. He was shorter than the average human by quite a fair margin, and Harry wondered if he had a mixed magical lineage, his nose for genealogy rearing its head. He had been too distracted the previous meeting to give it much thought.

He would have to sate it later, after he had managed to get that self-levitation spell out of the professor.

“Professor Flitwick?” he called out. “Professor McGonagall said you were to evaluate me next.”

Harry wondered what the evaluation would consist of. He ran through the half dozen charms theories he had cooked up over the years, some from his arguments with Rowena and Helga over the subject, some from his time with Merlin, and a couple more he had wanted to test himself.

There was a squeak from the tiny professor as he wobbled in the air. “Oh, yes, Mr. Potter. You’re much earlier than I had been expecting. I take it you have James’ affinity for the subject.”

Harry sighed. “Just, Harry please. I’ve never gone by Potter my entire life and didn’t even know I had a second name until you all started calling me by it. And by affinity I suppose so. I think the Professor was tired of me defying her known laws of transfiguration and sent me down here to get rid of me.”

Professor Flitwick frowned. “I see...Harry. That will take some getting used to. Are you sure about the name? Yes, I see you are. Hmm, well. Let’s see what we’ve covered in Charms so far this year. Very basic stuff. You should be able to figure it out pretty fast.”

“First, I have a question. How are you hovering like that?” Harry gestured towards the professor. “I was taught it was insanely difficult to self-levitate.”

Professor Flitwick chuckled. “It is, Harry, but I wouldn’t be worthy of my title as Charms Master if I couldn’t perform such a spell. It also helps with grading. I don’t have to shrink everything down to my size, which is convenient.”

“I see. Care to teach me that spell?”
“Oh, no, this is much too advanced. Your core needs to have matured properly before you attempt this spell. It uses your core as power source rather than directing your magic through a wand and it can be very dangerous. Best to wait, I think. Now, tell me, how much experience have you had with magic?”

Professor Flitwick looked eager for the answer, far more eager than someone who looked his age was generally comfortable being, in Harry’s experience. Harry grinned. He loved eager people.

“I’ve had a few lessons, when I was younger and it was obvious I needed some measure of control over my magic. I had a teacher who made me practice control by levitating breakable objects through a busy marketplace and if they broke I had to levitate the pieces.” Harry grinned. “Went a long way to helping me figure out how much magic I needed to put into a spell.”

Flitwick’s eyes went wide. “You’ve levitated multiple objects at once? Already? How old were you?” he said, voice squeaking out.

“I was somewhere around seven, I think. I used a practice wand, from China. They don’t have cores but they’re made of magical wood and regulate magic well. I can also cast a Lux and Nox spell. We used the first one to see if my control was any good, since the first time I tried it I blinded everyone in the vicinity.” He grinned at the memories of several knights flailing about and his dad blinking spots out of his vision as Merlin croaked out Harry’s need for control.

Flitwick sputtered. “That...that’s unheard of! A seven year old performing controlled levitation on multiple objects at once without even a proper wand! My boy, are there any other surprises for me?”

Harry pondered this for a moment, wondering if he should mention the color changing charms Merlin had taught him to help him learn focus as well as control. “Um, what have first years learned so far?” he asked, hesitant.

The professor cleared his throat. “Well, much of the first few months have been theory and going through basic wand movements and pronunciation. Pronunciation is especially important and between Professor McGonagall and myself we drill students in proper enunciation and movement. So far we have learned Lumos, the light spell, Lux was what it was called back before English was influenced by so many different people, and Nox. We have started on the levitation charm, Wingardium Leviosa, just this past week, but it sounds like you need no assistance with either spell.”

Harry huffed a laugh. “Well, um, I’m good on pronunciation, I think. I speak Latin fluently, though you all don’t really use proper Latin in your spells, so that might be an issue. I’m not sure of the wand movements you use though. I’ve never really gotten them down, just the ones for the spells I know personally.”

Flitwick nodded, a look of relief passing over his face. “I’m glad there is something I can cover with you. I feared for a moment that you would be beyond all of my students though you haven’t been here a day. We can review the basic ones now and I can lend you a small book on the rest of them. Most first years only use the basic ten and they rarely bother to memorize the rest unless they are particularly studious. I believe if you wish a demonstration, Miss Granger would be of great help. She is, I believe, a mis-sorted Raven in Gryffindor house, with her intellect and appetite for knowledge.”

“Hermione Granger?” Harry asked, the name familiar.

“Yes, do you know her?”

“Not...not exactly. We met briefly when I first got here. I should be able to find her easily.” Harry
thought back to the bushy haired girl he had helped out of the toilets.

“Well, that’s good. So, let’s go over the basics of wand movements before I send you off to Professor Snape. It’s nearing dinner time, I would rather you not miss it.”

Harry took out his focus. “Alright, let’s go.”

“Your wand is most unusual. I assume from its presence that Ollivander has said it is okay?”

Harry nodded. “It’ll only ever work for me but that’s probably not a bad thing in a wand, yeah?” He grinned.

“Indeed it is not. So, watch my wand. These are the ten basic wand motions that you will use in the majority of spells you learn in your first few years at Hogwarts. There are, of course, many many more, but they will come later.”

Harry focused on Flitwick’s wand, taking in the movements and moving his focus in tandem. Pashti had moved from his right shoulder to his left so as not to be dislodged by his shoulder movements.

“So, like this?” Harry went through each movement, carefully outlining each one.

Flitwick looked a little taken aback. “I wasn’t aware you were learning them as I was demonstrating. That was merely a quick example...though I must say, you have most of them perfectly. You need to zig your wand more to the right when you follow the pattern. Each zig should be equally distant in each direction. And...yes, just like that.” Flitwick stared at Harry in consternation. “You learn things much too quickly for your age,” he murmured.

Harry laughed. “You wouldn’t be the first to tell me that. I’ve always been a fast learner.”

Flitwick personally thought there was a difference between a fast learner and instinctive genius. “Well, yes, and for your curl, you should twist your wand slightly in your hand. It’s not common practice among first years, but it helps focus the spell more tightly on what you want. Like so,” he said, demonstrating the rather advanced technique for Harry.

“So, it’s almost as if you’re rolling your fo...wand in your hand just a bit at the end,” Harry commented, then copied the move perfectly.

“Yes, yes indeed. Well, Harry, I feel as if you are quite adept at wand work. Since we seem to have some extra time, I would like to review your ability with the levitation charm since you say you are proficient in it.” Flitwick summoned a feather from the stack in the far corner. “Students practice with these, as they are light and don’t require much magical strength to levitate.”

Harry looked at the feather lying on the desk beside him. “Alright then. Easier than how I learned. I think my teacher was a bit of a sadist when it came to working on my focus and control. Then again, I had very poor control.”

Flitwick wasn’t sure telling Harry that most seven year olds had very little control over their magic would really mean much to the boy. “I would very much like to see your proficiency with the charm. I you would.” He gestured to the feather.

“Volatus Levis,” Harry said, moving his focus in the correct manner. The feather immediately floated upward, following Harry’s wand movements to the tiniest shift. Harry made it spin, twirl, and zoom around the classroom, a bright smile on his face.

Flitwick blinked. “Is that the incantation you use?” he asked, a bit taken aback.
“Yeah. It’s the one I was taught. Do you all say it differently now?”

“Now?”

Harry mentally face palmed. “I mean, do you use weird not-latin?”

Flitwick stared at him in consideration. “We use ‘Wingardium Leviosa’ as the incantation. Though I can see from your skill that the spell is basically the same. Where did you learn that version?”

“My teacher taught me. He used Latin nearly exclusively, rather than the mix you all seem to use. Which is why the spells I know are the older versions. Before you all corrupted your language.”

“That’s a bit harsh,” the diminutive professor commented.

“Well, it’s true. English is one of the strangest compilations of languages in this region. You all collected several different languages and sort of...squished them into what you have now. Latin, Greek, French, German, Scandinavian, several others, and mix it all together to get English. It’s why you have weird word pronunciations.” Harry shrugged. “Just a fact of linguistics.”

“I see. Well, you will be learning the incantations used now, rather than the old ones. I’m sure you can work it out.”

Harry grinned. “Yep! No problems from me. It’s just a cultural focusing word, you know. Each country uses different ones. In China, they use whatever form of Chinese is native to the region, in Japan, it’s Japanese, in France, it’s French. Spells are influenced by cultural ideas given to them. In all honesty, language affects the spell we use far more than we realize, but with such minor spells you can’t tell the difference. I once used a language for a light spell that nearly drained all my magic and would have killed me if my dad hadn’t come and knocked some sense into my head.”

Flitwick felt he was looking at possibly the most Ravenclaw student he had ever seen, with possibly too much Gryffindor brashness mixed in. He wasn’t sure he could believe him about the light spell, but he could imagine that happening. “I look forward to seeing you in class and watching you test your skills on spells. For now, I shall give you the guide I mentioned. It would be helpful if you could outline a short essay on the first ten movements and their basic properties. The guide will explain all of them in detail, but please don’t turn in more than a foot of parchment. Conciseness is the key to success.” Flitwick hovered over to his desk and rifled through the drawers before pulling out a dusty book. “Here, take this. I don’t expect the essay for a little while, so just get it back to me when you can.”

Harry took the book with a grin. “Cool, can do. Thanks!”

“No, thank you. It’s been quite a while since I’ve had such a...fast learner. I look forward to your classes with me. The next class should still be covering the levitation charm, though you seem proficient in it.” He glanced up at the still floating feather. “So I may have you work on the various ways to alter the spell.” Flitwick grinned. “Now, it’s off to Professor Snape with you. He’s down in the dungeons. Take the closest staircase to the left down three times, take a right at the bottom, and at the next staircase go down one more flight, then turn right at the portrait of Queen Victoria. The potions room is to the left.”

“Is the potions room underground?” Harry wondered. It would have been similarly placed to Sal’s rooms if so.

“Yes, for the cool temperatures. It helps when storing potions ingredients for long periods of time, especially those that can’t be preserved with magic.”
Harry tucked the book away in a pocket, jotting down the essay he had been assigned, and grinned up at the professor. “Well, I like potions so this should be a fun lesson!” he commented. He didn’t miss the look of concern that flashed over the tiny professor’s face. “I’ll be off then. Thanks, Professor!”

He heard the murmured “Oh, Severus will not be happy with him,” from Flitwick as he left, and he wondered if perhaps this potions professor wasn’t entirely welcoming of new students.

The dungeon classroom was easy to find, only a few doors down from where Sal used to hold his lessons. Professor Snape. He remembered the man from his non-Sorting earlier, sallow skinned. Him and the giant of a man Harry figured wasn’t entirely human had come to deal with the troll, if he remembered correctly.

He hoped the man would be somewhat like Sal, considering he was the head of Slytherin house, but he sorely doubted it after his encounter with whatever was corrupting the Sorting Hat.

“Um, hello? Professor Snape?” Harry pushed the door in further, looking around the deserted potions room, so much like the one he learned from Sal in. So little had actually changed over the years it was hard to believe this wasn’t the time of the Founders, aside from the addition of the chalkboard (though no chalk) and far more metal and glass, both more precious commodities at the time of the Founders.

When no one answered, he walked into the room, turning as he went to take in more of it. He would bet a significant amount of his research that this was the same room Sal used to teach him how not to blow potions up in.

“Mr. Potter. I see you have decided to...grace....me with your presence,” a silky voice emerged from a far doorway.

Harry spun to see the sallow skinned Professor in the far doorway. If his memory served him right, Sal used to keep precious ingredients he never let Harry touch back there. “Not a Potter, Professor. It’s getting rather irritating having to keep correcting teachers who were in the room when I told the headmaster that,” Harry groused. “It’s just Harry. One name’s served me well enough until now, why would I need a second one?”

Snape narrowed his eyes. “Your name is Harry Potter, whether you choose to acknowledge it or not, Mr. Potter. Celebrity will do you no good in a potions classroom,” he said, sneer dripping all over the words.

Harry rolled his eyes. “Really, you think not acknowledging whatever name I was given before I even had a choice in the matter is some kind of celebrity thing? What celebrity thing anyway?” He paused, blanched. “Please don’t tell me you’re talking about all the surviving some impossible to survive curse nonsense that I found out about earlier. I refuse to be taught in a classroom where someone actually believes in it out loud.” He started backing towards the door. “So, if that’s the case, I’ll find someone else to teach me potions or something, really.”

“Mr. Potter, what are you doing?”

Harry stopped his retreat at the sharp snap of words. “For one, that’s not my name. And for two, if you think I’m going to spend another moment of my time in a classroom with someone who wants to call me a celebrity for something I don’t even remember happening and probably not even something I did, you’re insane. All offense intended.”

“Your choice to take potions is not an optional one, Mr. Potter,” Snape said, once again ignoring
Harry’s request to not call him that.

“Can you not get your head around a simple name? Professor McGonagall and Professor Flitwick decided the better part of valor was to just call me Harry. Potter is not my name.”

Snape bristled. “It is the name your insufferable father gave you by right of birth. Just because you don’t particularly care for it will not erase it from your identity.”

“James you mean? That’s some weird tradition you cling too tightly to, I think. Really rather absurd. I’ll choose a second name later if I think I ever need one, and it’ll be one I like rather than one handed out to me. Also I have been reasonably assured that it isn’t part of my identity any longer, no matter what history books may call me.”

Snape growled in frustration. “I’ll show you the truth, Mr. Potter. There is but a simple spell to reveal the identities of a fellow magic user. Then will you stop this inane chatter about names?” He pulled his wand out, pointing it in Harry’s general direction.

“Um, not to be impolite, but you seem to have some issues with me. I’m not sure shooting a spell at me is in any way going to endear me to you,” Harry hedged.

Snape didn’t bother listening and the spell was cast with barely a murmur and a flick up and to the left with a small curl before Harry was hit by a light gold beam of magic.

He glared at the potions professor. “That was horribly impolite. You’re lucky that was a harmless spell otherwise my magic wouldn’t have been so passive about it,” he bit out.

But the potions professor was staring at a point above his head, eyes wide in confusion.

Harry glanced up, seeing something hovering above his head.

Harry written in English was on top. Underneath was the flowing circular script Harry had learned from the moment he could hold a pencil, his name written with all the meaning his dad had given it.

“But….but that...that isn’t possible,” Snape breathed.

Harry sighed. “I’m sure for most people it wouldn’t be, but whatever you’re thinking is impossible is possible simply because of who I am. It happens a lot. Sorry. I tend to get in the way of standard thinking. McGonagall didn’t like me much either, if it’s any consolation.”

“But...your name on record is Harry James Potter, why wouldn’t the spell show that name?” the professor continued muttering, clearly ignoring Harry. “What is that circular shape?” Snape finally looked at Harry. “Who are you?”

Harry groaned silently “I’m Harry, son of the Doctor and the Tardis and Rose, nephew to Jack Harkness. Magical. Apparently now a first year at Hogwarts. I’ve been recently informed my birthdate is July 31st, though that doesn’t really mean much to me. No house affiliation in Hogwarts, not that I’ll need it.”

Snape blinked at him, seemingly unable to take in the information. “Not Lily’s eyes,” he muttered. “Too green. Not Potter’s stupid hair, it’s too long. He doesn’t even look like him.” The muttered words were loud enough for Harry to hear, and it worried him somewhat.

“Um, professor, are you alright?” Harry asked. “I mean, I’ve been told you’re a good potion maker, so if you could drop all the name stuff you insist on, I wouldn’t actually mind learning from you, grudge or not.”
Snape had retreated to his desk, ignoring Harry completely, pulling papers out of drawers and obviously searching for something. “This is crazy, does Dumbledore know what he’s done?.”

Harry raised an eyebrow. “Erm, I have no idea what you’re on about, but you should probably take that up with the headmaster. I’d be of little use,” he pointed out.

“How does the spell not work as it should? It doesn’t give your full name and I have no idea what that circle thing is. That shouldn’t be possible.”

Harry sighed. “You said that it was a name revealing spell, yeah? Well, that would mean it would rely on my perception of my identity first and foremost. And my identity to me is Harry, and that ‘circle thing’ you’re so confused about is, incidentally, my name. Just not in any language you know.”

There was silence as Snape looked at him. “I suppose I could concede that the spell is reliant upon the knowledge and magical signature of the person receiving the spell first, only drawing upon the caster’s knowledge if the receiver’s magic should be unable to provide an answer,” he said, haltingly, as if unable to believe he was saying this.

“Alright, so now that you’ve decided I am who I’m supposed to be and you can act like the adult you are and call me Harry, can we get on with the potions? I heard the food here is rather spectacular and I’m supposed to meet Blaise at the green table he says belongs to Slytherin house. Which is really rather silly. Why have a table belong to a house? Does that mean no one else gets to sit there?” Harry pondered. He would have to ask Blaise.

A long moment stretched between the two.

Snape stared at the young boy who was Harry Potter, not that the child acted anything like either James or Lily. It was hard to reconcile the intelligent, sharp witted, long haired, too green eyed eleven year old with the mental picture of James Potter he had been kindling his hatred for.

A pair of bright yellow eyes, distracted him, staring at him from underneath the child’s hair, and it took him a moment to realize it was a cat.

“Why do you have a cat in the potions room, Mr. Potter?” he asked, deciding for now he would just go with what Dumbledore believed and ask him about the odd information given by the spell later.

Harry sighed. “Not a Potter, really, and after you finish evaluating me I’m going to make it a point to bring this up with the headmaster. And Pashti goes where I go. She’s my companion.” He reached up a hand to pet her. “So, are you going to do anything about my potions knowledge?”

Snape resisted a sigh. Really, this was weird, too weird. “Tell me what the main ingredients are in a blood replenishing potion,” he ordered. “This is a simple first year potion that we have covered. If you have done any reading for this class, which I doubt, this should be easy.”

Harry pursed his lips, pulling up the exhaustive list of ingredients he had memorized while studying under Sal and then from a couple texts he had convinced his father to acquire for him. “Blood replenishing, blood replenishing. Since its required function is to either increase or multiply the drinker’s current red blood cell count, you would need licorice root, preferably cut under a blood moon to increase its potency, a base of water to match the consistency of the body’s natural supply, chamomile to calm the brain’s response to the increased blood flow, a few newt eyes, preferably taken from a recently deceased newt, crushed, ground bone to induce the multiplication effect, taken from any magical species, preferably with a charm on it to preserve the marrow, and of course a drop of blood, preferably the makers but any human blood would do, to act as a catalyst.” He grinned. “I
think I got it right.”

Snape blinked in what might have been mild astonishment. “Did...did you just make that up, Potter?” he asked, disbelief in his voice as he went over the list of ingredients Harry had just provided.

“Not a Potter. And yes, I did. Isn’t that the point of potions, to use the known ingredients and their effects to create a potion? Recipes are boring, I’ve always been a bad hand at them.”

“As a matter of fact, it is not. Students follow a set recipe for potions to make sure they don’t screw up too badly, though that is usually the case.” He paused once more going over the ingredients. If you added them in the right combinations and at the right time, they would in fact create a potion that replenishes blood. “The list you gave me is not the same recipe as from the book. Celebrity, Mr. Potter, won’t get you far in my classroom.”

Harry groaned. “Really, my name is Harry, you checked with your spell and everything, and cut it out with the celebrity thing. And the ingredients I gave you would create the potion you’re looking for, whether they follow some recipe or not. Recipes aren’t the only way to create something.” He was getting more than irritated with Snape not calling him by his name as well.

“Be that as may, you are here to learn how to make potions that have been created, not to create new recipes for potions we have already. Experimentation is done after one has achieved at least some semblance of knowledge in potions. There is too much room for error and poor reactions if you just decide to...experiment every time you make a potion.”

“Isn’t that why you memorize the ingredients first? I mean, I don’t know all of them yet, but I know all the common ones and their reactions and properties. You put together potions based on your desired outcome, using the knowledge of the ingredients you have.”

Snape furrowed his brow at him. “Only masters working on their own projects ever do that. First years especially don’t have the experience or drive to work like that.” He hadn’t, not until he was a few years older.

“But, why? I mean, recipes are good and all, but what’s to stop them from just creating monotony? Boredom invariably leads to uninterest and lackluster performance.” Harry sighed at the look of disbelief and contempt. “You’re a teacher with no desire to teach your students any creativity. Why are you even teaching?”

“Potions is a delicate art form, Potter.”

“Harry.”

“Not everyone has the desire to learn thousands of ingredients just to create simple potions that others have set recipes for. It’s tedious and time consuming. I’m not even sure you’ve done as you’ve claimed.”

Harry rolled his eyes, but at least this was delving into his potions knowledge. “I’ve memorized the 5000 basic ingredients used in most cases and their properties, as well as 2000 of the more esoteric ingredients, though a couple of them have fuzzy properties. There are about 3000 or so that I’ve been informed are rarely used and as a beginner student I wouldn’t even see them, and thus I have taken to focusing on those I would most likely see. I’ll work on the more esoteric things later. It would be better to solve a problem most likely given to you rather than one you might not encounter for a while.”

Snape raised an eyebrow. This was not the Harry Potter he was expecting at all. This wasn’t typical
first year behavior. This was rarely typical NEWT student behavior. “What are the most common bases used in potions?”

“Water, oil, blood, various vegetative juices, saliva, bodily fluids of any kind really, venom,” Harry continued on.

Snape furrowed a brow. “Only three of those are used commonly, Mr. Po…” Harry’s glare cut him short. “Why are you listing all of them?”

“You asked for bases. Commonly used ones I am unsure of, as you seem to be referring to recipes that I haven’t looked at properly.”

Snape resisted rubbing his temples. “Tell me the most common ingredients, in order of usefulness.”

Five minutes later he had to stop Harry, wondering who on Earth had taught him potions before. Whoever they were was a mad genius, to devise a system of memorization the likes of which this eleven year old child demonstrated.

“Who taught you potions?” he demanded.

“Sal. Best teacher, in my opinion, after he realized I couldn’t learn with recipes. I tended to blow things up because I was impatient. He set me to memorizing things instead, and then left me with books to keep my studies up.”

Sal. Single name, probably a nickname of sorts. He wouldn’t be able to find anything conclusive with just that information. “You use a memory trick to recall all that information. No one could do it otherwise,” Snape commented.

Harry shrugged. “Well, yeah, but I’ve had memory tricks since before I could remember. Doesn’t everyone? I follow a fairly well proven method, the method of loci, or a version of it. Actually it was popularized here, you know. Wonderful system, fairly similar to what dad uses, though I don’t exactly have dad’s brain power so I had to work out a version I could use myself. But it allows near perfect recall if you can use it properly.” Harry grinned. “You probably use something similar. It’s a fairly standard way of memory recall for human norm brain types.”

Snape just stared down at the boy. He was tempted to use legilimency on him, just to see what this method of loci was and if it was anything remotely similar to occlumency, but his personal ethics code held him back. Also, the Potter brat wasn’t worth the fines and/or jail time he could get for using Legilimency on an minor without their guardian’s consent.

“I see. If it should interest you, there are magical arts for the mind. Occlumency and Legilimency, to be specific. For the time being, I will gauge your abilities in class and if I see you are failing, which you might very well, I will set you remedial lessons.” He looked down at the boy he had prepared so much hatred for, only to see intelligent, eerie green eyes peering up at him. “Get going. Mr. Zabini will, no doubt, wonder where you are, as dinner has already started. I hope you can find your way back to the Great Hall as I have other business to attend to.” He would refrain from using any name at all for the moment. Potter seemed adamant that he not be called by his last name and the fuss was more irritating than the payoff of irritating the boy.

“Well, alright. I’ll see you whenever class is then. Bye, Professor Snape.” Harry headed off with a cheerful wave, the tiny cat under his hair considering Snape a final time before Harry turned and headed out the door.
The Great Hall wasn’t too hard to find, Harry recalled the trips he had taken there before and managed to wind his way around the staircases and up to the main floor.

As Professor Snape indicated, dinner had started, though just recently if he was correct. There were four long tables stretching from the front of the hall towards the back, bookended by another long table. Students were sitting or milling about around the four long tables, and Harry took the end table to be for staff only, a pity.

The color scheme was, he had to admit, rather impressive. Red and Gold, Yellow and Black, Blue and Bronze, and Green and Silver, marked by banners and various table cloths and sundry on the tables. Really, was it necessary to color code everything here? First all the students seemed to be color coded by tie, then the tables. Next would be personal belongings followed by bedrooms and bathrooms. Another reason to avoid this house system. Harry hated having colors chosen for him.

He scanned the room with mild interest, until he spotted his newly made friend over at the green and silver table. Blaise, with his dark coloration, stood out quite well against the typical pale colors of UK natives and Harry headed his direction with a grin.

“Hey, I made it! Managed to keep myself in one piece too.”

Blaise huffed. “I’m more surprised you kept the professors in one piece. You did, didn’t you? I was expecting some report of you driving them mental before you made it to dinner. Which you’re late to, by the way.”

Harry shrugged. “I had to wander from Professor McGonagall’s room to Professor Flitwick’s, then down to Professor Snape’s. Hogwarts isn’t the smallest place, you know, quite a few stairs. And everyone’s in one piece. I can’t be that unusual, this is a school for magic, after all.”

Blaise shook his head. “You have no idea how weird you really are, do you?”

“Where’s the fun in that?” Harry said, grabbing a plate and picking out a few interesting looking foods. “You know, I’ve never had some of these. Dad always preferred fish and chips or bananas, given the choice, and Rose never has the best sense of what to eat either. If we left food decisions up to Jack, I don’t think we’d have anything resembling proper food in the Tardis at all.”

“Really? You’ve never had meat pies?”

“Well, I’ve had things resembling meat pies, but I don’t think anything in it was actually meat, or remotely edible. In fact, I recall us all turning a lovely shade of violet before hovering a few centimeters off the ground and spinning in place. Supposed to be some traditional food or whatever, but I think they were just pranking us. I’ve never seen that many mouths laughing at once.” Harry shuddered.

Blaise thought Harry couldn’t get any stranger.

Pashti took the opportunity of food to jump down and meander over to the ham, delicately taking a piece to Harry’s plate before eating it in small bites.

Blaise thought Pashti was the weirdest animal in Hogwarts as well. The two made quite the pair.

“Potter, what are you doing at the Slytherin table?”

Blaise groaned. Malfoy just had to make an appearance. “Go away Malfoy. It’s not really your business.”
Malfoy sidled up to Blaise and Harry, followed, as always, by the two overly large eleven year olds who acted as his bodyguards, Crabbe and Goyle. Though what an eleven year old needed them for was beyond Blaise. “If you aren’t part of Slytherin, you shouldn’t sit at the table,” Malfoy shot back.

Blaise raised an eyebrow. “I don’t remember that being part of the rules,” he replied. “Besides, Harry doesn’t have a House so it shouldn’t matter.”

“No House Potter? Did the Sorting Hat think you were too dumb to Sort?”

Harry rolled his eyes but didn’t bother answering the blonde. He hadn’t even acknowledged Malfoy’s presence. “Blaise, what’s this chocolate looking thing here?” He pointed at something that mildly resembled chocolate logs.

“Blood sausage. Not bad, but maybe a bit odd if you’ve never had them.” Blaise looked at him in consideration. “You didn’t grow up in the UK did you?”

Harry shook his head, taking a small piece of the sausage to try. “Nope. Home’s the Tardis, only one I’ve ever had.”

“Potter, are you really ignoring me?”

Harry snorted. “Really, this isn’t that bad. Besides the cloud of pre-teen self rightiousness hovering behind me, this is a rather nice meal.”

Blaise choked on his food. “Are you seriously calling Malfoy…?” he started, incredulous.

“Well, he is. Unable to properly address someone without adding insults is both childish and stupid. Who wants to talk to someone who insults them? Besides, what’s an eleven year old going to do to me? In a crowded hall as well. There isn’t much he could do.”

“I’m right here! Are you stupid Potter?” Malfoy protested.

Harry rolled his eyes. “Well, my name isn’t Potter, and if he can’t even figure out how names work without adding insulting addendums to them I’m not going to talk to him. Why anyone would want to talk to him is beyond me. I mean, sure, Professor Snape had an issue with my name, but he didn’t constantly insult me at the same time. I’m sure he wanted to, he certainly started to a few times, I’ve seen that look before, but he didn’t spend the whole lesson dropping insults. Maturity is key.” Harry popped a blood sausage in his mouth, chewed, frowned. “This is weird. Not bad weird, but weird.”

Blaise was goggling at him over his lifted fork, seeing the shade of red Malfoy had turned behind Harry. “Um, you might want to be careful,” Blaise said to Harry. “Malfoy, casting spells in the Great Hall is supremely stupid,” he added as he saw the boy going for his wand.

“Potter,” he ground out.

“This is fantastic pudding Blaise, you should really try it,” Harry said cheerfully, for all intents and purposes ignoring the mildly insignificant threat of a pissed off eleven year old behind him.

“Harry, um, are you, well, I mean,” Blaise tried to grasp for words.

“He’s not much of a threat, Blaise. He’s eleven and only just starting his magical education. I doubt he has the power to cast any of the stronger spells he may have picked up at home, and there are half a dozen teachers here. Starting a magical battle in the Great Hall is a really good way to make them angry, I’m sure.” Harry didn’t bother to mention his own magic’s unique reaction to harmful spells, which was usually to toss them right back at their owners if the magic used to cast them wasn’t too
“Stop talking about me as if I’m not here, Potter!” Malfoy ground out, hand twitching for his wand.

Pashti glanced up at him, eyes narrowing in dislike, before dismissing him with an eyeroll and turning back to her ham. It was enough of a sign for Harry to decide that Malfoy, especially as he was now, wasn’t worth investing the time in. Maybe given a bit of room to mature and grow up he could be worth it, but at the moment it was too much effort. He would give the boy a moment, then it would be up to him.

He turned to look Malfoy in the face, to make sure that this time his words weren’t brushed off by the angry child. “You, Draco Malfoy, are immature, spoiled, and self-centered. Why you think I should give you my time is beyond me. You can’t use my name properly, your first words to me are insults, and then you expect me to talk to you. Well, this is me, talking to you. You’re eleven, old enough to form your own opinions, to think about those around you, and to be respectful of others. If you can’t do any of those three, you aren’t worth anyone’s time. Now, I’m eating and you’re interrupting. I would suggest you take yourself back to your seat and finish dinner before it’s over. Good bye.” Harry gave him a long look, taking in the shocked grey eyes, before he turned back to his plate and proceeded to continue ignoring him.

Blaise felt like he couldn’t breathe properly, trying not to gasp out laughter or choke in shock. No one had spoken to Malfoy like that, ever.

Inarticulate rage, touched with confusion, covered Malfoy’s face before he stomped back to his seat further down the table.

“You’ve just poked an angry bear,” Blaise told Harry.

Harry huffed. “Really? That spoiled child, a bear?”

“His father. He’s really powerful in the Ministry.”

Harry shrugged, unconcerned. “So? What can he do, throw me out of Hogwarts? I didn’t want to come here in the first place, not a reliable threat. Toss my family out? Unlikely to happen, not even the headmaster can keep my dad out of Hogwarts, and Hogwarts likes me and my family. There isn’t much he could do to me, really. Besides, someone needed to tell him he wasn’t five anymore.”

Blaise shifted in his chair. “Well, I mean, I don’t know exactly what Mr. Malfoy can do, but there are plenty of rumors about some dark things he’s got his hands in.”

“And what, he’s going to curse me for telling his son the truth? He’d be even more immature than the brat he’s raised.”

Blaise gulped quietly. The magical world, he felt, wasn’t ready for Harry Not Potter, not at all.
Snape shifted. “The boy’s magical signature doesn’t acknowledge his name as Harry James Potter. I...may have become frustrated with his insistence about his name and cast the spell at him.”

“Severus, that’s bordering on illegal,” McGonagall warned, eyes flashing. “You can’t just cast that spell whenever you like, especially on a minor.”

“I am aware. But it revealed his name as simply Harry, with some strange circular mark underneath. I’ve never seen anything like it. The boy said it was his name, just in a language I didn’t know.”

Snape scowled. “I didn’t even know there was a language that was written in circles and lines.”

Dumbledore furrowed his brow. “I see. It is the same with the Hogwarts registry spell. His name on his letter was, simply, Harry. Perhaps his magic has adjusted to never knowing his last name. Though I have never heard of it happening before.” He sighed. “This is not the issue, though I am sure you are all concerned about the implications of that.” He saw nods from McGonagall and Flitwick. “As it stands, just call him Harry. He has made it quite clear he doesn’t go by Potter and we have more important things to discuss besides his name.” Dumbledore looked over his spectacles at them. “His magical ability, for instance. We can start there.”

McGonagall spoke first. “He’s powerful. If he wasn’t so argumentative and contrary and more than likely to be detrimental to lessons rather than helpful, I would move him up into a higher class. He can easily do inanimate to inanimate transfigurations, though they don’t always turn out how you would expect.”

“Wouldn’t that indicate he failed, then?” Sprout piped up.

McGonagall sighed. “In most cases, yes, but in his case, he not only managed to turn a fork into a fountain pen, but he managed to teach Blaise Zabini how to as well. I’m not quite sure I understood how he managed to do so, but the fact that another student was able to perform the same transfiguration indicates that it isn’t a fluke of his magic.”

Dumbledore hummed. “That is the Scribbilifors spell, yes?”

“Yes, and it’s meant to transfigure quills from small objects, not fountain pens.” She pulled Harry’s gold and silver striped pen out of a pocket. “This is the pen I watched him transfigure. It’s not just a pen, but a rather ornate one. Harry said it looks like one of his favorite pens.” She handed it to Dumbledore.

“I see. This is an impressive first year creation. And from a spell not intended to create a pen. Did he give you a reason as to why he made a pen rather than a quill?”

“You mean aside for his absolute disdain for quills?” McGonagall said, a hint of frustration seeping into her voice.

“Pardon me?”

“Harry hates quills, and was most adamant about telling me this while in Diagon Alley.” She sighed, kneaded her temples. “He is the most irritating student I have ever taken shopping, Albus. He practically blew up Ollivander, he argued with the telescope salesman, he whined through the quill and parchment shop, he barked with the potioneer about knives like a master potioneer, he dragged his feet getting robes and I believe he bought half the bookstore. The only shop he remotely got along in was the truck shop, of all places, and I have half a mind that the girl behind the counter was a bit odd herself.” McGonagall kneaded her temples. “Also he’s probably the most intelligent first
year I’ve ever talked to. I’m sure you’ve noticed it,” she said, raised an eyebrow.

“Yes, I have,” Dumbledore replied.

“He is certainly far more intelligent that many students I have ever taught. He’s not just smart, it’s as if magic comes to him instinctively.” Flitwick shifted. “I thought to test him on wand movements and teach him those since much of the first year curriculum has been covering that. But all it took was a quick demonstration before he had copied them all nearly perfectly. His levitation spell was unconventional but well executed, and I shall be testing his capabilities next class, but if he is anything near as proficient as he says he is, I don’t know how useful class will be to him.”

Dumbledore nodded, then looked up at Snape. “You were the last one to see him. How is his potions knowledge?”

A faint frown covered his face. “Whoever taught him potions was a mad genius,” he finally said.

McGonagall felt mildly stunned. “What?”

“The boy doesn’t know any recipes, but he can name all the bases used to make potions, list ingredients off by usefulness, and come up with potions based on a given problem. I asked him for the recipe for a blood replenishing potion, it’s the first one we cover in class and also the first in the book, and instead of giving me a standard recipe or, as I expected, nothing at all, he instead made up a potion on the spot, though it would work. When I asked him further about it, he said his teacher thought it better for him to learn ingredients and their reactions rather than recipes. Something about the boy being too impatient and blowing them up.” Snape curled a lip. “He is far too intelligent to be an eleven year old, Dumbledore. Who is this Doctor you gave him to?”

Dumbledore sighed. “Yes, the Doctor, well…”

“I too would like to know who this stranger you can’t control is, Albus. You told me barely anything about him ten years ago,” Minerva said, a hint of impatience in her voice.

“Me as well. There is something strange about a child being able to perform a levitation charm so easily, to catch on to movements and instinctively master them.”

Four sets of eyes peered at the elderly headmaster who wasn’t sure himself who the Doctor was exactly.

Silence permeated the room for longer than was comfortable.

“The Doctor is…” Dumbledore started, trying to gather his thoughts and piece them together into a coherent message. “He is... ineffable. He is, maybe he always has been and will always be. He has a presence that you can’t ignore and is powerful beyond words. He is an unknown to all sides and thus truly safe. And he is essentially a good person. I believe that.” He had to, otherwise he had made a grave mistake ten year prior.

“So you basically handed the savior of the wizarding world over to an unknown man and hoped for the best? Is that what you’re telling us right now?” Minerva said, voice hardening.

“Maybe that is a bit premature an assumption to make…” Sprout began.

“No, he gave a child to a stranger, a powerful and renowned child to a powerful and mysterious stranger he met once years ago. Then he lost all track of him until Harry-Not-Potter comes back, but he’s about as far from a normal child as you could imagine. I would like to know why you trusted this Doctor over the dozens of families who would have been willing to take Harry in 10 years ago.”
There were mutterings of agreement around the room.

Dumbledore sighed. “What would you have had me do? Raise him myself? I am probably the least fit person for parenting. Give him to a magical family as you suggest? They would raise him on a pedestal for destroying the dark lord and what would we have when Harry finally came to Hogwarts other than a spoiled child? Leave him in a muggle orphanage? Look how well that worked out for Tom Riddle. All of those in the Potter will were ineligible, his only remaining blood relatives dead. I needed to find a solution, and the Doctor was that solution. The Doctor is probably the most powerful magical I have ever encountered. I’ve been inside that blue box, and it was unlike anything I’d ever seen.” He paused, eyes going distant. “The expansion charms alone must have been an impressive working, not to mention the ability to make it a portkey at will, one that can pass through wards. The enchantments it contains, that it must contain, led me to believe the Doctor was someone powerful, and essentially someone good.” He looked over the rim of his spectacles at the teachers arrayed before him.

“Quite the leap of faith,” Snape muttered.

Dumbledore continued on. “So when I needed so give Harry a home, I thought of him. If there was anyone who could raise Harry in an environment so removed from danger, who could raise him with new views and perspectives as well as keep him safe, there was no one better than the Doctor.”

“Teach him new views and perspectives? Dumbledore, that child defies the laws of logic and magic. You gave him to a mad genius, at the very least,” Snape said bitingly. “An eleven year old should not have a working knowledge of 8,000 potions ingredients at his fingertips. No master I know has ever bothered memorizing more than the most commonly used four or five thousand, preferring to keep notes on the rest. And he hates recipes.”

They all stared at him. “How many ingredients did you say?” Sprout asked in a small voice.

“8,000, and I have it on decent authority that he isn’t joking.” Snape slumped further into the wall. “He’s going to be a nightmare to teach. His former instructor let him experiment, having him memorize potions ingredients and their reactions rather than teaching recipes. How could a child even sit still long enough to memorize that many potions ingredients?”

“Former teacher?” Dumbledore picked out of the complaining.

“Yes, someone named ‘Sal’. Not much to go on. Also, should the boy ever take my advice on mental magic, he would be a formidable occlumens I’m sure.”

“You seem impressed,” McGonagall noted.

Snape glowered. “He is remarkably level headed and intelligent, if much too mouthy for a first year. He resembles neither parent and surpasses many of my seventh years in articulation. At the very least he isn’t boring.”

McGonagall felt a small spark of amusement, though she wouldn’t voice it. That Snape was doing anything other than imagining James Potter’s son’s downfall in his class was a minor miracle.

Dumbledore clapped his hands. “It is late and we have other things to discuss before the night is through and I would like to see my pillow before the sunrise. We still have the problem of his House. Any early takers?”

“Not mine,” McGonagall said immediately. “He’d drive me crazy in under a week if he was my charge.”
“I too fear that Harry may alienate my Ravens. It will take a bit of time to tell, but he is frighteningly intelligent. I fear his ease with magic may spur jealously within my House,” Flitwick added.

“I am unsure yet if he would fit with my Badgers, but from what I’ve heard, I don’t know how well he would do,” Sprout said. “Still, I have yet to meet him in a classroom setting. I shall withhold immediate judgement.”

“He would destroy Slytherin House before they even knew what was happening,” Snape said, voice firm.

“Then we shall have to see what the week brings. As for out two new classes, I am willing to hear suggestions for time frames and locations.”

“You are referring to the new classes you are adding, the fitness one and the history class,” Sprout said.

“I am. I admit I am unable to force the three members of Harry’s family out of Hogwarts and thus they need some reason to be here, before the Ministry gets suspicious. As it is, they will be any way, but with legitimate professions and reasons for being here, there is little they can do about it.”

“I still don’t understand why you can’t just force them to leave. You’re the headmaster,” Sprout said.

McGonagall huffed a laugh. “That would be a sight to see. I dare say our headmaster would be on the losing end of that disagreement.”

Said Headmaster declined from commenting.

“I will agree that History needs another professor. I endlessly hear complaints about Binns and his one track teaching. But this fitness class, are you sure?” Flitwick looked mildly concerned, thinking about some of his bookish Ravens who particularly disliked strenuous activity.

Dumbledore nodded, brooding. “It was recently pointed out to me that it is unwise to rely on magic to support the body when in poor health. Without adequate nutrition and fitness levels, magic is concentrated on making sure the body stays functional and when in poor health, this lack of fitness taxes the magic and makes it harder to recover. This could be solved with a weekly fitness regime, and Ms. Rose and Mr. Harkness seem adequate for the job. Now we need only to decide on a time frame for this. I would suggest either early morning or late afternoon, as there are fewer lessons at those times and they can be easily shifted.”

“How are you going to teach them? By house?” Flitwick asked.

“No. By grade. First and second years together on Mondays, as they have the closest physical similarities. Third and fourth on Tuesdays for the same reason, Fifth on Wednesdays, Sixth on Thursdays, and Seventh on Fridays. That way each class gets a period a week to rotate through. I am sure Ms. Rose and Mr. Harkness will have time set aside for students who either struggle or are too advanced for their level and they can be placed in those time slots after the first class evaluation. Also, they insisted that the classes not be separated by house, as they wouldn’t be wearing uniforms anyway. Gym clothes would be required, but they haven’t said how they will acquire them, only that they would.”

“You’re going to put all the houses together by year for this lesson?” McGonagall said, a little taken aback.

“There’ll be blood,” Snape huffed softly.
“I’m sure Mr. Harkness and Ms. Rose will be up to handling them. So, is this agreed? We can shift the schedules a bit tomorrow, so that they will be handed out on Monday.”

“I propose the empty ballroom in the east wing. We never use it and it can fit about 100 people. Large enough for whatever they want to do and out of the cold,” McGonagall said.

Dumbledore grinned. “Perfect! I had forgotten about that room.” McGonagall didn’t believe him for a second. “So, is this agreed then?”

Nods all around.

“And the History lessons?” Flitwick asked.

“The Doctor indicated he would provide several hours every evening for students who wanted to learn. I request that we make this mandatory for all students though, as Hogwarts has an increasing track record of failure when it comes to the History OWLs and NEWTs.”

“Agreed,” Flitwick said. “We should find a way to get Binns to pass on as well. It’s been a long time coming but he does need to let the position go. I do believe, though that he might lecture to an empty room. We could just move the students’ History lessons to another room and keep the time slots the same. It would mean less shuffling of lessons and no need for added hours that some students wouldn’t attend.”

McGonagall hummed. “We can try it first. I do believe Binns fails to recognize students are present until someone addresses him directly. It would solve some of the problems we have been having with that course.” McGonagall looked around. “What do you think, Pomona, Severus?”

“I think, so long as Binns fails to notice the lack of audience, this would be an ideal solution,” Sprout said. “I would dearly like to not have to rearrange schedules more than they have to be.”

“I as well. We can use this next week to observe. If it seems to be acceptable, than I say keep the Doctor. Binns is a mild nuisance and fails to impart much education on anyone, unless you have a great fascination for goblin rebellions,” Snape huffed.

Dumbledore clapped his hands together. “Alright, we shall try it that way. I rather hope this will help Binns move on. It’s been a number of decades.”

And thus the new classes were agreed upon, even though they all found it a bit odd to be adding new classes at all, much less in November.

~~~~~In Which this is a Scene Break~~~~~

Saturday morning came late, as it was wont to do when fall began its turn towards winter. Still, this wasn’t much of a concern for Minister for Magic Cornelius Fudge, who rarely bothered to keep track of seasons. Magic, after all, made it much too convenient to simply set the temperature around you as you wished. Only when it started to snow did he bother to take into account the change of temperature.

Still, it was an odd day for the beleaguered Minister, having been woken up especially early that morning by a multitude of owls all hopping and chittering at the end of his bed.

Each owl seemed to carry a similar message, save for one, and that one was the reason he was up earlier than normal and rushing towards his office with single minded purpose.

Thursday evening, Harry Potter had burst into Hogwarts with some fanfare. Friday he had been
spotted at Diagon Alley by curious shoppers, most of whom had been uncertain who the boy was. Most of the letters he had received were all from reporters, reporters demanding he get an interview for them from the child, as Dumbledore had denied them all rights to see the boy.

The news of his return came with shocking unexpectedness, as the boy saviour had been missing since his expected arrival two months ago. No one knew where he was, and any tracking charms failed miserably, despite there being plenty of material for them. Dumbledore, the sly bastard, had been tight lipped about where he had placed the boy and Fudge was kicking himself for not caring about it ten years ago.

Now though, the child was back. At least a dozen employees had received letters from their children at Hogwarts attesting to that fact late Thursday evening, and Fudge had spent all Friday attempting to figure out the best way to confront both Dumbledore and Harry Potter about his apparent absence.

The letter that had him up so early from his bed was, in fact, a letter telling him that he was welcome to Hogwarts on Saturday to talk to Harry following the lunch hour.

He had an interview to prepare for.

~~~~~In Which This is an Ending~~~~~

Chapter End Notes

So, here it is. Another chapter.

I make no promises on when the next one will be out, I suck at keeping them. Only be assured that this story isn’t abandoned, won’t be abandoned, and I love writing it. I recently won NaNoWriMo this year with this story, so there is 50,000 more words to this, I just need to edit them. Because NaNo does not let you edit. So many mistakes.

To all my reviewers, I love you. Thank you. You make writing this a joy, and I’m so glad you all like this story. I will get to individual questions/requests/what-have-you in private replies. If you have a request for this story, be it a side story you want to see, something happening in the upcoming chapters, let me know.

Thanks so much! Kuroi
In Which Friends are Collected

Chapter Summary

Friends are collected and Hogwarts is explored, and Minister Fudge isn't sure what to make of the boy-who-hates-that-name.

Chapter Notes

I return! And only a few months later! Wow...still later than I wanted to be. Sigh. I'm working on that. This chapter was a pain to figure out the ending to. I finally just cut 8K worth of non essential story and picked a point I believed I could work with. A couple bits didn't come out like I wanted them to and I finally just threw up my hands and left them in. Hope you all enjoy this!
Kuroi

See the end of the chapter for more notes

~~~In Which This is a Beginning~~~~

When Harry woke up, he only vaguely recalled that he was at Hogwarts. It seemed a bit distant initially, before the previous events came flooding back as his brain roused to his current state.

After a long evening in which he had spoken with Blaise about Hogwarts and gotten a promise from the green-wearing boy to show him around, Harry hadn’t retired to bed. Rather, he had dragged his newly bought books out and the assignments from McGonagall and Flitwick, determined to get started on them, or at least make headway into two of the more interesting topics he would be learning.

Transfiguration was a topic he had always been interested in but, he was starting to realize, probably one of the more dangerous. He had a proclivity towards experimentation over implementation and with Transfiguration that could go horribly wrong if used incorrectly. Still, he had some faith that his focus wouldn’t let him do anything too stupid. They tended to be overprotective of him.

Now though, the sleep cycle had ended and he had told Blaise he would meet him for breakfast in the Great Hall. Blaise had told him Breakfast started at seven and ended at eight-thirty, times which Harry was only vaguely aware of existing, much less when they occurred. The stone Merlin had given him told him it was 7:38. He could guess with simple math how much longer he had before breakfast ended, though when it occurred wasn’t any clearer.
He relocated Pashti to the warm spot his body had left behind while he threw on clothes and dragged a brush through his hair. When he had been younger his dad had told him his hair had been a nightmare to deal with, which was why Harry preferred it long. Also, he could put decorations in it, something not possible if he ever cut his hair.

By the time the stone told him it was 7:55, Harry had finished dressing and his other morning ablutions and Pashti was back in her place on his shoulder as he raced out the Tardis door, barely stopping to wave at Rose and Jack as he rushed through the console room. His dad was nowhere to be found, though he wasn’t really surprised.

“Harry, make sure you’re at the headmaster’s office at lunch! The headmaster wanted to talk to you this afternoon! Your dad’s already up there with him!” Rose called out as he made for the entrance of the rooms they had been given.

“Alright, will do! Thanks!” He had just been glad no one told him specific times for things.

The Great Hall wasn’t too far away, and Harry raced down stair cases and hallways, coat flapping around him as he grinned with reckless abandon. He loved this feeling.

“Who’s that?”

“What was that?”

“Have you ever seen him before?”

“Are you sure it’s a boy?”

“Was that a cat?”

The whispers followed him all the way down to the Great Hall, not that Harry paid any attention to them. He was far too used to whispers whenever he traveled.

The doors were open and students bustled around, many in casual clothes as there were no classes today, something Harry was still unsure about. He would be studying on his own, but two whole
cycles without formal classes seemed odd at a school.

Green eyes scanned the hall, looking for Blaise’s distinct skin tone amongst the many pale shades that dominated this region.

He really should have just looked over at the green table, where Blaise had been watching him with wry eyes.

“Ah, Blaise! I’m here and I think I’m on time!”

“Almost late. Breakfast finishes in twenty minutes.”

“That means absolutely nothing to me.” Harry plopped down and snagged a plate, filling it with various fruits he recognized and some sausages. “What’s the orange drink?”

“Pumpkin juice. Not bad, but I prefer milk, given the option.”

“Pumpkin juice? Do they squeeze pumpkins until the juice drips out? It seems like an impractical drink.” Harry didn’t bother waiting for Blaise’s response, taking a tumbler and filling it. “Wow, sweet. I wasn’t expecting the sugar.” Harry blinked. “Wow.”

Blaise snorted. “I would have told you that if you had waited.”

“Eh, what’s life without adventure?” Harry grinned, digging into his food. Pashti jumped down and started snacking on the sausages. “I generally try things at least twice to see if I like them, and I’ll always try it again later, in case I might like it.”

“I’m not surprised.” In all honestly, Blaise had made a mental decision to just never be surprised by anything Harry did. The boy was a bundle of energy and intelligence and will. Blaise wouldn’t be surprised if Harry suddenly decided that Hogwarts would be better on the other side of the lake and then proceeded to move the whole castle there without telling anyone.

“So, this Hogwarts tour, where are we going?” Harry wanted to know how Hogwarts was set up now, as he still had a mental map of Hogwarts from the Founders Era. He was sure it was quite
different now, though after his trip to the potions room he conceded it might not be as different as he thought it would be after so many years.

Blaise chewed a piece of toast as he replied. “Well, the Library for one, it’s important, and I guess showing you where all the classes are would be helpful. There was a notice in the Slytherin common room this morning about two new classes being added, which is weird since it’s November, so I can’t show you where those classes are, but all the rest of them are easy enough. And I can show you the grounds.”

Harry grinned. “I can figure out the new classes just fine. My dad’s teaching one, and Uncle Jack and Rose are teaching the other.”

Blaise blinked. “Really? But, why? I didn’t know they were teachers.”

“Well, the headmaster can’t get rid of them so he just hired them as teachers. Besides, you all need some physical fitness here. It’s bad for the body to rely on your magic to keep you healthy.”

“Physical fitness?” Blaise said, unable to keep the mix of horror and curiosity out of his voice.

“Well, yeah, you know, running, jumping, sit ups, pushups, obstacle courses, stuff like that. It’s to keep you healthy. You can’t rely on just magic to maintain your body, that’s stupid. What happens when you get ill and your magic has to fight both the illness and your poor physical health? Also, being physically fit makes it harder for you to catch certain illnesses and it helps you live longer. I know the average age for magicals tends to be up in the 100’s because magic helps maintain the body longer, but what if I tell you that some non-magicals have lived past one hundred?” Harry grinned at the look of shock on Blaise’s face. “Now think what would happen if you could keep your body healthy so your magic didn’t have to do that for you?”

Blaise blinked. “You’re strange,” he told Harry.

“I believe you’ve told me that already, in multiple ways. And yet here you are, having breakfast with me.” Harry grinned, downing his pumpkin juice and standing up. “So, what do you say to starting the tour?”

“You’re Harry Potter!” Blaise winced as the loud, slightly whining voice of Ron Weasley echoed in the slowly emptying Great Hall. This would not end well.
Harry sighed, giving Blaise this look of aggrieved put-uponness. “Really?”

“Not everyone knows, Harry,” Blaise offered. “They all heard the Headmaster say ‘Harry Potter’ yesterday.”

“Fine, fine, alright.” He cleared his throat, looked over the hall once, then stood on the bench. “Alright, I’m saying this once. My name is Harry. Not Harry Potter, not whatever other silly nicknames you’ve come up for me, and I’ve seen a few. I’m crap with plants, so being called a potter is really rather stupid. So please, it’s just Harry. I know you all have some cultural system of using a parent’s second name for the child, but I don’t follow it, so I don’t use it. I’ve never gone by ‘Potter’ in my life, and if you insist on using it and you refuse to listen, I won’t talk to you. It’s common courtesy to use the name someone prefers if you want to talk to them.” Harry looked over the crowd of students who had frozen the moment he had raised his voice above the chatter of the Great Hall.

Up at the Head Table, Blaise could see McGonagall put her head in her hands. “Harry, I think you’ve made your point,” Blaise pointed out.

Harry scanned the Hall once more, then nodded, satisfied. “Thank you.” He jumped back down, letting Pashti leap onto his shoulder before turning to Blaise, grinning.

“You’re crazy,” Blaise told him. “How did you get your voice so loud without screaming?”

“Been told I was crazy by people far more convincing than you, though you’ve done a fine job of mentioning it multiple times since we met. And it’s a trick I learned from my dad. It’s how you pitch your voice that makes people listen far more than how loud you scream.” Slowly the chatter around them resumed, though Harry heard his name more than a few times.

“Well, you’ve certainly made sure everyone could hear.”

“Harry, Harry!” It was Ron Weasley again, though this time he wasn’t using Potter, which was more thought than Blaise would have given him credit for.

Harry grinned at Blaise. “Hey look, it worked!”

“I think he just really wants to talk to you,” Blaise countered.
Harry shrugged. “He used my name, so that’s fine.” Harry turned to see a boy with bright red hair twining through the students to get to him. “Wow, my dad would really like his hair.”

“Harry! What are you doing over here with the snakes?” He frowned at Blaise.

Harry raised an eyebrow. “I’m sorry? Are there snakes here that I missed? I usually would have heard them by now, they’re fairly hard to ignore. Mouthy things.”

Blaise chuckled. “It’s part of the House system, Harry. Each House has colors and an animal.”

Harry’s eyes lit up in realization. “Ah, that’s what all those animal motifs were for. I was a bit curious about that. So I suppose the Green House has snakes, yes?”

“It’s Slytherin, Harry, Slytherin. I know you know that.”

Harry sighed. “Fine, yeah, so what? I think the whole thing is stupid anyway. Besides, why can’t I be over here? Blaise is my friend, where else would I be?” Harry looked at the red head. “Also, I don’t know your name.”

“I’m Ron Weasley. And didn’t you get sorted into Gryffindor? Why would you want to hang out with snakes?”

Harry sighed, running his hands through his hair. “I haven’t been Sorted at all. The Hat couldn’t sort me, so no house, so I can sit wherever I want, with whomever I want. Also, why should someone’s animal mascot be a negative thing? You keep sneering ‘snake’.”

Blaise laid a hand on Harry’s shoulder. “We aren’t exactly a well accepted house, Harry.”

“It’s where all the dark wizards came from,” Ron said, voice hard. “You shouldn’t hang out with them.”

Harry huffed. “And you, at all of, what, eleven? You’re old enough to judge an entire group of people based on some silly sorting system? Wow, and I didn’t think people could get any more narrow minded.” Harry rolled his eyes. “You said you’d give me a tour, Blaise, so let’s go. Ron
Weasley, when you decide you can talk without insulting my friend, come talk to me again.” Harry brushed past Ron’s startled form, pulling Blaise along behind him.

“Harry, are you determined to turn Hogwarts on its head?” Blaise demanded of him.

“Well, if that’s how you get people to shut up about stupid things, yes.” Harry let Blaise’s wrist go. “So, where to first? Inside or outside?”

Blaise considered. “Inside. It’s still too cold to go outside, we can wait until later.”

“Oh, yeah, I have to go to the Headmaster’s office at lunch, whenever that is. He wants to talk to me or something.”

“That still gives us all morning since lunch is at noon. I’ll show you where the Library is. It should be mostly empty since it’s Saturday. No one likes to study on Saturday, unless you’re a Raven.”

Harry grinned. “Race you!” he shouted, then took off, darting out the door faster than Blaise even had time to process.

“You don’t even know where you’re going, Harry!” Blaise called after him trotting to keep up.

“I’m sure it can’t be that hard to find a giant room of books here,” Harry said from the bottom of the staircase. “Still I figured it would be a better plan to wait here rather than dash around the castle. You seem quite determined to show me around.”

“Well, you’ve never been here before and there are a lot of secret passages and trick staircases. I only know of a couple because I got caught in them, but they’re a pain to deal with.”

“Trick staircases?”

“Yeah, someone’s idea of a practical joke centuries ago. They spelled certain steps to be intangible so when you step on them your foot goes through the step. It’s rather irritating.”

Harry chuckled. He wondered if Godric had put those in on a whim to piss off Rowena. He would have to ask Uncle Jack. “Well, you can show me these trick staircases on our way up to the Library,” he suggested, leaping to his feet. “Come on!”

Blaise sighed, rolling his eyes. He was questioning his decision to be friends with this insane personification of chaos. “This way, Harry. Not up the main staircase, you’d go three whole floors out of the way and the proper staircase from there to the Library moves every two hours or so.”
“Do the staircases here move often?” Harry asked, curious as to if this was a new thing. Back with the founders there wasn’t nearly as much sentience in the castle.

“Some of them move at specific times of the day. It makes it difficult to get to some classes if you have a tight schedule so you have to remember where they are and find other routes.” Blaise took a left at the top of the stairs. “The Library’s actually pretty close to the Great Hall, which is convenient for those who like to coop themselves up in there on weekends.”

The Library seemed to have taken over Godric’s dueling room, if Harry remembered correctly. Then again, back with the Founders books were rather hard to get a hold of and rare, precious things.

Now, the huge doors seemed imposing, having taken the place of the smaller door Godric had preferred, but they moved with barely a push from Blaise. Probably spelled to be light and easy to move.

As Blaise had said, the Library was practically deserted, aside from a couple students here and there. One Harry was sure he recognized as the girl he had rescued from the toilets. “Blaise, is that Hermione Granger, by chance?” he whispered, pointing over at the bowed head of frizzy brown hair.

Blaise raised an eyebrow. “Yeah, do you know her?”

“Sort of. Just happened to bump into her the other day. But Professor McGonagall said we might get along. Something about liking books.”

Blaise snorted. “That’s an understatement. She’s always got her nose in a book. I think she memorized the first year texts.”

“Hm, quite studious for an eleven year old,” he muttered.

“You aren’t allowed to comment on someone’s age in relation to intelligence when you’re the same age and probably twice as smart as the smartest person in the school,” Blaise shot back.

“Nah, can’t compete with dad in the intelligence department,” Harry sighed, a heaved upon sigh that drooped his shoulders. “And he always likes to remind me of it too.”

Blaise shook his head in amusement. “Can’t always expect to be smarter than the person who taught you everything you know,” he said.

“True enough. Ah well.”

When Harry looked back towards Hermione Granger, it seemed their raised voices had caught her attention, and she stared at him with wide brown eyes. Harry waved, a grin on his face.

“Harry Potter?” she said, just loud enough to carry over to their position.

Blaise put a comforting hand on his shoulder. “One person at a time, Harry, one person at a time.”

Harry rolled his eyes. “It’s ok, she wasn’t in the Great Hall.” He wandered over to her table, taking the chair opposite her and gesturing for Blaise to join them. Hermione shot a look of mild shock at Blaise when he sat next to Harry, but otherwise said nothing. “My name’s Harry. Just Harry. No potter or whatever else you seem to add on to it.”

“But, you’re in all sorts of books about the Fall of the Dark Arts and such, and there’s even a
children’s book series about you! What do you mean, not Potter? It’s your name, right?”

“I don’t have a second name, haven’t had one for as long as I can remember, which is actually a pretty long way back. Photographic memory, or something really close to it.”

Hermione furrowed her brows. “But you don’t get a choice in your last name, it comes from your father, James Potter.”

“Didn’t know him, not in my memory, and though I am thankful him and my birth mother loved me enough to protect me with their lives, it’s hard to feel a longing for someone you don’t know when you were raised with a family. And my dad doesn’t have a second name for me to take. I would sound rather odd being called Harry Doctor. Not quite appropriate, yes, considering my lack of body hair.”

Blaise choked on a laugh. “Really, bad puns?”

“Well, there aren’t any good ones out there.” Harry turned back to see Hermione struggling with a smile. “So, how are you? I didn’t get a chance to ask after the last time I saw you. You were pretty far away from Gryffindor and the Great Hall. I was a bit curious why you were there.”

Hermione shrugged, the force of her loneliness once more on her shoulders. “I’m okay. Thank you, for saving me. I don’t know what I would have done if you hadn’t come.” She hunched over. “I didn’t want to go to the feast. One of the boys in Gryffindor isn’t exactly very nice to me.”

Harry frowned a bit. “Is it the one with red hair, by any chance?” he asked, recalling the mouthy, judgemental boy, Ron Weasley, who had stopped him this morning.

Hermione nodded. “Yeah. But he’s not too bad. Just, he’s not very quick at spells, and he doesn’t like that I am. But all that spellwork would be for naught if you hadn’t come a saved me. I had no idea what to do.”

Harry smiled. “You would have figured out something. Professors McGonagall and Flitwick both praised you for being an excellent student, I’m sure if you needed to you could have thought of something. And don’t let Ron Weasley get to you. There will always be people jealous of your skills.”

Hermione flushed at the praise. “Oh, um well, I like learning. I think it’s weird that no one wants to study, at least in Gryffindor. We’re at a school for magic, and we’re studying magic! How amazing is that?”

“I think it’s bloody brilliant, if you ask me. No one does though, not usually.” Harry looked at the books piled up in front of Hermione. “Doing research on the Dark Arts? Any particular reason?”

Hermione bit her lip. “Well, for one our DADA professor isn’t very good and I don’t want to fail a test. And, well, I was curious. About you. You’re in a lot of these books and everyone was really excited when you turned up. All of Gryffindor buzzed with the news yesterday.”

Harry groaned. “I hate fame. Remind me to strangle my dad for keeping this from me when I see him again, will you Blaise?”

Blaise raised his hands in surrender. “Don’t get me involved in your family arguments. If they’re anything like you I’m way outmatched as it is.”

Harry let his head hit the table in frustration. “Just not my day. Not my day at all. It’s not going to be my seven years, is it? I hate fame. It’s so stupid and so easy to manipulate people with. It makes good
people do stupid things and I hate when good people do stupid things.”

Hermione wasn’t sure what to make of the boy in front of her who said he wasn’t Harry Potter. Well, he was, but he didn’t use his last name, he hadn’t even known it, it seemed like. And he wasn’t at all like she imagined a boy hero to be.

“Um, well, can you answer some of my questions then?” she asked, putting the book she had been perusing aside.

“Depends on the question, but fire away.”

Hermione took a deep breath. “How did you know how to find me that day? Where have you been since you disappeared? How much magic do you know? What do you…”

“Woah, woah, one question at a time, and I can’t answer at least two of those.” Harry laughed. “I knew how to find you because the guy with the turban came rushing into the Great Hall screaming about a troll in the dungeon. Had no idea you were even there, I just wanted to see a troll. They’re impressive beings, so long as you stay out of club range. And don’t piss them off.”


“I don’t have a house, and what’s so wrong with Slytherin?” Harry wondered again, hearing the same scorn in her voice that Ron Weasley’s had held. “I mean, do you all really not like Slytherin or something?”

“Well, it’s not got the best reputation. And a lot of them think they’re better than anyone else because they’re purebloods.” Her shoulders drooped. “They aren’t very nice.”

Blaise sighed, feeling a little put upon when Harry cast him a look. “Slytherin has a reputation for having a lot of dark witches and wizards, though it isn’t the only House they come out of. But yes, many Slytherins aren’t very nice to muggleborns or half-bloods.”

“You all could use less insulting terms than that,” Harry pointed out. “The terms they used to use was New-Blood, Magic-Born, and Old-Blood, which are far less insulting. Why call someone with no magic a Muggle? It sounds demeaning,” Harry pointed out. “And then to call a child who comes from a nonmagical family a muggleborn? It’s not a word that makes you feel better about becoming part of a new society. New-blood or Magic-born is a lot more welcoming.”

Blaise sighed, shaking his head. “One thing you’ll learn about the wizarding world, Harry, is that a lot of traditions are hard to change. Some things are just ingrained into people and nearly impossible to budge.”

“Doesn’t mean you shouldn’t try. Staying stuck in the past is stagnating, and New-Blood is an older term than muggleborn.” Harry looked at Blaise, then back at Hermione. “The wizarding world should embrace new-bloods. They bring new ideas, new magic, new innovations. They prevent the stagnation of a culture.”

“Well, I don’t have anything against mugg….new-bloods,” Blaise corrected at the look Harry sent his direction. “I mean, I’m not sure they’re everything you say they are but they’re magical, they have a right to be taught the same as everyone.”

Harry turned to Hermione. “And you? What do you think of the wizarding world here?”

Hermione bit her bottom lip. “Well, it seems like a lot of it is still in the middle ages. With magic you
can do nearly anything, but you still use candles and torches to light places. There should be plenty of ways to make light permanent without having to rely on things non-magicals only use in an emergency. I mean, even if you do use magic to make them everlasting, it’s still looks really silly.”

Blaise blinked. “Really?”

“You don’t know much about the non-magical world, do you?” Hermione asked, looking at Blaise.

He shook his head. “I grew up in a magic only household. My mom’s part of an old line of magicals back from Merlin’s time. We rarely go out into the non-magical world.”

Harry laughed just a bit. “And here we see the result. You do know non-magicals can fly, right?” he asked, grinning.

Blaise’s eyes went wide. “Really?”

Hermione couldn’t contain her laughter at Blaise’s shocked look. “We fly in planes. They can hold hundreds of people at once and there are dozens of flights a day all over the world.”

“But….how?”

“Remind me later and I’ll get you one of my old books on aerodynamics and engineering in relation to planes. I loved that book as a kid. It’s got some good pictures too.” A hologram feature as well, but Harry could pass it off as magic since the non-magical world hadn’t quite caught up to that level of technology.

“Er, thanks Harry,” Blaise said.

“No problem. Now, you seem to know the library rather well, Hermione. Want to give me a tour?” Harry stood up.

Hermione smiled. “I would love to. You’re welcome too, Zabini. You’re not too bad, you know.”

“Call me Blaise. It sounds weird if you call me by my last name.”

“And I’m Hermione.”

“The start of a lovely friendship,” Harry said, grinning. “We’re gonna have a blast!”

Hermione and Blaise traded looks. “You get used to him, I think,” Blaise offered. When Pashti decided to make her presence known by jumping off of Harry’s shoulder and onto the pile of books, Hermione started. “You might get used to Pashti too. They’re a matching set of strangeness.”

Hermione nodded slowly. “I see. Pashti, is that your name?” she directed at the cat.

Pashti preened under the attention. “Mreow!”

“You’re rather tiny for a cat. Are you magical?”

“In a sense she is. She’s been my companion for a while now. My best friend and practically my caretaker when Dad, Rose and Uncle Jack aren’t around. She makes sure I eat if I’m too caught up in something. Between her and the Tardis, I rarely miss meals or sleep cycles.”

“Aren’t you such a good companion, Pashti,” Hermione cooed, scratching behind Pashti’s ears.

Pashti turned her head towards Harry, blinking in a pleased manner. “If you want, you can carry her
while you show us around. She seems to like you.” Harry grinned at the joy that blossomed on Hermione’s face.

Pashti leapt onto Hermione’s shoulder and balanced with the ease born through repetitive practice with Harry. Harry secretly suspected she tapped into his magic to stay on his shoulder, considering he dashed about with reckless abandon and not once had Pashti fallen off. The enchanted look on the girl’s face was worth it.

“So, you ready to show us the library, Hermione? We can put the books away while you show us around, then you can help Blaise show me around.” Harry picked up a few of the books Hermione had on the table, then dashed off.

“Does he know where he’s going?”

“No, but I think he rarely knows where he’s going,” Blaise said.

Hermione chuckled. “Well, we better go catch up before Madam Pince catches him at something and throws him out.”

Blaise rolled his eyes. “He would get banned from a library. Do you know he talked back to Professor McGonagall yesterday? And basically told Malfoy he was a spoiled brat?”

“Really?”

They trailed after the whirlwind of chaos, catching up quickly as Harry had stopped, trying to figure out the shelving system.

“Come on, I’ll show you how the library works. That’s what you asked me to do, isn’t it?” Hermione took the lead and Harry trailed after with a look of resigned amusement.

It took Hermione the better part of an hour and a half to show Harry how the system worked, then Blaise dragged them both out of the Library as he had no desire to stay there all day, no matter what the two bookworms who had inexplicably become his friends wanted to do.

“Alright, it’s nearly ten, we can go outside now. It should have warmed up some.” Blaise looked down at Harry’s bare feet. “Are you sure you don’t want shoes, Harry?”

Hermione frowned, looked down at Harry’s feet. “You aren’t wearing shoes? Isn’t it cold in the castle? I mean, flagstone isn’t very warm.”

Harry shook his head. “Hogwarts keeps things at a fairly stable temperature year round. It’s part of the magic here. It reduces the need for temperature control spells.”

“How...how do you know that?” Hermione said. “That’s not in Hogwarts, a History.”

Harry grinned, tapping his nose. “That’s a secret.”

“But....”

“I’m fine. I’ll put shoes on if it’s too cold. Dad always makes me carry a pair in case.” Harry patted his jacket pocket.

“Well, they’re your feet.”

Blaise led the way down the stairs and out into the courtyard Harry remembered running from Godric in while learning how to hold a sword properly.
Beyond the stone arch was a wide expanse of grass with a few trees dotting the grounds beside a huge lake that filled the space. The forest was a good 200 meters from the courtyard and it immediately caught Harry’s eye.

“Let’s go! I want to check out the forest! I love a good forest, always something to find.”

Harry dashed off before Blaise and Hermione processed his words. Their eyes met, wide in shock. “He doesn’t know we aren’t allowed in the forest,” Hermione said.

“I doubt it would matter even if he did know,” Blaise replied. “Let’s go get him before he gets in trouble.”

“But...won’t we get in trouble too?” Hermione said, playing with a strand of her hair. “No one’s allowed in the Forest. We’ll get detention and Professor McGonagall and Headmaster Dumbledore said there were dangerous creatures in it.”

“Would you rather Harry get eaten by something?” Blaise retorted. Hermione’s will hardened.

“Alright, let’s go get him.” She stuttered, stopped, face flashing with fear. “I hope he’s not gone too far in,” she worried. “I really don’t like this. Rules are there for a reason.”

“And you decided to befriend the boy with no shoes on in November,” Blaise pointed out. “It would seem apt that he wouldn’t follow rules. Rules he doesn’t even know about.”

Hermione picked at her hair once again, before drawing in a deep breath. “We’ll just have to find him and tell him then,” she said, determination in every line of her body.

Blaise chuckled. “Whatever works.”

They took off after the wayward boy. He was fast, Blaise thought. Really fast. They could barely make out his figure as he raced towards the trees. They could hear him though.

“Come on, you’re too slow!” And then, to the pair’s shock, he vanished into the trees.

“This is not good,” Blaise muttered. “Why did I decide being friends with an insane person who doesn’t even like their last name was a good idea?”

Hermione really wanted to laugh but she was too busy trying to breath as they raced after Harry. “Because...he’s...different,” she panted out.

“Too different,” Blaise countered. “He’s going to drive us insane in under a week.”

Hermione couldn’t argue with that.

They skidded to a stop at the edge of the trees, looking for Harry without having to get too close.

“I don’t see him,” Hermione said, worried. “Blaise, what if...”

“He’s barely been in there five minutes. He can’t have gone too far in. Are you any good at light spells? I’m still trying to get the hang of them myself.”

Hermione nodded, taking out her wand. “Lumos,” she said, watching a bright ball of light form in front of her wand tip. “Alright, let’s go. I don’t fancy losing the only other friend I’ve ever made in my life.” Pashti just snuggled up under her ear, seemingly unconcerned about Harry’s disappearance. Somehow that made Hermione feel better.
“He’s too troublesome. Really. He sees a dark and scary forest and decides the best thing to do was to waltz right in.” Blaise shook his head. “We need to stick together.” He looked at the frizzy haired witch. “You know, you aren’t too bad for a know-it-all Gryffindor,” he said. “Really, I expected more of a fuss about this whole adventure, but you’re right here.”

Hermione shot him a look. “Was that a compliment?”

“Well, it wasn’t an insult.”

Hermione sighed. “I mean, I think rules are important. And they’re there for a reason, you shouldn’t just ignore them, but Harry doesn’t know about the rules, and he’s been really nice. I don’t want him to get in trouble.”

Blaise choked the laughter threatening to bubble over. “Nice. I suppose that’s not a bad word for him.” Hermione shot him a look. “Let’s go find the boy-who-lived before he becomes the boy-who-was-eaten-by-a-monster.”

The forest wasn’t as ominous as Blaise had first expected, though that didn’t mean it wasn’t ominous at all. Still, in daytime with light peeping through the canopy, it was rather pleasant.

“This isn’t so bad,” Hermione commented. “I’ve seen a couple rabbits and a few birds already.”

“We’re only at the start of the forest,” Blaise warned. “It might get worse further in, and we have no idea how far Harry went. And we don’t know if anyone saw us go in.”

Hermione shook her head. “No one was out on the grounds when we were there. Only way they could have seen us would be from the windows, and I doubt they’d be paying that much attention.”

Blaise looked at her strangely. “How did you know there was no one there?”

“I have a photographic memory.”

“Like peas in a pod,” he muttered. “How did I end up with the genius kids? I barely qualify for smart.”

Hermione giggled. “You really aren’t that bad. I mean, the other Slytherins have been really mean to me, I wasn’t expecting you to be so…..normal.”

“I wasn’t raised in the same circles as they were. My mum is a bit of an outcast, really. Happens when your husbands tend to die rather frequently.” He shrugged at Hermione’s startled look. “It’s not a secret, everyone in the magical world knows about her. I don’t have anything to do with whatever it is she does. I try to just stay out of the way.”

Hermione felt a minute shiver pass through her. “You’re weird,” she decided.

“My mother is weird. I have no choice,” Blaise corrected, looking left and right to see if his wayward new friend was anywhere.

“Point. I don’t know if I ever want to meet your mother.”

“She’s not exactly easy to get along with, no,” Blaise agreed. “I don’t think we need the light spell anymore, it’s actually brighter than I thought it was.”

Hermione extinguished the spell with a whispered “Nox.”

“Hey, Hermione! Blaise! I found something!” Harry’s voice cut through the air and made it absurdly
easy to pinpoint him.

The two looked at each other, then took off after the voice, having located it ahead of them and a bit off to the left. Pashti vibrated gently under Hermione’s ear, at ease. Her reaction reassured Hermione that they were on the right path.

A few minutes later, panting and muscles on fire, Hermione and Blaise skidded into a clearing where Harry was kneeling down next to...nothing? Hermione furrowed brows, staring at the blank patch of air Harry seemed to be petting.

“What is it Harry? There’s nothing here,” she panted. “You made us worry, you know, running into the Forest. It’s dangerous! And there’s nothing even here! We aren’t supposed to go in the forest.”

Harry tilted his head at her. “Really? You can’t see them? I wonder if it’s a magic thing….”

“I can see them,” Blaise said lowly, voice soft. “They’re Thestrals.”

Hermione made a curious sound in the back of her throat. “Thestrals?”

“Ah, I know that word! That’s what this adorable little one is?” Harry grinned, and he cuddled whatever it was Hermione couldn’t see closer.

“Is it a gender thing? Can I not see it because I’m a girl?” she asked, a little put out her new friends could see something she couldn’t.

Blaise shook his head. “No, it’s nothing as silly as that. Thestrals…they…you can only see them if, well,” he trailed off, looking reluctant to tell Hermione the answer. “Well, you can only see them if you’ve seen someone die.”

Hermione gasped, taking an automatic step back. “But…that’s horrible,” she breathed.

Pashti leapt down off her shoulder, leaving a cold patch on her neck as she slunk her way back to Harry.

“It’s not that bad Hermione. Death is a natural part of life, it happens to everyone.”

“But…it’s such a horrible thing to witness,” she said, a little sad the tiny kitten had left her perch on her shoulder.

“They’re omens of bad luck,” Blaise continued. “Most people say it’s a sign of bad things to come of you see a Thestral.”

Harry snorted. “That’s absurd. Thestrals are guardians of the dead, guiding their spirits to their resting place and making sure they stay safe,” he said, a grin on his face.

“That’s wrong,” Blaise said. “Where’d you hear that bit of nonsense?”

“How’d you know it’s wrong? I heard it from a focus crafter. They have to know the history of all the materials they use in their foci and Thestral hair was part of it. They told me all about Thestrals.” Well, he was stretching the truth a bit, but they wouldn’t believe the truth anyway.

“Everyone says so,” Blaise protested.

“Well, where did this Everyone hear it?” He waited a moment, watching Blaise’s face contort into strange shapes. “I hate the use of ‘Everyone says’ and such. It’s stupid and tells anyone who’s listening that you didn’t bother to look up the information on your own, that you just believe what
anyone tells you. You should always make your own observations and make sure you get your information from a trusted source. Besides,” he said, petting the Thesstral in his lap. “What’s wrong with seen someone die? I mean, a violent death is traumatic in its own way and should be handled carefully, but the passing of someone when their time’s come, that’s not a horrible thing.” Harry smiled up at Blaise. “It’s important to think for yourself, you know.”

Blaise grumbled under his breath.

Hermione had let the tension that had been building in her muscles fade a bit. She edged closer to Harry and the invisible Thesstral in his lap. “Can...can you touch one if you haven’t seen someone die?” she asked.

Harry’s eyes lit up. “Of course! They take up a physical space in the world, most people just don’t know they’re there. Here, come a bit closer. This one’s a baby, I think their parents are over there, staying just beyond the tree line, but they’re keeping an eye on the little one, so be gentle.”

Hermione sat day, taking care to leave ample room for whatever it was Harry was about to hand her. “What do they look like?” she asked.

“Well, you know a horse’s basic shape, yeah? Well, imagine a black horse, with bat like wings and very fine, downy fur. I think the adults have a different skin texture, but this baby here has a soft covering of fur, probably for protection. Here, move your arms a bit, yes, like that. Alright, here you are.”

She felt the weight of the baby Thesstral as Harry settled it into her lap.

“That’s really strange to watch, Harry,” Blaise said, hovering around the edges of the clearing, still unsettled. “I’ve never heard of anything like that about Thestrals. No one has ever said anything good about Thestrals. Just that they’re only able to be seen by those who have seen death.”

“Well, that’s rather silly of everyone. You should explore everything you can to its fullest extent. That’s the only way to learn about anything. How are you doing, Hermione?”

Hermione giggled. “It’s very squirmy. And soft. I think it’s trying to nibble my fingers, but I can’t tell.”

Harry tapped the baby on what Hermione assumed was its nose. “Now now, that’s not nice. Hermione is being very gently with you, be nice.”

“It’s only a baby, kittens and puppies do the same,” Hermione said.

“Still, you don’t let them, or human babies either, get away with it. They should learn that nibbling is reserved for food only. Tasting is fine, but teeth are dangerous.” Harry looked at the baby Thesstral. “You understand?”

Hermione felt the baby shift, as if nodding. “You’re even weirder than I thought, but this is so amazing I don’t care,” she said, running her hand down the baby’s fluffy body, feeling the edges of the tiny wings growing in and the tail that felt too floofy to be fully grown. “How big is it? I can’t quite tell, though it feels really small for a horse like creature.”

“You know a full grown cat? Only a bit bigger than that. I think they’re really rather small as babies. Their parents are much bigger.” Harry nodded towards a patch of air where Hermione assumed the baby’s parents were.

“Harry, are you sure this is safe? I mean, there’s a reason this is called the Forbidden Forest,” Blaise
said, his voice a couple tones higher than normal. “And Thestrals are supposed to be really protective of their young.”

“Forbidden? That’s a stupid name to call it. Only makes people want to explore it more. Should name it the Bland Forest, of the Unexciting Copse of Trees. Something unappealing. Really. Forbidden is just inviting people to come look.” Harry shrugged. “And the parents are perfectly content right now.”

“I think we should get going, before someone comes looking for us, and it’s nearly eleven. it’s an hour before lunch, if you want to look at the green houses and such we should hurry before you need to go meet the headmaster.” Blaise’s body language screamed uncomfortable, so Harry sighed.

“Alright Hermione, Blaise is clearly not happy about this. Let me go return them to their parents.” Harry gathered the invisible bundle up and turned to the patch of air he had spoken of before. “Here’s your baby. Thank you for letting me play with them.” Harry set the baby down and Hermione saw footprints appear in the leaves as the baby pranced away.

“Can we come back sometime? I mean, I can’t see it but I think I could figure out ways to interact anyway.”

“You want to come back?” Blaise said, voice clearly shocked. “Why? Moments before you were talking all about detentions and getting in trouble and rules, and now you wanna come back just because of….of” he gestured off towards the Thestrals.

Hermione frowned. “Well, it’s against the rules to be here, I mean, but it’s just so interesting to learn about magical creatures!”

“Against the rules?” Harry said. “That’s stupid. It’s a forest.”

“It’s a dangerous forest with dangerous creatures.” Blaise gave a significant look towards the Thestrals.

Harry snorted. “That doesn’t make it any less foolish. I’ll come back with you Hermione, if you want to come see them again.”

“I still don’t believe you want to see them again. It’s just...they’re Thestrals!”

“What’s so bad? I mean, you could clearly see them and obviously they weren’t hurting me, so what’s the problem? I couldn’t see them at all.”

“Probably for the best. Harry was being nice when he described them.”

Hermione turned to Harry, eyebrow raised. “What is he talking about?”

Harry sighed. “The adults look like emaciated horses, skeletons with black skin stretched over the bones, though they are rather sturdy looking. They look fierce as well. I think they’re carnivores, though obviously carnivores of dead meat. It would match with their duties as guardians of the dead, consuming dead flesh rather than creating more dead. But really, beauty is in the eye of the beholder, and I think they looked lovely.” Harry looked at Blaise, who had huddled into his jacket.

“I think you’re creepy, I think you’ve corrupted a perfectly innocent and intelligent witch, and I think it’s getting colder. We should go inside before someone figures out where we’ve gone. I don’t fancy detention cause I chased after you into the forbidden forest.”

Harry shrugged. “Eh, not a big deal. Detention doesn’t mean much after a while, really. I mean,
besides, I can claim ignorance. No one told me the rules.” Harry’s smiled was bright and a bit conniving.

Hermione fidgeted. “I want to see them again, but detention...that goes on your record,” he said, voice low.

Harry waved a hand. “There’s far worse in this world than detention Hermione. In any case, we should get going. I wanna see the greenhouses. I’m no good with plants but I should probably know where they are so I can find them again when I need to go there for lessons. I’ve seen the transfiguration room, charms, and potions, so herbology, defense, and astronomy are left. And I’ll just assume astronomy is on top of a tower somewhere.”

Blaise huffed. “Why’d you need me to show you around if you’ve seen half the castle already?” he said, still clearly spooked by the Thestrals in the corner of the clearing.

Harry followed his eyes. “Alright, we can go. And besides, I wanted to see what you knew of the castle. Didn’t know where the library was at all, or the greenhouses. And we got to go an an adventure, however small.” Harry headed out of the clearing the way they had come, or at least Hermione and Blaise hoped it was the way they had come. They weren’t too sure.

“Can you get us out of here?” Blaise asked.

Harry nodded. “I’m pretty good with direction. Rarely get lost unless it’s on purpose.” He decided to not tell them he could feel Hogwart’s magic from here. Pashti hopped onto his shoulder before they exited the clearing, curling up in her normal spot. He grinned over at her and she nuzzled his cheek.

“Nice to see you again, Pashti.” She mreowed at him.

“She can hold on remarkably well when you run,” Hermione commented. “I was surprised, I didn’t even notice her and I would have thought she would have fallen off at some point.”

“She’s got her own special abilities,” Harry said, running a finger over her brow. “She would have to, having to live with me and my family for any amount of time.”

“I assume they are all as crazy as you,” Blaise said, slowly relaxing as they drew further away from the Thestrals.

“Uncle Jack’s worse,” Harry said.

Blaise shuddered.

“Uncle Jack?” Hermione asked.

“Oh, you weren’t at the feast. Uncle Jack, otherwise known as Jack Harkness, uncle and flirter of anything that is both legal and sentient. It’s annoying.” Harry snorted. “Rose is dad’s.....wife? Mate? Partner? Who knows. They haven’t gotten the paperwork for an E...a proper marriage yet, but they’ll get around to it. She’s like my mum whenever the Tardis isn’t busy taking care of me. And dad’s probably twice as bad as me,” he contemplated that last statement. “Possibly. He doesn’t tell me how much trouble he got into as a kid but it was probably worse than half the things I did.” He sincerely hoped so at least.

Blaise shuddered at the thought. “Your family is staying at Hogwarts?” he asked in confirmation.

Harry nodded. “Yep. Dad’s doing History of Magic special lessons, hopefully he gets the dates right. Uncle Jack and Rose are doing the Physical Fitness class. Won’t be easy, that class. Unless you get
regular exercise. Then you might not die on the first day.” Harry grinned at the looks of panic on both Blaise and Hermione’s faces. “It’ll be fine, you’ll do okay. I mean, they won’t kill you, you’ll just feel like you’re dying.”

“I’m….I’m not good at stuff like that,” Hermione confessed.

“That’s alright. They won’t be too harsh. I think. Oh, look, we found the edge of the forest! Race you to the Green houses!” Harry took off before Hermione or Blaise could say anything.

“Does he ever stop?” Hermione asked.

“Hasn’t since yesterday,” Blaise replied. “Are you feeling okay? I mean, any weird feelings?”

Hermione gave him a quizzical look. “Um, no. Why?”

Blaise shook his head. “It’s nothing. It’s just, I’ve never heard of anyone being allowed anywhere near a Thestral baby. They’re usually super protective of their young.” Blaise looked over at Harry’s receding form. “I think Harry knows something more about Thestrals than he was saying, if he was able to convince the parents to let him see their baby, much less touch it.”

Hermione fidgeted. “Um, you said you could only see a Thestral if you had seen someone die. Um, who, well, who did you….” she stopped. “I’m sorry, that’s really personal.” Hermione had a quick flash of her parents talking with her about personal questions after she asked a stranger about their missing arm. She was insatiably curious, always had been, but she had to learn that there were times where questions weren’t okay.

Blaise shook his head, sighing. “My mother isn’t exactly the most…subtle of black widows. I was seven when her second husband died. He took a tumble down the stairs, except his magic didn’t protect him like it should have.” He gave her a significant look.

Hermione quickly shut her mouth, looking towards Harry. “Oh, um, well.”

“I told you because I doubt you’ll tell anyone. And I think you’ll be a big help with Harry. And I need you to trust me to be helpful.”

Hermione heaved a sigh. “I’m just….it’s weird to know that there are people like that in the wizarding world. Hasn’t she ever gotten in trouble?”

Blaise laughed. “No. She doesn’t ever directly do anything. It’s all hearsay and rumor. Unless you live in the same mansion as she does.” He squared his shoulders. “Alright, let’s go get the impossible Harry. If he’s as bad with plants as he says he is, we shouldn’t leave him alone in a greenhouse for any period of time.”

Hermione placed a hand on his shoulder. “Thank you, for telling me. You didn’t have to.”

Blaise gave her a thin smile. “You aren’t part of Slytherin politics, who would believe anything you say if you wanted to tell anyone? Your a mug...new-blood. It means your words don’t carry as much weight in the wizarding world until you’ve proven yourself twice over what pure...old-bloods have to.”

Hermione half smiled at him. “Thanks, you know, for not saying muggleborn. That word always rubbed me wrong, but I didn’t know why until Harry said something about it.”

Blaise rubbed at his face. “Harry’s right about a lot more things than I think he realizes. And he’s gonna turn the wizarding world on it’s head whether they’re ready or not.”
“I sincerely hope I can watch at the very least,” Hermione said.

“You don’t want to help?” Blaise asked.

“I don’t know. I don’t know much about the wizarding world yet. I’m still learning.”

“So’s Harry.”

“We both know Harry isn’t a normal eleven year old.”

“We aren’t exactly normal either,” Blaise pointed out as they continued their trek to the greenhouses. “You the brainiac Gryffindor new-blood, me the son of a Black Widow. Not exactly normal children.”

Hermione shook her head. “Harry’s in a different league, and you know it.” She heard a commotion and someone scream from up ahead. “He’s been there for all of four minutes. What could he have possibly done?”

“Well, let’s go see if we need to fetch a professor or not.” Blaise thought he hadn’t run so much in his life before as they sprinted towards the greenhouses.

“No, no, don’t touch that! I don’t know what that is but Professor Sprout said not to touch it!” they heard the panicked voice of a young boy say.

“Oh, in that case, I’ll put it back then. What about this one? It’s got some pretty flowers.”

“No! Don’t touch it! It’ll put you to sleep after making you hallucinate!”

“Wow, that sounds interesting!”

“Harry, are you terrorizing someone?” Blaise asked, stepping into the greenhouse and looking around for his wayward friend.

Harry was inches from what looked like a lovely bright blue and green flower. “Oh, no, not at all, am I, Neville?”

Neville, Longbottom if Blaise remembered correctly, looked like someone who was caught between panic and determination. “He’s touching plants without checking to see if they’re safe,” Neville said softly. “It’s not safe, this is a special greenhouse. Professor Sprout said I could look after the plants in here cause I’ve got some like it at home, but I have to be careful.”

“Well, I haven’t done anything bad yet.”

“You almost pulled out a mandrake!” Neville protested.

“What’s wrong with that? They’re rather good potions ingredients, could have started my own collection,” Harry pouted, staring at the boy standing between him and the mandrakes.

“What’s a mandrag?” Blaise asked from the doorway.

“Mandrake, Blaise,” Hermione corrected.

“Um, yeah, it’s mandrake. They’re plants that scream out a deadly shriek when uprooted,” Neville said, eyes flitting between Hermione and Blaise, uncertainty in them.

Hermione sighed. “Why did you think it was a good idea to show Harry the greenhouses again?”
“Well, I didn’t know Professor Sprout had stuff like that out for anyone to touch,” Blaise defended. “We were supposed to go to Greenhouse 1, Professor Sprout keeps that one open for anyone to look about and there are safety spells to make sure dangerous magic isn’t cast when an adult isn’t present. Not Greenhouse 3.”

“Can’t I just listen to it once? They’re babies, won’t do much more than knock us out for a bit,” Harry complained. “I’ve never seen a real mandrake, dad won’t let me have one.”

“No,” Neville said firmly.

“Well, I see why he was sorted into Gryffindor,” Hermione whispered to Blaise. “I had been wondering, he seemed so shy.”

“It takes some kind of courage to tell a curious Harry no,” Blaise agreed.

Harry sighed. “Fine, I won’t touch the mandrake.” Neville relaxed. “So what’s this?” Harry reached over towards what appeared to be a drooping umbrella like flower.

Neville’s face paled. “Don’t touch that!” He swatted at Harry’s hands. “That’s the Sleeping Lily. If you touch it without gloves it releases a toxin that makes you sleep for 48 hours.”

Harry grinned. “You know a lot about plants,” he said. “I’ve always been crap at them. I like them when they’re already prepped for potions, but when they’re in the ground I always manage to either kill them or turn them into killing plants. Dad banned me from the garden after I accidentally created a carnivorous daffodil.”

Neville looked at him, clearly perplexed. “How did you manage to make a daffodil carnivorous?”

“Well, you see, there’s a special chemical that, when you add it to a seed, will allow you to tinker with the genetic make up of the plants. I was trying to make it eat the bugs, I hate getting bit by those irritating nuisances my dad says are good for the plants, but I might have been impatient.”

“You’re eleven, Harry, why is your dad letting you play with such dangerous chemicals?” Hermione asked, quite reasonably.

Harry laughed. “I was seven or eight when I made the carnivorous daffodils. They still terrorize the garden, dad had to put up special signs. I’ve been playing with chemistry sets since I was a toddler.”

Hermione turned wide eyes to Blaise. “How are we keeping Hogwarts from blowing up when we have an impatient genius with access to carnivorous daffodils?” she asked.

Blaise shook his head, shrugging helplessly.

“Um, well, don’t do anything like that here. Professor Sprout only lets third years and up in this greenhouse, but I got special permission.”

“Well, then, you wanna help me with plants? I mean, I promise I won’t intentionally create anything too dangerous, probably,” Harry said, slinging an arm around Neville’s shoulders. “I don’t know what I can help you with, you seem to be pretty smart on your own, but I’m sure we can find something. I mean, you would be doing me a favor, I am really crap with plants.”

“Um, but, wait, I don’t even, I don’t know who you are!” Neville protested. “I mean, you just barged in here and…and….and….and…” Nevilled floundered, looked over at Hermione and Blaise.

“Hi Neville,” Hermione waved. “We apologize for not corralling our friend. He’s fast.”
“You know him?” Neville looked over at Blaise. “And….aren’t you in Slytherin?” he said, nearly whispering the last part, a look of fear coming over his face.

Harry waved his hand. “Blaise is cool, aren’t you Blaise?”

Blaise sighed. “You’re ruining my cool image with every word,” he said.

“You’ll be better for it. I’m Harry, and you said your name was Neville when I came in. It’s nice to meet you, Neville. I would have thought everyone knew me by now, seeing as how I sort of burst into the Great Hall during a big feast thing. Uncle Jack said it was Halloween, which I don’t actually know much about. Lots of pumpkins and bats and the color orange. Not too fond of orange, if I’m being honest. I like green and blue more.” Harry grinned.

Neville froze. “You’re….you’re Harry….Harry Po-”

“Not Potter.” Harry’s voice firmed. “Just Harry. No second name or anything. Just Harry.”

Hermione mouthed ‘Just go with it’ behind Harry’s back, and Neville nodded slowly. “Ok….um, well, um, I’m, I’m Neville Longbottom…..”

“It’s nice to meet you Neville Longbottom. So, you willing to help me not kill myself in the greenhouses?” he asked, maniacal grin on his face and a glint in his eye.

Neville gulped. “Um, well, um, you said, you said you know how the plants work in potions, so, um, well, if you, um, if you could, well, I’m not, you know, very good at...at potions….”

“You know, I think Neville has a spine of steel buried under all that stuttering and hesitation,” Hermione whispered to Blaise.

Blaise raised an impressed eyebrow. “I thought he just crumpled up if anyone confronted him,” Blaise whispered back.

“Ah, potions! I love a good potion, me. So, if I show you what the plants do in potions, you’ll help me not kill myself in the greenhouses?” Neville nodded. “Brilliant! Thanks Neville! I was really worried about Herbology.”

Neville stumbled back out of Harry’s grasp and ended up next to Hermione and Blaise. “Um, what just happened?” he asked, voice shaking.

“Looks like you’ve joined the club,” Blaise said.

“Club?”

“Part of the ‘Keep Hogwarts intact’ club. It sounds better than ‘people Harry’s collected’,” Blaise said.

Hermione snorted.

“You really think Harry Po...Harry would destroy Hogwarts?” Neville squeaked.

“Well, he wouldn’t do it on purpose,” Blaise reassured him. “Just, he’s a walking natural disaster. I mean, he talked back to McGonagall and lived. And he does magic like he’s breathing. It’s insane.”

Neville’s eyes went wide. “He talked back to Professor McGonagall?!?” he said, horror in his voice.

“He not only talked back to her, he argued with her,” Blaise said, matter of factly.
Hermione joined Neville in looking at Harry, innocently wandering through plants and firmly keeping his hands in his pockets, whistling. “He looks so innocent,” Hermione said.

“Fat chance of that. And he says his family is teaching the two new classes that the notices were about.”

“Oh dear,” Neville said.

“Yes.”

“Oh, do...do you think we, we can do anything?” Neville said, unsure about the company he suddenly found himself in.

“Well, we can certainly try. I’m not sure who he has classes with, he’s unSorted, so we should find someone from Ravenclaw and Hufflepuff to help,” Blaise said.

“You aren’t very Slytherin,” Neville remarked.

Blaise smirked. “You only see Slytherins as being prejudiced little toerags like Malfoy. Slytherin is the House of self-preservation and ambition. We survive.”

“Ah, that makes far more sense,” Hermione said.

“Harry, it’s nearly noon. Don’t you have to meet the Headmaster at noon?” Blaise raised his voice to reach Harry.

Harry spun, eyes wide. “Is it really? I guess I better get going! Make sure to keep me in the loop of whatever plan for taking over Hogwarts you come up with! I like knowing what my friends are plotting, you know, even if it is rather adorable that you all think I’m going to destroy Hogwarts.”

Harry laughed at the startled looks on their faces. “See you later! I suppose I can meet up with you all after I finish with whatever the Headmaster wants from me.” Harry tilted his head. “Hey, Pashti, would you be up for staying with them until I’m finished? I’ll call for you when we’re done and we can meet up that way!”

Pashti considered this for a moment, or Hermione thought she did, turning her head to the side and glancing back and forth between Harry and the three people he had collected. Then she mewned and hopped off his shoulder to spring onto Hermione’s with shocking ease.

“I guess….we’ll see you later, then,” Hermione said, raising a hand up to pet Pashti.

“Why didn’t I notice he had a cat?” Neville muttered to himself. Hermione covered a snicker.

“Later! Bye!” And Harry took off through the door and across the grass towards the huge doors that marked the entrance.

“Was he not wearing shoes?” Neville asked.

“He doesn’t like them,” Blaise said.

“Are you sure he’s Harry Potter?”

“He doesn’t seem like it, but the headmaster called him that. I wouldn’t recommend you use his last name though,” Blaise warned. “He stood up on top of the Slytherin table this morning at breakfast and made a whole speech about how he wasn’t Harry Potter.”

Hermione finally let loose the laugh that had been building. “Oh god, we’ve made friends with an
insane person,” she snickered.

“Well, you aren’t wrong,” Blaise replied. “And Neville, welcome to the club. We’ll try to keep you intact. Have you met the Thestrals yet? I don’t like them myself, but Hermione’s rather fond of them.”

Neville’s eyes went wide. “Thestrals?” he nearly stammered. “There are Thestrals at Hogwarts?”

“Oh, don’t be like that! They’re absolutely harmless. I can’t see them, but the baby was soft and really friendly.” She smiled. “If it didn’t entail watching someone die, I would certainly try to find a way to see them.”

Neville paled. “Oh dear.”

“You’ll be saying much stronger words than that by the end of the week. We all will,” Blaise said, a hint of resignation in his voice.

~~~~This is a Scene Break~~~~~

Meanwhile, Harry grinned at the memory of his newfound friends’ mild horror when he had left them in the greenhouses. He was well aware that half the plants in there were probably best left to people who didn’t enjoy blowing things up, but Neville seemed like someone who would hide in a corner at the first opportunity unless he did something drastic. And besides, he looked like he knew what he was doing with plants.

A win-win for everyone.

His dad would be proud of his growing collection of friends, even if they did think he was going to blow things up.

Did he really seem that irresponsible?

The headmasters gargoyle guardian shifted and glared at him as he skidded to a stop in front of it.

“I don’t have time for games,” Harry said evenly. “Either let me up or we’ll have a repeat of the last time we met, except this time I’m older and have better control. I can probably make it permanent.” The gargoyle thought about it for a moment, then shrugged and shifted it’s shoulders.

And didn’t move.

“I don’t know the password you piece of carved marble!” Harry shouted at it. “Let me up, I’m supposed to meet the headmaster for something.”

It shrugged and smirked.

“Oh, come on, really, this is stupid.”

It’s mouth opened as if it was preparing to spit soot at him again.

“I can shrink you, I remember what I did,” Harry threatened.

“Why in Merlin’s name are you talking to that gargoyle?” came a silky voice from behind Harry.

Harry spun. “It won’t let me up to the headmaster’s office,” he said, spotting Professor Snape. “And I don’t know the password. No one told it to me and I was a bit busy dodging fireballs yesterday to hear it.”
Snape’s lip curled. “Yes, you’ll have to tell me what you did to it, I don’t think I knew it could do that.” He looked Harry up and down. “And where is your cat?”

“Pashti’s with Hermione. We’ll meet up again after this meeting. Blaise, Neville, and Hermione are gonna finish showing me around the school.”

“Blaize Zabini, Hermione Granger, and Neville Longbottom?” Snape said, disbelief evident in his voice.

“Yeah. What of it?”

Snape shook his head. “Nothing, just...nothing. The password is Cockroach Clusters. You better get to your meeting.” Snape turned to leave. “I’ll see you in class. Be sure to bring all your supplies.”

“Sure thing!” Harry grinned. It seemed that the potions professor had just decided against using a name at all, which didn’t bother Harry any. There were plenty of species that didn’t bother with names.

The stairs moved but much too slowly for him, so he bounded up and through the door, showing all the manners he was raised with, which were none.

“I’m here! Is it the right time?”

The occupants of the room stared at him. Well, the headmaster, McGonagall, and the stranger in the bowler hat stared at him. His dad merely sighed, shaking his head.

“You’re fine, Harry. The Minister here was just wondering where you were.” He gestured to the stranger.

“Cornelius Fudge, right? The headmaster said your name yesterday. I always liked names that take after food. And fudge is pretty good, all foods taken into account. I prefer the sweet mandrikor from….what was that place called again? I can never get the pronunciation right. It’s got lots of glottal stops and some sort of whistling-through-the-nose sound that I can’t reproduce.”

The Doctor smiled. “I’ll give you a guide when we get back to the Tardis. It’s got some good tips for how to make those sounds with the human throat.”

The aforementioned Cornelius Fudge blinked, staring between Harry and the Doctor. “I say, you are Harry Pot-”

“Not Potter. My name is not Potter. Not Harry Potter, not whatever else Potter, I don’t do plants. I don’t get them. And it’s silly, your tradition of using the parent’s second name as the child’s.” Harry narrowed his eyes as McGonagall opened her mouth. “I don’t like it, and I have never used it in my life, not before coming here. Your insistence that it is my name is pointless. I am perfectly content using the name my birth parents gave me, I don’t need to use their second name as well, especially since it clearly doesn’t define me at all.”

“I am aware, Harry. But we hadn’t gotten around to telling the Minister anything about that. You don’t need to be so hostile every time.” McGonagall gave him a disapproving look.

“Well, if I’m insistent the first time someone uses it, they don’t use it again. Makes the whole process much faster.” Harry turned to look at the shocked Minister. “So, yes, I don’t go by Potter. My name’s Harry.”

The Minister looked at Dumbledore and McGonagall, seeming to ask for some kind of assistance in
this case, but found none. “Well, then, I see, Mr. Harry.”

Harry snorted. “No need for the Mr either. It sounds weird. Really, is Harry so hard to say? It’s a very simple name, I am assured, by many many different people.”

The Doctor covered his mouth to hide the snickers he couldn’t quite suppress. He must have skipped over a lot of Earth customs when he was teaching Harry culture. Really, this was too much, but he was reluctant to teach Harry proper Earth customs if this was the humorous result.

The Minister, for his part, was looking far more uncomfortable than he imagined he would have been, seeing as how this was supposed to be an interview of an eleven year old boy.

“Well, Harry.” He paused, cleared his throat, uncertain how to proceed. “Your appearance is quite a surprise. We had wondered where you had gotten off to, as Dumbledore here was less than forthcoming with your location. I am aware the Headmaster has turned down numerous interviews from the papers, but you must understand, many people were concerned when you didn’t show up to Hogwarts on September 1st.”

The minister turned imploring eyes to Harry, only to be met with a child the very picture of horrified and unhappy. “This is all that saviour nonsense, isn’t it. You all think I’m some kind of hero or whatever. How inane are you lot, to think a one -Earth year old human child would be able to do anything of significance against someone as powerful as you proclaim this Voldemort to be? Really, it’s mind-boggling that you turned a baby into some kind of….of….of celebrity! For something he didn’t even do! It was probably Lily who cast a spell or did a ritual, a mother’s instinct is powerful and I am forever grateful she loved me enough to do it. Or, frankly, it might have been all sorts of things, but the idea that I did anything is absurd.” Harry let the words roll off his tongue, unmindful of how they would appear to be taken.

McGonagall kneaded her temples and Dumbledore hid a smile. Minister Fudge was looking perplexed. “But, my boy, you are the only one who survived the killing curse! You destroyed the Dark Lord!”

Harry raised an eyebrow. “And you know this how? I would say I was the only eyewitness, but I don’t quite remember that age. My memory doesn’t start until about a month later, so I can’t tell you for sure. It’s far more likely, as I just said, that Lily did some kind of magic that allowed the spell to be nullified. There’s all sorts of lore about sacrifice and protection magic. I was her child, she would have done quite a lot to protect me, and there is powerful magic in selfless self-sacrifice required rituals when performed by a powerful magical.”

The Doctor rolled his eyes. “What did I tell you about doing research on magic lore Harry?” he said, interrupting whatever it was the Minister was dying to say.

Harry shrugged. “You didn’t say anything, really. Just blocked off books and told me I couldn’t look there. But you never bothered to look at the book I got on Haleysio. There’s all sorts of foci lore in there, and it also deals with self-sacrificial magics and how they affect spells.”

“I knew I should have looked at the book more closely,” he huffed. “I really should pay more attention to what you get into.”

“I...I don’t think I understood all of that,” the Minister confessed, turning to the headmaster. “Are you sure this is Harry P…?” he cut of the last word at Harry’s glare.

Dumbledore nodded. “Yes, he is Harry, son of James and Lily Potter. Though now, I believe, it is son of the Doctor?” He looked at Harry.
“The Doctor and the Tardis, and Rose and uncle Jack, for good measure. They get upset when you leave them out of things. Still, James and Lily are my biological parents, for the most part. They gave me life, and protected it. It gets a bit complicated in places, but they are mostly my biological parents.” Harry grinned, not at all concerned that he was possibly dumping way too much information on the Minister.

“I am afraid…” Fudge stopped, collected himself. “We need to know where you have been, why you were late to Hogwarts. Dumbledore assured us when he took you ten years ago that you would be back at Hogwarts when you turned eleven.”

Harry raised an eyebrow at his dad. “Really? I didn’t know anything about this promise. And as for being late, well, I’m not the best of drivers. I misplaced a few rotary dials and a lever or two. Ended up two months late instead. Hey, it’s not too bad, better than a year late.” He gave the minister a look.

The Doctor narrowed his eyes at Harry. Harry wondered if it was at the not-so-subtle jab at the Doctor’s own poor driving or a warning to stop saying so much.

He really needed to stop thinking he could babble whatever he wanted. He was going to have to live here, in this time. At least for a while.

“What?” Fudge responded. “Wait, wait, I’m...that doesn’t answer the question. Where were you?”

“I lived with my dad, then uncle Jack joined us, then Rose. The Tardis was always there. I’ve lived there my whole life.” Harry rocked back on his heels, grinning at what he knew sounded like absolute nonsense to the Minister. “No exact location, we travelled quite a bit.”

“Your father?” Harry gestured behind the Minister to where the Doctor was standing, obviously only now connecting the previous statements with the fifth person standing in the room. “Oh, yes, Dumbledore did introduce you earlier. I didn’t catch your name.”

“I’m the Doctor,” the Doctor said, bouncing to the balls of his feet with a grin. “Raised that little imp over there.”

“Doctor….is that a muggle term? I feel like I’ve heard someone say that before. I’m afraid I don’t know any families with that name.” The Minister’s grin was fixed.

“Ah, yeah, I’m not part of your magical family tree. Bit outside that, actually. You might know one of my good friends, General Alistair.” The Minister’s eyes widened slightly. “Ah, I see you do. Yes, he’s a close, personal friend of mine. He can vouch for me.”

“You...you know that insane muggle?” the Minister said, voice shaking just a bit. “But….but he’s….he’s…..” Fudge turned wide eyes to Dumbledore. “You gave the Saviour to someone affiliated with that bonkers muggle that the Prime Minister trusts to know about the wizarding world? Are you insane?”

Dumbledore furrowed his brow. “I am afraid I am not familiar with a General Alistair,” he admitted, uncomfortable with this fact. How could someone so significant escape his purview?

“No one should know about him! He’s nuts! He shouldn’t be allowed to keep his memory, much less actively interfere with Unspeakable missions! And you entrusted Harry Potter to someone who is friends with him!”

“Not a Potter, and General Alistair is awesome, if the stories dad tells are all true. What’s wrong with him?”
Fudge turned to Harry. “He’s insane. Aliens or what-have-you and nonsense talk. No one actually believes that bit of rubbish, right? And he puts his nose into any strange magical event that occurs. And I can’t fathom how he learns about them.” He kneaded his temples. “This is a problem. We cannot let this pass. Friends with General Alistair…” the Minister muttered.

“He’s not as crazy as you think he is. But yes, I know him. I’ve known him for years. I’ll have to get in contact with him, apologize for the long absence. They used to have me on retainer there. Sort of.”

The Minister’s face paled. “You worked for him?” he said, horror in his voice. “Dumbledore, you cannot think that he is a good candidate for raising the Wizarding World’s Saviour,” he said, turning to the headmaster with a pleading look.

Harry narrowed his eyes. “Enough. You’re not judging my dad because of his friends, especially one who’s respected within the non-magical society far more than you are. And if you think for an instant that you could ever make me leave, you’re in for a surprise. I am assured General Alistair knows the Queen personally.”

Dumbledore and Fudge reacted to that bit of knowledge with raised eyebrows. Though Fudge seemed to have paled even further. “But…”

The Doctor stepped in. “No, Minister. I think you fail to realize the issue here. You can’t take Harry from me, as you were hinting at, with any power you currently possess. I would recommend dropping the subject.” His voice was calm, even, and not even that loud, but the Minister nodded as if his life depended on it.

“I understand,” the Minister squeaked out. He really wanted this Doctor to stop looking at him with those intense brown eyes. It was exceedingly uncomfortable. He would investigate into this Doctor later, but right now, he really wanted him to stop looking like the Minister was a bug he could squash.

“Wonderful.”

McGonagall had watched the scene with more than her fair share of confusion. She too had never heard of this Alistair character that the Minister seemed to be actively fearful of. But from the quiet look of determination on the Doctor’s face, she could feel the protective parent rising up in him, and Fudge was on the receiving end of it. She stepped in. “Minister, I believe you wanted to speak with Harry about his plans and the minor complications that have arisen, yes?”

Fudge regained his color. “Yes, yes, indeed I did. Thank you, Professor. Now, Harry, Dumbledore has informed me that your….family….is staying at Hogwarts. I must say, this is not standard procedure.”

Dumbledore cleared his throat. “I must step in now. I cannot have you sending away teachers. The Doctor is serving as interim History professor as we attempt to find ways of getting Professor Binns to move on, and Mr. Harkness and Ms. Rose are both taking up a physical enrichment course that I believe will add much to the student’s well being. Their contracts have been submitted for review with the Board and I expect them back this afternoon, though ultimately the decision is mine. I merely am allowing the Board full clarity on the situation.”

“But, but, it is November Dumbledore! You can’t just add classes in November!”

“I can and have. These are important classes, I believe and there is little you can do about it right now. I have personally approved of all three new teachers. Now, unless you have more questions for Harry or the Doctor, I suggest you take your leave. I allowed this conversation as I believed you
needed some kind of assurances that Harry was alive and well, and as I have given you ample time to see that, I request that you return to the Ministry. Good day, Minister Fudge.” Dumbledore gestured to the fire, and Fudge purpled slightly, but stalked to the fireplace.

“This isn’t the last of it, Dumbledore. You may run this school but you don’t have the right to...to go behind the ministry like this!” He took a fistful of powder and tossed it into the flames. “Minister’s Office!” he called out, and stepped in.

Harry watched in curiosity as he was sucked up and away. “Magic. You all choose the weirdest forms of transportation, really. Fire? There would be a lot more use out of doors or archways, you know.”

“Floo is a respected tradition here, Harry,” McGonagall said.

“Doesn’t mean it’s not silly. I mean, really, fire? Can you be any more obvious or cliche? I thought the pointy hats was a bit much but now you travel through fireplaces and wear pointy hats. It’s like you’re trying to live up to stereotypes. Witches and fire and pointy hats and cauldrons and flying brooms. You all don’t have the flying brooms, do you?”

McGonagall kept her mouth shut. She wasn’t quite ready to provoke another tirade from the boy.

“Don’t blame them, Harry. They only do what they can,” the Doctor said.

“Well, they could not copy everything that non-magicals believe about magic,” Harry said matter of factly.

McGonagall sighed. “So, what are you up to today? I recall you were upset with the lack of classes, and I heard your announcement in the Great Hall. I assume you are still with Mr. Zabini?”

Harry laughed. “Yeah, well, can’t have everything you want all the time, makes things boring. And I found Hermione in the Library and Neville in the Greenhouses. They’re pretty awesome. They seem to think I’m going to burn Hogwarts to the ground, or some such.” Harry made a gesture of ‘really, would I do that?’

McGonagall could believe it. Wait, did he say…? “Hermione Granger, Neville Longbottom, and Blaise Zabini?”

“Yeah, so what? You sound shocked.”

“It’s not common for Slytherin and Gryffindor to get along, and Ms. Granger and Mr. Longbottom have been markable loners these first two months. I was worried about them.” I might still be, if they’re friends with Harry, she thought.

“You all make them think they shouldn’t get along with each other,” Harry said. “By separating them into Houses and pitting those houses against each other, you say it’s alright to fight. Which is stupid. You can’t make judgement calls on eleven year olds.”

“I’m beginning to think I made the right one when it comes to you,” McGonagall said with a sigh.

“Oh?”

“That you would be an impossible student to teach and would end up disrupting Hogwarts to her very core.”

Harry laughed. “Well, you aren’t wrong. It’s not a bad thing, you know. This school needs a bit of
McGonagall sighed. “Please don’t tell me you did anything stupid, Harry.”

“Well, he was being a bloody ponce, so I took him down a peg. Verbally.” Harry crossed his arms. “He needed it, don’t tell me he didn’t.”

“Are you really going to be here for seven years?” she asked.

“If I had my way, no,” Harry muttered, sending his dad a dark look.

The Doctor mimed blowing up into tiny pieces behind McGonagall’s back and Harry sighed.

“But I don’t have much of a choice, so yes, I will be.”

McGonagall turned to the headmaster. “He’s been here all of two days and he’s started insulting students, Dumbledore. If anything happens, you have to deal with it. I also refuse to have him in Gryffindor. Point blank.” She turned to look at Harry. “If I didn’t know that you could care less about Houses, I would apologize, but as it is, I don’t want to be responsible for anything you do. At all.”

Harry beamed. “No problem! Besides, Hermione and Neville are pretty cool. I can just come hang out sometime. No need to actually make me stay there. All that red. Dad may like red, but I think it looks too strong. Makes me all anxious.”

The Doctor laughed. “Well, I think that’s it, Harry. We didn’t really have much else for you.”

“What are you doing up here dad?”

“I’m here discussing the classes they want me to teach. There seems to have been a change, so we’re going over it. I’ll tell you later. For now, get back to your friends. Pashti too. It’s not a good idea to leave her places. She gets into things.”

“You only say that cause she wandered into your multi-dimensional vortex experiment and ended up turning half the room into a mausoleum from Lystricia-shhhrys,” Harry said in defense of his companion.

“That still doesn’t mean it’s not true. Go, Harry. I’ll tell you later.” Harry sighed, but obliged, heading out of the office.

He wanted to see more of the castle in it’s current state anyway.

He slipped his necklace off when he got out of the staircase and settled his fingers on the wall. Hogwarts? I’m looking for Pashti. He sent an image and the feelings he associated with his companion, the feeling of searching her out, his magic. She can find me if I let my energy flow through the walls. Is this okay?

My young mage, of course it is. It is wonderful to feel you within my walls once again.

Harry blinked. You sound….much more sentient.

I have been home to thousands of young witches and wizards and even a couple warlocks and sorceresses and enchantresses every generation or so, young mage. The excess magic let out by
young magicals has given me my own voice. When you last met me, I was still young.

That’s interesting. Well, um, thanks for letting me use the castle’s magic to amplify my own. Pashti should be able to find me now.

It is no problem, young mage.

Why do you call me young mage?

Is this not what you are?

I’m a magical, yes, but I don’t see the difference.

Harry distinctly felt like Hogwarts was laughing at him. Young mage, you will learn someday. One day. I shall enjoy your time here, as I have enjoyed your time here before. I sense your young companion approaching with several young warlocks, and I do believe, an enchantress. You make the most interesting friends. Thank you, young mage, for speaking with me. I hope you do so again soon.

Harry opened his eyes to see Pashti racing up the stairs, a panting Blaise, Neville, and Hermione behind her. I shall, Hogwarts. He took his hand off the wall and slipped his necklace on before anyone could say anything about the intricate gold chain in his hands.

“See, this is why you all need a physical fitness class. You should not have been that tired from a run up the stairs.”

“We ran up a dozen flights of stairs after your crazy cat, Harry,” Blaise gasped out.

“Only a dozen? Low stamina. We’ll get that fixed,” Harry said with a grin. He cheerfully ignored the groans of protest. “So, where to now? I think History is getting moved, so no point doing that room, but I wouldn’t mind seeing the tower for Astronomy. If I have to take such a pointless class, I might as well make an effort to show up to it.” Not that he planned on actually taking it for any amount of time.

Hermione gained her breath back first. “Pointless? Astronomy is really rather important to many major magical workings,” she said.

Harry shrugged. “Yeah, but I know the names of all the stars visible from Earth at this latitude and longitude, and most of the ones you can’t see as well.”

Hermione blinked. “But...that’s...not all the stars even have a name!” Hermione said. “Or, well, not a name that has any significance.”

Harry rolled his eyes. “I know them all. Dad just says I know different names from what you know. And the planets too. I think I know the right names, but I can’t remember which one goes with which planet in English. You all named them after some of your ancient gods, and it plays havoc with my memory skills when you do stuff like that. Doesn’t match up with the right mental picture.”

Hermione, Neville, and Blaise just looked at each other, then at Harry. “You’re impossible, you know that?” Blaise said.

“I’ve been told that in many different ways, yes. And by you numerous times.”

Hermione straightened up. “Well, the Astronomy Tower is part of the tour, I suppose. It’s not too bad a climb.”
“You say that like we didn’t just run up a dozen flights of stairs,” Blaise said.

“I don’t know how you’re not dying,” Neville gasped out, slumped against a wall and staring at Hermione.

“Really, guys, it’s not that bad.” Hermione huffed, crossing her arms. “I mean, it wasn’t too hard.”

“You’re a new-blood, yeah? So you took physical education classes in school right? I know that’s part of the curriculum until at least tertiary school,” Harry said, looking at Hermione.

Hermione nodded. “We had to run a 5K every semester. I always did my best in school, though I wasn’t very good at physical education.”

Harry grinned. “Yes, perfect. See, she did physical exercise and look, she’s not dying like you two currently are. Come on, moving is good for you, let’s get going. I want to see everything!” Harry pulled Blaise upwards, dragged Neville off the floor, and let Pashti settle on his shoulder. “Time’s wasting! I’ve always loved that idiom, you know. You can’t actually waste time, but the idea that you all think you can is really rather humorous.”

“You ever get the feeling he’s talking to us like he’s some sort of god looking down on us?” Blaise asked.

Neville nodded. “A bit, yeah.” Neville was too bewildered by the boy who had dragged him into a whirlwind of running and exploring to really put much thought into it, but Harry did seem rather as if he were looking down on them from somewhere.

“Harry, you’re going the wrong way!” Hermione called out as Harry took off down a hallway. Or it might have just been his imagination, Neville privately thought. Harry was a weird contradiction of too many things.

Harry skidded to a halt, made an abrupt 180, and headed back. “Only the wrong way if you don’t like adventure!”

“Or if you would like to get to places on time,” Hermione sniffed.

“I’m crap at time, makes no difference to me numerically when I get there,” Harry said, shrugging.

“You can’t be crap at time, what kind of, what?”

“I’ve never managed to figure out how long hours are supposed to be. Oh, I know they’re sixty minutes and sixty seconds to a minute, and all that good stuff, I even know that a second is the amount of time it takes a cesium-133 atom to cycle 9,192,631,770 times, plus or minus about 20 cycles. But that means very little to me in the real world. Why pay attention to that? You know, you used to count time with grains of sand, by the movement of the sun between two points, and by how far a candle burned down. It all changes and shifts, why bother remembering one version when another might very well take its place?” Harry shrugged. “Don’t tell the professors though. They’ll make me sit and learn time or what have you, and I hate trying to figure out time.”

Blaise, Hermione, and Neville stared at him, disbelief on their face. “You can’t actually be serious when you say that right?”

“Say what? That’s the precise measurement of a second as created by Louis Esson and William Markowitz in 1967, or thereabouts. I mean, they’ve done some finetuning of it over the years but that remained the standard definition for quite some time.” Harry gestured vaguely about him. “I know how long things take and measuring experiments and stuff, but confining it to the way you all tell
time is more frustration that I’m willing to put up with.”

“I can’t tell if he’s lying or not,” Blaise said.

“I...he’s not, I’ve heard of cesium, we were going to start chemistry in my next year of school, and cesium is one of the elements on the periodic table, so it exists, but I have no idea what it has to do with time,” Hermione replied.

Harry rolled his eyes. “Really, you get on me for not knowing how to tell time and now you’re saying you don’t even know the proper definition of a second?”

“Harry, knowing how to tell time doesn’t require you to know the precise definition of every part of time,” Hermione said slowly, as if unsure hot to approach this topic.

Harry shrugged. “Doesn’t seem to matter if I know it or not, your conventional Earth time is not something I’m good at. And Pashti can tell time for me, so she’ll let me know when I have to be somewhere for something.”

“The fact that a cat is the one telling time over the human is mildly worrying. If I had seen Pashti behave anything like a cat, I would be more concerned,” Blaise said. “Moving on, let’s get to the tower, I’d like to get around to showing you the Slytherin common rooms too at some point. Figure since you don’t have a house there’s no rule against showing you where they are. Though I don’t know about Hufflepuff or Ravenclaw or Gryffindor.”

Hermione nodded. “I can show you where Gryffindor is.”

Harry beamed. “Awesome!”

Hermione led the way up a few more flights of stairs before she opened a door in the wall. “This is the Astronomy Tower.”

The staircase wound upwards and Harry dashed up it with far more enthusiasm than Blaise, Hermione, or Neville were willing to show.

“Where does he get it from?” Neville asked. “I don’t understand. It’s like he’s just bouncing with energy.”

Hermione giggled. “You know, I’ve heard you say more today than I’ve heard from you all year,” she said.

Neville flushed. “Um, well, I mean,“

“It’s fine, Neville. I like having friends. That’s what we all are, right?” she looked at the two boys. “I mean, we’re in this together, with Harry?”

Blaise snorted. “I’m just glad I’m not on my own in this.”

“I...I don’t even know why I’m here,” Neville admitted. “I just...followed?”

“I think we might get used to it,” Blaise said, as they reached the top of the staircase.

Harry, they found, was talking in rapid….something with a girl Hermione recognized as Padma Patil, her roommate’s twin sister.

Padma, for her part, was looking bewildered and delighted all at the same time.
Hermione sighed. “Well, at least we have Ravenclaw dealt with,” she told Blaise. “What language are they speaking?”

Blaise narrowed his eyes. “The Patil’s are an old family from India, so I would wager a guess on Hindi, but I don’t know for sure. I’m wondering why Harry knows Hindi, to be honest.”

Harry turned, a grin on his face. “Hey guys, this is Padma! She was telling me all about the Indian Magical community! Did you know that they use flutes as foci there? I mean, not everyone, but some magicals use flutes! I think that’s amazing!”

Hermione gave the obviously excited boy a smile. “Hi Padma,” she told the girl.

“Hello. Are you Harry’s friends?”

“It seems to be that way. Not sure if we had any choice in the matter, but here were are.” Hermione gave a small shrug. “This is Blaise Zabini and Neville Longbottom. I’m Hermione Granger.”

“I’ve heard your name before. You’re the one who Professor Flitwick says should have been in Ravenclaw,” Padma said, dark eyes bright. “I’m Padma Patil. I think my sister is in your House, Hermione.”

“She’s my dormmate.”

“I apologize. She’s always had a lack of sense about others.”

Hermione shook her head. “No need. She doesn’t bother me too much. I think her and Lavender Brown hit it off really well. They leave me alone.”

Padma nodded. “Alright then.” She turned to Harry. “Thank you for talking with me. It has been a while since someone spoke Hindi with me. Parvati never made much effort to keep up with the language since she says we don’t need it in the UK, but I value the heritage my parents cultivate.”

Harry smiled. “Hey, why don’t you join us on our Hogwarts tour? I mean, it’s awesome to find someone else to speak to! I haven’t used Hindi in ages. I convinced an old mystic to teach me in exchange for fixing his supplies and levitating things during his street performances.”

Padma blinked. “You were not raised speaking Hindi?”

Harry shook his head. “Nope! Actually, I wasn’t raised speaking English, to be honest. My first couple languages are all rather arcane. Dad was a bit too invested in having someone to teach, and I loved learning.”

Hermione narrowed her eyes. “How many languages do you speak, Harry?”

Harry shrugged. “Don’t know, never bothered to keep track. I mean, I can speak just about every major language, or if not I can at least make myself understood. It’s helpful when you don’t know where you’ll end up from day to day.”

“You’re eleven,” Hermione pointed out.

“So? I like learning. What’s the harm?”

“You can’t know that many languages at eleven, it’s not humanly possible.”

Harry was sorely tempted to tell her he wasn’t exactly all human. Between the Olympians and the Tardis, he hovered in a weird, in-between state.
“Well, I can,” he settled on.

Hermione groaned. “You’re teaching me Latin,” she said finally. “I hate not knowing the meaning of the words I’m saying when I use spells. It’s frustrating.”

“Well, I can teach you latin, but the spells used today don’t use strictly Latin. It’s a mix of several different languages, but Latin will help you figure out the meaning of the spells, if that’s what you’re going for.”

“Yes, yes, I am. And Padma, you aren’t leaving me the only girl in the group of boys. You’re welcome to join.” Hermione felt herself growing bolder in this group of people, more than she had been before. Rarely did she find herself intellectually stimulated by her peers, yet Harry-not-Potter here was making her feel as if she was still in kindergarten while he was out of college with a doctorate.

Which, to be fair, wasn’t a bad analogy. Harry sort of bulldozed nearly everyone with his intelligence.

Harry grinned at them. “This is turning out to be a wonderful group!” he said, pleased.

Hermione raised an eyebrow. “I’m still not sure what all of us are even doing here. Neville is practically clueless and Blaise seems resigned to this whole thing.” She gestured at the two other boys.

“Well, what does it look like I’m doing?” Harry asked.

“It looks like you’re trying to find all the kids who don’t have friends,” Hermione said.

Harry made a contemplative face. “Not exactly. I mean, wonderful side benefit that you can make friends with each other, but not really. I mean, I’m not exactly the easiest person to get along with, I will fully admit. But I also know that you can’t survive without friends, and I intend to make Hogwarts better. Better than this stuck-in-the-past society has made her. I mean, you all still use candles and torches and outdated words that are insulting.”

Blaise sighed. “So our thoughts that you plan to destroy Hogwarts aren’t actually that far off, yeah?” he said.

“I’m not going to destroy Hogwarts!” Harry exclaimed. “She’s a wonderful castle. I’m just going to bring society up to the present. Even if I have to do it by dragging old fashioned politicians kicking and screaming.”

Hermione groaned. “We’re eleven!” she pointed out.

Harry shrugged. “So what? Age is only a number. If you can think it, and act on it, you can do it. Besides, this is a long term plan. Well, I mean, long term for me. I’ve rarely had to plan something out over a span of Earth years, you know, I mean, I’ve done some weird time finangly plans before, those were fun, but consecutive years….”

Neville, Hermione, Padma, and Blaise all watched as Harry began muttering in a language they had never heard before.

“Are you sure he’s sane?” Padma asked.

“I’m fairly sure he isn’t, but he’s also shockingly good at magic,” Blaise said. “And he’s got the celebrity thing going for him. I wouldn’t be surprised if he could pull this off.”
Hermione rubbed her face. “That’s what I’m scared of. I’ve known him all of four or five hours and he just...it’s like a fungus,” she complained.

Blaise snorted. “I’m sure that’s the closest you’re going to get to an apt description of Harry,” he said. “He grows on you, but faster than you think possible. Like, whatever he says you just go with it, because he sounds like he knows what he’s doing.”

“I think,” Neville piped up. “I think he knew that the plants were poisonous,” he said. “He just, well,” the plant genius trailed off, fidgeting.

“What is it Neville?”

“Well, he didn’t actually touch any of the plants he shouldn’t have, he just sort of reached for them. He said he knows potions, so he would know the properties of plants even if he wasn’t good at handing them,” Neville spoke softly.

Hermione and Blaise rolled their eyes. “He would do something like that,” Blaise said. “I’ve known him for a day and he just seems like he would do something like that.” He looked over at Harry, who was still muttering under his breath. “Oi, Harry, you about ready to go somewhere else? I mean, the Astronomy Tower’s nice and all, but it’s getting rather cold.”

Harry looked over, clearly a bit surprised to be shaken out of whatever muttering he had started on. “Oh, yeah, well, if you’re done trying to fathom how insane I am, we can get going. I was going to give you some more time, but if you’re ready,” Harry smiled widely. “What’s left?”

Hermione refrained from the eye roll she desperately wanted to indulge in. “Well, there’s still the common rooms and the defense classroom and teachers’ offices.” She stopped for a moment. “Wait, how did you know where the headmaster’s office was, from before?”

Harry shrugged. “Went after the troll incident. It wasn’t too hard to remember the route.”

“Impressive memory,” Padma commented.

“I said I had one, didn’t I?”

“It’s getting cold. I for one would like to go inside, as would Neville here, I’m sure, though he wouldn’t say anything,” Blaise said, nudging Neville with his foot.

“Let’s get going then!” Harry cheered. “Are you joining us, Padma?”

Padma took a moment to think. “Well, it would be nice to have someone to talk to in Hindi, and Hermione is really smart. I can deal with Blaise and Neville.”

“That’s more thought than any one of us put into joining this weird group,” Blaise put forth.

Harry looked a little affronted. “Hey, I’m not that bad!”

“You round up people like others round up pets, Harry,” Blaise retorted.

“Oi!”

“Face it Harry, you aren’t a normal eleven year old,” Hermione said.

“Well, neither are you four,” Harry replied. “I mean, you’re far more intelligent than your peers, Hermione. Blaise is an out of place Slytherin with a dark past, Neville is a shy Gryffindor in a house full of, I’m sure, loudmouths, and Padma is part of a magical twin bond and of Hindi descent, royal if
I’m correct on your accent."

There were wide eyes and shocked faces all around. “How…?” Padma started.

“It’s not hard to place accents, especially royal accents. You all use a very specific uplilt on certain vowels.” Harry offered her a grin. “So let’s get going! I want to see more of Hogwarts!”

As Harry took off down the stairs, they stared at each other. “You aren’t leaving me out of this group,” Padma said, voice firm. “He’s way too strange to not get to know him better.”

“Let’s catch up before he ropes someone else into this little gang before we can stop him,” Blaise said. “Are you really royalty?”

Padma shifted a bit uncomfortably. “I wish to not speak of it,” she said shortly. Blaise put his hands up in surrender.

“Okay, just asking. Didn’t mean to touch any sensitive buttons. You ready to get going?”

Hermione nodded. Neville agreed with a jerk of his head. Padma unfolded her arms and gave a sharp nod. And they were off down the stairs.

Harry was waiting for them at the bottom. “So, which way?”

“Where are we going?” Hermione asked.

Harry shrugged. “Not sure. You all are the one giving the tour. Or rather, Blaise was the one who said he would show me around. So, where to?”

Blaise sighed, looked at his wrist. “It’s nearing half past three, dinner’s not until half past six. Gives us three hours to do whatever. Suggestions?”

Padma raised her hand. They all looked at her. “Sorry, a habit, the hand raising. Well, what have you seen, Harry?”

“Potions classroom, Charms class, Transfiguration, Herbology, Astronomy, the grounds, the great Hall, the Library, the Headmaster’s office, and a bit of the dungeons from the Troll adventure.”

Harry ticked them off on his fingers.

Padma nodded. “Well, that leaves, History and defense left for classes,” she remarked.

“No need for the history one. My dad’s teaching that class and it’s probably gonna be moved, so no point looking for it now. Might as well wait until class starts, or I’ll ask dad about it later,” Harry said.


Harry laughed. “I love running!”

“I am not running anymore,” Hermione protested.

Harry sighed. “It’s not all that bad.”

“I would rather not run as well,” Neville said.

“Fine, fine, you all are ruining the adventure. Alright, let’s go. I’ll not run, ok?” Harry gave in.
Blaise, Hermione, and Neville all shared a grin at the proclamation. Padma raised an eyebrow. “You’ll find Harry would rather run to his destination than walk. It’s a troublesome habit.”

“I see,” Padma replied, looking at the skinny boy. “Well, the Defense room is this way.” She headed off to the right.

The all followed at a fairly sedate walking pace.

“Harry, you said you speak a lot of languages. How did you possibly learn them all?” Hermione asked.

Harry folded his hands behind his head. “Well, I should clarify that it doesn’t take me long to learn a language. The spoken form at least. I have to study a bit more on the written form, but unless it’s a really obscure way of writing it’s not hard to master. My dad speaks a lot more languages than I do. I don’t think there’s a language he doesn’t speak, to be honest. Uncle Jack and Rose rely on special translation spells when we travel, but I always refuse them. I want to learn the language so I spend a few days getting used to the rhythm and the sentence patterns and the words.” He nuzzled Pashti closer to his cheek. “It’s exhilarating, to learn more about how language is used, spoken, how it adapts to meet the needs of those who speak it, how sounds are created.”

Hermione looked a little outraged by this. “You can’t...you can’t just learn a language by listening to it!” she protested.

Harry grinned. “I can. It’s a quirk of mine. I mean, I have to listen closely, actively, and pay attention to everything that happens. I have to be able to match the words with the actions people make, and the responses given. But it’s much like how children learn a language. I just...speed it up.”

“That’s not normal,” Padma said. “Not even among magicals is that normal.”

“I know. Doesn’t mean I can’t. And I like it. I love languages. Aside from science and math, Language is the best thing to happen to sentient species.”

“Why does it sound like you talk as if you weren’t human?” Blaise interrupted.

Harry had to cough back a sound of surprise. “It does?”

“You don’t seem to realize it, but every time you talk about something relatively ordinary, you always seem to fascinated by it, and you sound like you aren’t human or something. It’s really disconcerting.”

Harry mentally cursed his dad. “I...sorry. I just, my dad speaks like that all the time. It rubs off on you after a while.”

“I don’t know if I want to meet your family,” Hermione decided. “If they’re worse than you how is Hogwarts going to survive?”

“You do recall that they’re teaching here, yeah?” Harry said, looking a bit concerned.

“Yes, I remember.”

“They are?” Padma said. “You said your father was teaching History, though Professor Binns still exists, so I don’t know how that will work, but the rest of your family is also teaching? Your...Uncle Jack? And the one named after the flower?”

“Rose. And yes, Uncle Jack and Rose are teaching the Physical fitness class these three have been
moaning about all day.”

“Not all day,” Hermione replied.

“It was only after we ran up all those stairs,” Neville offered. “I don’t think I ever ran up stairs before.”

“Missing out on some good fun! Stair running is quite a bit of fun, you know,” Harry said, cheer in his voice.

“No it’s not,” Neville said. “I don’t like running up stairs.”

“You go Neville, tell the insane person,” Blaise cheered.

Harry just shook his head. “Uncle Jack and Rose will have a lot of fun with you lot, you know,” he said.

“The Defense class is just down these stairs to the left,” Padma interrupted. “And I too am not fond of running up stairs.”

“No fun, all of you.”

Hermione suppressed a laugh. “Here’s the defense classroom,” she said as they swung left. “So you know where it is now, what next? We still have the common rooms, but those can always wait.”

“I can go see if Uncle Jack and Rose are available,” Harry said. “Dad was busy talking with the headmaster and Professor McGonagall, so he’s probably still up there, but Uncle Jack and Rose are pretty awesome. And Rose can keep Jack under control.”

Blaise, Hermione, Neville, and Padma looked a bit hesitant. “Harry, are you sure…” Blaise started.

“You’re going to meet them eventually, wouldn’t it be better to know who they are before you have to take class from them?” Harry said.

“Fine,” Blaise sighed. “Let’s go see your crazy family.”

Harry cheered.

Then he took off at a run, before stopping halfway down the hallway and looking back. “None of you are going to join me, are you?” he said, voice resigned.

“Nope,” Blaise said cheerfully.

“Fine, fine, we’ll walk. Spoons of fun, you are.” Harry shoved his hands in his pockets, muttering several uncomplimentary things about laziness and unfun people.

Hermione and Padma giggled, Neville tried not to smile and Blaise could care less about how wide his grin was. “Let’s go, we have to follow you now. We don’t know where your family is staying.”

Harry pushed off the wall and stalking in front of them, playacting at being unhappy with his lot in life.

“You know, sometimes he does act his age,” Blaise commented.

“Yeah, when he can’t run, which doesn’t say much,” Hermione sighed. “Also, isn’t this the fourth floor? Aren’t most of the professors’ rooms here?”
“I wouldn’t know,” Padma said.

“I think so.”

“Why do you know something like that, Hermione?”

“Cause I needed to turn something in to Professor Flitwick once and he said to drop it off at his door on the fourth floor,” Hermione replied. “And Professor McGonagall was coming out of a room a bit further down.”

“Oh, good, I was expecting you to be some sort of teacher stalker,” Blaise joked. Hermione shoved him.

A few minutes later, Harry stood in front of the portrait that led to his family’s rooms. “Raxacoracolfalapatorius,” he said, and the portrait swung up.

“What language was that in?” Hermione muttered.

“Not one I’ve ever heard,” Padma replied.

“No idea,” Blaise said.

“It sounded weird,” Neville contributed.

Harry walked into the room, stuck his head out. “You lot going to follow me?” he asked.

“Um, can we?” Blaise responded.

Harry looked taken aback. “Of course. I mean, you can’t come into the Tardis, but I’m not going to make you stand out in the halls waiting for us. That’s a bit silly.” He gestured. “Come on! Besides, it’ll be easier to meet them inside a room and not out in the hallway.”

The four looked at each other, then shrugged, before stepping into the room.

“Why is there only a blue box in here?” Hermione asked.

“That’s the Tardis!” Harry proclaimed. “My home! Wait out here, I’ll go find Rose and Uncle Jack. Be back soon, hopefully!” And he slipped inside the box before they could say anything in response.

Jack and Rose weren’t the easiest to track down, but the Tardis was being helpful today and gave him a few nudges in the right direction.

Rose was in the library, curled up on the couch with a book. “Rose! Rose! Want to come meet my friends?” Harry shouted out, hoping to get her attention.

Rose was easier to distract from a book than either him or his dad. “You friends? You made friends already?” she asked with a teasing smile on her face.

Harry pouted. “I’ll have you know I’m good at making friends,” Harry said.

“You’re good at making followers, Harry, there’s a difference,” she replied.

“Well, they’re pretty awesome either way. Want to come meet them?”

“Sure. Are you taking Jack too?”
“If I can find him,” he said.

“He should be somewhere playing games, if I’m thinking right. He said he found the arcade center not too long ago and wanted to test out the toys.”

Harry’s face brightened. “I know that room! Come on!”

Jack was easy to find after that. He was, indeed, in the game room, and Harry got him to agree to the meet and greet simply because Jack wanted to know what children Harry had convinced to become his friends.

“You have no faith in my ability to make friends,” Harry complained.

“I didn’t think you could make friends,” Jack said with a grin. “I mean, there was Arthur, but he was in awe of you. And he was older than you. And he knew about your little time traveling secret.”

Harry groaned. “Just come meet them. And be normal, or as close to it as possible. You’re going to be teaching them, you know.”

Jack’s smile widened, if possible. “It’s gonna be awesome!”

“Don’t terrorize the children before we get around to the first lesson,” Rose reprimanded. “They’ll be terrified to even go to the classroom.”

“Rose,” Jack whined.

“Wait until after the first lesson if you must scare them, Jack,” Rose said. “That way you know who to track down if they run away from you.”

“I like your thinking.”

Harry just sighed in resignation.

He opened the door of the Tardis to see his four friends staring at the blue box with looks of wonder and a bit of confusion.

“You were gone for twenty minutes! In a blue box! What could you have possibly been doing?” Hermione asked, bursting at the seams with curiosity.

Harry raised an eyebrow. “I know you magicals have some way of making things bigger on the inside, or smaller on the outside, or whatever,” he said, deadpanned.

“Well, yeah, but….but not that big!” Blaise said. “Twenty minutes Harry! Unless you were standing around talking with them for ten minutes, that box must be huge inside! Twenty minutes!”

“You say that like I know what that means,” Harry said. “Anyway, this is Rose and Uncle Jack. Uncle Jack, Rose, this is Blaise, Neville, Hermione, and Padma.” He pointed to all of them individually.

“Nice to meet you,” Rose said, a warm smile on her face. “I’m Rose, honorary mother figure to Harry and caretaker of this idiot here,” she pointed at Jack. “Also the Doctor’s mate, for lack of a better term. And I’ll be teaching the physet class.” She cocked a hand on her hip.

“I’m Jack Harkness. Harry’s uncle and also teaching the physical education class. You’ll have a blast.” He grinned.
“They don’t like running,” Harry informed his family with a grim look. “Hate it.”

“Well, we can always change that opinion,” Rose said firmly. “Running is good exercise.”

By the end of the discussion, which was when Hermione told them that dinner was about to start, Harry’s four new friends were left with the impression that his family was just as insane as he was. They weren’t sure if they should be comforted by this idea or not.

~~~~~In Which this is a Scene Break~~~~~

The Doctor stumbled into the Tardis late into the evening, running a hand through his hair and sighing.

Rose was glad she’d stayed up for him in the console room. “Come here,” she said, and the Doctor dropped into one of the chairs circling the console.

“Dumbledore is a manipulative little egomaniac,” the Doctor said, temper snapping on the heels of his voice.

Rose decided now wasn’t the best time to chuckle. “What’s up? Is it safe?”

The Doctor sighed. “Oh, it’s safe, for now. He may think himself a chess master and controlling the board, but he wouldn’t dare cross me. He’s still not certain of who or what I am, that much I know. And since Harry’s mine, he’s that much more wary when dealing with him.”

“So what’s up with the insults? You usually save them for world controlling idiots and power hungry maniacs.”

“He is a world controlling idiot, minus the idiot part, mostly. He’s a genius world controlling idiot, he just far more subtle about his moves,” the Doctor said. “He sneaks and lays words thick as honey and then keeps tabs on everyone important. I bet he knows any major news the moment it happens, or shortly thereafter, if he wasn’t the direct cause of it himself. I’m not saying he hasn’t done good with this power, he has, but,” here the Doctor stopped dragging a hand through his hair. “He’s too focused on an end goal that he fails to see that the roadblocks are human beings and magical beings as well. They have faults and failings and strengths. He wants to move everyone in his perfect little chess game, and I’ve spent a long time outwitting chessmasters.”

Rose rubbed the Doctor’s shoulders. “So he wasn’t that hard to duck and weave around, is what you’re saying?”

“To the contrary. Dumbledore is a genius. A pure genius, one who nurtured his intelligence and honed it like a weapon. And he’s dangerous. But essentially he’s not a bad guy, he’s just…” the Doctor waved a hand around in a fluttering motion.

“He’s not someone who focuses on the little people who make his plans work,” Rose said.

“Not...not exactly. He cares for his people, but he’s willing to sacrifice them, and that rubs me wrong. He’s willing to sacrifice Harry.”

Ah, Rose thought. We’ve reached the crux of the matter. It always came back to Harry. One way or another, after that little boy showed up in the Doctor’s life, his whole being seemed to change it’s focus to protecting and caring for the child he raised, who was his son. “In what way?”

“When I first came here, Harry was a baby. Well, a bit more than a human year old. He wasn’t yet talking but that could have been from shock. Also, I might have not used English with him.” Rose
huffed a laugh then fell silent. “But I was shown a prophecy, and I hate, I really really hate, prophecies. Always tricky things, prophecies. They depend far more upon what those who hear them do following their utterance rather than anything to do with the words spoken. And Fate has always found this amusing.”

“What was this prophecy? Don’t give me that look, I know you have it memorized,” Rose rubbed the Doctor’s shoulders more, deeper, focusing on the knots she felt under her fingers.

“Oh, you have brilliant hands. Anyway, this prophecy said that the Dark Lord, Voldemort by the way, will mark a child born on the last day or days of July, and that neither of them can live with the other survives. And the child is supposed to have some sort of power that Voldemort doesn’t know about.”

“I am fairly certain prophecies don’t come with modern shorthand and slang,” Rose said with a wry grin.

“No, but it’s better than reciting it to you. Troublesome thing. But Harry was marked, the failed curse left that lightning bolt on his forehead. And he was born the last day of July, we learned today. But that he has to kill someone to survive, I don’t think I can handle that.”

Rose soothed her hands down the Doctor’s shoulders. “Well, he’s not going to have to do any fighting any time soon. This could be years away, Doctor, and by then we’ll probably have found something to avoid that. But you should also know Harry is going to grow up, and he won’t like you hovering over him all the time, protecting him from what happens when you make certain decisions.”

The Doctor sighed, tugging Rose around until he could pull her into his lap and bury his face in her sweet smelling hair. “I know, I know, but for now I want my little boy to be a child. To have fun, to learn, to explore, the make new friends and enjoy life.”

Rose pressed a kiss to his throat. “Harry will always do those things, just the amount of control you’ll have in the decisions he makes will be less and less. I know you, I know you tremendously influence his life, even when he thinks a decisions is all his. And he’s doing pretty good so far on the friend collection bit.”

“Friend collection? You make it sound like he has some sort of limited edition thing going on or something.”

Rose laughed, pulling back. “That’s not too far from the truth. Harry dragged four children to the room to meet me and Jack. Hermione, Blaise, Neville, and Padma. I don’t think any of them knew quite what they were doing there though.”

The Doctor chuckled. “I heard a bit when Harry was up at the headmaster’s office for the meeting with the minister. Apparently Harry’s managed to mix two of the most volatile Houses together. I didn’t hear about this Padma though.”

“She wore a blue pin with a raven on it. I would bet a large sum of money she was a Ravenclaw. She’s probably the most evenkeel of the four of them. Hermione seemed highly intelligent for a child, Neville was much too shy, and Blaise looked like he was just hopping along for the ride and hoping he didn’t get swept out to sea. Padma said Harry spoke to her in Hindi.”

The Doctor laughed. “Yeah, Harry and his languages. Once he gets it in his head that he’s going to learn a language, it takes very little time for the effects to show.”

“I am aware. I am also aware at how strange it would seem to an outsider to know Harry speaks so
many languages at the age of eleven.” Rose pursed her lips. “Is there something about knowing Gallifreyan that makes learning languages easier?” she asked.

The Doctor shrugged. “Possibly. The language was created with the intent of manipulating time, and it adapted as Time Travel became a consistent presence in the lives of the Time Lords. Before the Tardises developed a strong enough telepathic field and became able to connect the mind of their inhabitants with those in their natural surroundings to allow language learning to become obsolete, Time Lords often specialized in learning languages at high speeds. Hundreds of languages were required before you could leave the Academy, and even when I graduated they still had a requirement that we speak the dominant language for each major space age. Harry, Harry benefits from his unique connection with the Tardis as well as his own impressive brain power, and he absorbs languages much like how young Time Lords did.”

Rose hummed. “You do know it’s a bit disconcerting to watch, right? Harry sits like a hawk, silent and observant, for days, then all of a sudden he’s speaking as if he were fluent. It’s very weird to watch.”

The Doctor chuckled. “It’s interesting. It’s much the same way a Tardis gathers the necessary data for a translation matrix, but processed through a semi-human mental pattern. I look forward to how he’ll develop it in the future.”

“Semi-human?” Rose caught the word.

The Doctor winced. “Ah, yes, well, I’ll explain later. When I can figure it all out. But you know the Tardis changes people? She took a special interest in Harry, and between her and those damnable Olympians, Harry isn’t quite as human as he was when I got him.

“I look forward to the day you ever have to explain that to Dumbledore, or anyone else who puts Harry up on that pedestal he hates so much.”

“Speak of the devil, where is he?”

“Asleep. He came back from dinner a bit revved but looking like he was about to pass out, so I challenged him to a race. Three laps in he curls up on the track and goes to sleep. Pashti made me put him to bed,” Rose said, grinning. “I totally would have left him there, maybe he’d learn his limits if he woke on the uncomfortable rubber track, if she hadn’t insisted I make myself useful and carry him back. Lots of screeching from that one. Do you know how disconcerting it is to be stared at by three eyes and all of them peering into my soul and judging me unworthy.”

The Doctor laughed. “Pashti is highly protective. Oh, yeah, you’ll need to take Jack with you and go see the headmaster sometime tomorrow. I hashed out the details with my classes, apparently I’m the main History teacher as they are trying to get the ghost that used to be a tenured professor to move on. They have to put up with my lesson plans and I’ll teach magical and non-magical history. Need to brush up on the former though. Bit rusty.”

Rose sighed, stretching. “Alright, we’ll go up after breakfast tomorrow. Need to figure out when we’re teaching the kiddos. Probably going to motivate them with Harry.”

The Doctor laughed. “Motivate how?”

Rose grinned. “That boy can do the obstacle course faster than nearly all of my new trainees could. I’ll bribe them. Beat Harry’s time and they’ll have 15 minutes off their tri-weekly running schedule.”

The Doctor whistled. “You’re going to make them all run?”
“This is a physical fitness class. Would be pointless if they only took a lesson once a week. If that’s what the headmaster had in mind, he’s going to be sorely disappointed. We’ll probably have the specialized classes once a week but every single able bodied student in the school is going to do running drills three times a week. They’ll get used to it,” Rose added when the Doctor gave her an incredulous look. “I mean, I’m not going to make them run for an hour. Half an hour’s fine. Plenty of time to warm them up and make sure they don’t get too soft. I’ll have someone make a path around the lake after I run it and get a good idea of the distance. It would be a good spot.”

The Doctor couldn’t hold back the chuckles bubbling up in his throat. “Oh, this is going to be wonderful to watch,” he said, snickering. “All the wand wavers out there running with drill sergeants Rose and Jack making sure they don’t escape.”

Rose grinned, all teeth. “It’ll be wonderful. I haven’t had any newbies to mess with in years.”

They shared chuckles.

“Alright, I’m beat. It’s been a long day. I can’t remember if this is your sleep cycle night or not, but you’re welcome to join me in any case.”

The Doctor yawned. “Yeah, it’s my night. Bed?”

“Bed,” Rose said firmly, then stuck her tongue between her teeth. “Well, bed eventually.”

The Doctor couldn’t keep the smile from his face as he was tugged back into the depths of the Tardis.

~~~~In Which This is a Scene Change~~~~

“Oh no,” Blaise muttered under his breath. “This is very not good.”

Hermione peered around his shoulder. “What?”

“Are those the Weasley twins?” Padma asked, a note of interest in her voice.

Neville paled. “Is that Harry talking to them?”

“That’s the reason for the ‘very not good’.”

Hermione frowned. “What’s wrong? I mean, they’re sort of pranksters but Harry’s unlikely to be a target.”

Blaise raised an eyebrow at her. “Are you seriously thinking Harry would ever be a target for any prank school children could cook up?” he asked. “Did you see how fast he was yesterday when Rose...Professor Rose? Miss Rose? What do you call her? Anyway, when she challenged him to a race? One moment he was there and then, blink, halfway down the hall, laughing and shouting. And he just...he effortlessly used that light spell when the windows tinted down. I mean, I know what the spell is but I’ve never gotten it to work properly yet. And he just gestured and there was light!”

Blaise made a vague magical hand wave. “Do you seriously think he couldn’t either outrun or out magic any prank?”

“Then why are you so worried?” Hermione pressed.

“Because I’m worried they’ll team up,” Blaise said bluntly.

Hermione’s eyes widened. “They wouldn’t….”
“Do you think Harry could even resist the possible chance of causing chaos?”

“The twins are rather well known,” Neville added.

“Ravenclaw has a general agreement that they’re geniuses but they could care less about studying for tests or whatever. They use spells and potions in rather ingenious ways,” Padma chimed in.

“Which makes this all the worse. Harry and two genius pranksters isn’t exactly a recipe for peace and quiet at Hogwarts.”

“Oh no,” Hermione uttered.

“Yes, you are finally on the same page.”

Harry had dashed ahead of his friends, heading to the Library, when he nearly bulldozed through a pair of redheads. He skidded to a halt, skirting to the left to avoid actually hitting them. “Er, sorry. Wasn’t exactly paying attention.”

“You weren’t paying attention?”

“That’s some fast reaction time.”

They spoke nearly in sync with each other, one starting the sentence as the other finished.

Harry looked them over, grinning. “Magical twins! Lovely thing! And wow, strong twin bond. I bet your mother can’t even tell you apart.”

The twins blinked, looking between Harry and each other. “Twin bond?” they echoed.

Harry snorted. “Don’t tell me you don’t know about the magical bond identical twins have in the magical world? Actually all twins have one, but it’s especially strong between identical twins. Best studied as well.” Harry looked at the looks of mild confusion on their faces. “You really don’t know?”

“No, we don’t,” they said.

“Well, it’s obvious you use it well, and often. It’s uncommon to see one so reinforced. It’s almost visible to the naked eye, the magic flowing between you two is immense. I could feel it as I brushed past you.”

“This bond,”

“Is it something that sends magic back and forth?”

“Well, sort of. It’s a way for one twin to revive the other, or replenish their magical stores when low. Magical twins are born with a shared core, you know. It’s only as they get older that the cores separate and solidify, though in especially strong bonds the cores remain tied. Yours seem to be part of the latter, while the Patil twins are the former. It’s interesting, how it happens. You two are really really similar, you know, for your bond to remain this strong well past the onset of human puberty.”

The red headed twins exchanged looks. “We’re Gred and Forge Weasley. And if you tell us all you know about this bond, we’ll show you all the secret passages in Hogwarts we know about.”

Harry grinned. “Wonderful. Deal.” He reached out with both hands to shake the twins’ hands.
“Gred, Forge, this is going to be a lovely friendship. I’m Harry. And before you even start, I see your mouth moving Gred, not Potter. I am not Harry Potter, no matter what anyone says. I don’t have a second name, much less a second name that refers to something I am absolute crap at.”

The twins gave pause. “How did you….why did you call me Gred?”

“Well, I figured with magical twins as strong as you two, you switch names just as often as you breathe, so it wouldn’t matter which name I used. I bet you don’t even know which name went with who originally,” Harry said, a grin on his face.

“Er, um, well, yeah,” they said, gesturing around.

“Our mom can’t tell us apart,” Gred started. “She just uses whatever name comes to her mouth first, so we aren’t exactly sure who is who.”

“Dad told us we would switch our letter shirts around as babies and they couldn’t tell our magical cores apart,” Forge continued.

“I know he likes strawberries while I can’t stand them, and I prefer charms and he would rather do potions, but it’s small things. I mean, we’re different individuals, but we share so much, well,” Gred gestured around.

“Our family and friends can’t tell the different,” Forge finished.

Harry nodded. “Well, I can tell you that I can tell you two apart, but not in any way that would be visible to the naked eye,” he said. “And I’m probably the only one who will be able to, unless there’s another magic sensitive in the school.”

“You’re a magic sensitive?” Forge said, impressed.

“Yeah, hyper sensitive. I mean, I have to touch something, or have it physically touching my skin, to be able to feel the magic, but I can figure the essence of something out fairly quickly after that. And I can tell that you, Forge, your magic is, well, I suppose saying it’s tinted orange with a hint of lemon wouldn’t mean anything to you would it?”

“Er, not….particularly, no.”

“What’s mine?” Gred asked.

“Hued yellow with an orange twist. Fairly complementary,” Harry said. “Mirror reflections, if you will. Your magic reflects each others.”

“Wicked,” they breathed.

“It is indeed.”

“Well, welcome, Harry totally-not-Potter, to the Gred and Forge mischief making band!”

“We’ll have to tell Lee about adding Harry here,” Gred commented.

“Yeah, we can tell him at dinner. McGonagall has him writing lines today for screwing around in class on Thursday.”

“She has always said punishment on the weekend was worse than any punishment on a school day,” Gred mused. “Interesting to see she’s followed up on it.”
Harry laughed. “Awesome. Oh, and those are my friends.” Harry thumbed over at the four first years watching them. “You can come over, you know,” he called out.

“I wasn’t sure if you were planning any world ending schemes or not. Figured it would be better to let you hash it out without interference.”

“A Slytherin, a Ravenclaw, and two Gryffindor firsties all together? What’s the world coming to Gred?” Forge gasped, looking over the mismatched group assembling near Harry.

“I think this might be the apocalypse Forge,” Gred said seriously.

“Are you responsible for this...this...this unnaturalness?” Gred asked, turning to Harry.

Harry looked a little bemused. “What? I don’t get it.”

Blaise sighed, hand to his head. “I’ve been trying to explain that Slytherin isn’t really well liked by other Houses, Harry, but you just refuse to listen.”

“I don’t get why it would be. I mean, you all are sorted into those Houses when you’re eleven. I mean, unless you’ve got some serious life experience under your belt, it’s unlikely that you actually match one one house well at all. Do you all even know what the Sorting Hat does?”

“It sorts people by matching their personality with the core foundations of each house. It was enchanted by Gryffindor back during the age of the Founders to help manage the growing population of Hogwarts by placing students under the control of one of the four founders,” Hermione piped up. “What?” she asked defensively when they all turned to look at her. “it’s in Hogwarts, a History if any of you actually bothered to read it.”

Harry shook his head. “Not exactly, but that’s a pretty good description of what most everyone believes it does, and in a way it isn’t completely wrong.”

“How would you know what it does?” Hermione shot back, looking a bit disgruntled.

“I’m a magic sensitive. I can tell the nature of something’s magic by touching it,” Harry said. “And I got a good look at the sorting hat’s function while it tried to sort me.”

“Oh,” Hermione said. “Magic sensitive? I’m going to have to go look that up. I think I’ve read about it before, but I don’t remember where…” she trailed off, looking thoughtful. “The library has a section on magical abilities right next to the section on hereditary bloodlines and family biographies.”

“Gred, we may need to commandeer this young first year for research purposes,” Forge said, a serious tone in his voice.

“Indeed, Forge, indeed. Two months into the school year and she already knows the library indexing system better than we do!”

“Why are you calling each other by weird mixed up versions of you names?” Neville asked. “I get Harry’s no last name thing, sort of. Well, not really, but it makes some kind of sense. But why do you keep calling each other Gred and Forge?”

The twins turned to stare at Neville, a little hint of surprise in their eyes. “I see why you were sorted into Gryffindor,” Gred said.

“Got quite the spine on him, you know,” Forge agreed. “Not many people bother asking.”
“Well, um, sorry, I mean, if it was too personal. I just, well, I’ve never heard Ron use those names before,” Neville stuttered.

Forge waved a hand. “No, no, it’s okay.”

“What? Isn’t Gred and Forge their names?” Harry asked, a bit puzzled.

“Um, not exactly,” Hermione said.

“Well, it’s how they introduced themselves to me, and wouldn’t you use the name you prefer when introducing yourself to someone for the first time?” Harry said, quite reasonably. “It is, after all, the label you have to live with for the rest of your life. You should like what it is.”

Padma gave him a grin. “I see why you get along with them so well,” she said. “Most people don’t take the Weasley twins at their word. They’ve got quite the reputation on them, most suspect them of underhanded dealings and don’t listen to them.” She turned to look at the two. “Despite them being plenty intelligent enough for Ravenclaw to find worthy.”

Forge and Gred rubbed the back of their heads with eerie identical grins. “Yeah, well, don’t tell mum that.”

“Otherwise we’d be in quite a bit of trouble for not studying harder.”

“As to our names, Fred and George are so plain. Gred and Forge sound much better, don’t you think?”

“I figure you use the name you like. You’re the one who has to live with it. Uncle Jack says you can always just steal a good name if you can’t think of one yourself.” Harry frowned thoughtfully. “Then again, Uncle Jack always said if you needed a special name to make an impact you aren’t doing things right, but he’s more likely to just make out with the nearest guard to escape a jail cell than anything else useful. Snagged more than his fair share of keys that way though.”

Hermione, Blaise, Neville, and Padma all pictured the handsome man Harry had introduced as his uncle kissing random strangers, then flinched. “Really?”

“You get used to it after the first dozen times or so. I have to elbow him to remind him not to flirt with anything that is sentient and of age.” Harry grinned. “In any case, it’s his life, might as well let him live it as he wants to. Most of the time.” Harry turned to the twins. “Well, if you want, I’ll call you by either name,” he told them.

The twins grinned. “Gred and Forge, at your service, Harry totally-not-Potter.”

Harry sighed. “I’m not going to escape that one am I?” he said with a wry grin.

“Nope. But we shall find you later! We have a potion on stasis we should really get back to.”

“Before it explodes.”

“What House are you in?”

Harry shook his head. “I don’t have a House. If you find the painting of the Forest Nymph on the Fourth floor and bang really hard on the frame, someone will probably answer it and tell you where I might be,” he said. “Later!” He waved them off and skipped towards the library.

Blaise sighed, then headed after him. “Better get there when he does or he might get us all kicked out
before we even make it.”
They hurried after him.

“So, Forge, you thinking what I’m thinking?”

“Of course, dear Gred. Hogwarts won’t know what hit it!” And they ran the opposite direction, grins plastered on their faces.

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“Harry, Harry! Wait up! Madame Pince says we must be quiet in the Library!” Hermione called after him.

Harry skidded to a stop, looking back with an incredulous face. “That’s a universal rule, you know,” he said. “Libraries the universe over are silent places. I am well aware of that.”

“Well, you seemed utterly clueless on half of everything else common sense, I was just telling you out of courtesy,” Hermione huffed.

“You do know we found you in the Library yesterday and managed to not get kicked out,” Harry pointed out.

Hermione glared at him. “You seem perfectly able of causing ruckus regardless.”

They found a table in the back of the study area and sat around it, keeping their voices low so as to not attract the attention of the librarian.

“You know, these tables need some sort of spell on them that creates a bubble of silence around it. Makes it easier to study when you can actually talk loud enough for your friends to hear without having to whisper in their ears,” Harry huffed.

Hermione frowned. “That would be difficult. It would have to be renewed all the time because it’s really hard to set permanent spells on objects without some sort of anchor,” she said.

Blaise and Neville looked at her. “Really?” Blaise said.

“She’s right,” Padma agreed. “Some of the older Ravenclaws studying Ancient Runes talk about spell anchoring when they’re going over their homework.”

Hermione nodded, a light in her eyes. “Yes, exactly! Runes are really common for anchoring things, aren’t they?”

Padma turned thoughtful. “For a lot of permanent work and some really expensive enchanted things, Runes are always used, but they’re tricky. If you get just one stroke wrong the whole thing will blow up in your face.”

“Ouch, sounds like a challenge,” Harry commented.

“Please don’t tell me that’s your ‘I am going to learn this’ face,” Blaise said. “I don’t think we would survive if you start playing with runes.”

Harry looked affronted. “Why do you think all I’m going to do is blow things up?” he asked, clearly offended. “I haven’t done anything like that yet.”

“Your use of the word yet implies more than you think,” Blaise pointed out.
Harry huffed. “It’s true. It’s been ages since I blew anything up. A whole five sets of cycles.”

“Cycles?” Hermione asked.

Harry nodded. “It’s how I keep track of things. The Tardis, well, it’s hard to explain. But a cycle is similar to your day. A cycle is a full awake and sleep period. A set is five cycles.”

Hermione nodded. “I don’t think it’s reassuring that your last explosion incident was only 25...cycles ago, or days ago,” she said. “That sounds suspiciously close.”

Harry shook his head. “Nope! I even got a treat for keeping my mishaps to one per five sets. Dad appreciates it when he doesn’t have to fix all my messes.”

Hermione gulped. “I think we are perfectly justified thinking you might cause chaos and havoc then,” she said. “You’re eleven, how many mishaps can you possibly get into to have a reward for causing fewer of them?”

Harry looked at her. “Didn’t you ever get into trouble?”

“Not trouble that resulted in explosions!”

“Missing out on all the fun bits then,” Harry said. “Well, anyone else up for some Runes study? I think it would make a fine area of research if it’s as useful as you say it is, Padma.”

“I’m busy trying to keep up with my current studies. It’s why I wanted to come to the Library. I have a couple essays I need to polish off and I know we all have homework due this week.” She looked around at them all. Everyone had brought bags with them, even Harry.

Hermione nodded. “Yeah, I have a few essays of my own, which Neville has as well, and Blaise?”

“History paper and a charms essay,” he said, grimacing. “And something for potions as well.”

“Well, you can forget the history paper. Dad’s taking over the class this week and he’s not going to bother with whatever you have to turn in to the old professor, who I understand is a ghost?” Harry said, looking amused.

“Yeah, Binns. He died one day and probably forget he was dead. Just continued his classes as if nothing had happened. Which also means we’re stuck with whatever curriculum he was teaching that year, as something messed with his mind. He only teaches one year of lessons. I mean, 1st year and second year are different from each other, but first year is the exact same lesson every time, every year. It’s ridiculous.” Blaise made a face. “Glad your dad’s taking over. Anything’s better than Binns. It’s basically nap time for most students, or catch up on missed homework time.”

Harry sighed. “Dad’s going to have fun with you lot. Be warned. He isn’t know for going easy. He’ll drill you until you feel like you’ll fall over from all the knowledge.”

Hermione had stars in her eyes. “Oh, yes, that sounds wonderful.”

“Say that in a week after you wander around wondering if your feet are on the right way,” Harry warned. “I love learning, but when dad gets on the subject of history, I feel like all my neurons just start going crazy.”

Blaise laughed. “I’ll look forward to the class. It’ll at least keep me awake.”

Harry sighed. “Don’t say I didn’t warn you,” he said. “I have an essay for Professor McGonagall...”
and Professor Flitwick. I started the transfiguration one before I went to bed, just need to make sure I wrote it legibly.”

They all looked at him. “You have homework already?” Neville asked, a touch of incredulousness in his voice.

Harry shrugged. “I always have something to do. Essays or reading or maths or science. Dad makes sure I stay busy. I’m less likely to be causing trouble, so he says.” Harry reached into his bag and pulled out a notebook, several pencils, an eraser, a charms book, and a couple transfiguration books.

And Pashti, who had been sleeping on top of his things.

“Why was Pashti in your bag? Isn’t that a Mokeskin pouch? I didn’t know you could put sentient beings into them,” Padma said, voice curious.

“Pashti’s tied into the wards on the bag, she can go in or out as she likes. And she didn’t feel like waking up with me this morning so she headed into my bag instead. She likes to be close even if she isn’t up to being awake.”

Blaise shook his head. “I should know better than to think Pashti’s anything near normal. She’s your’s after all.”

“More like I’m hers. She chose me, more or less.” Harry looked fondly at the still snoozing cat, tiny and curled up into a tight ball. “I’ll just put her back. She’ll come back out if she wants to join the discussion. Otherwise we’re just keeping her awake.” He scooped the tiny kitten up and gently lowered her into the bag.

“So, you have homework?” Hermione said, getting back on track.

“Yeah. It’s nothing too bad. Flitwick wants me to write an essay on the uses of the different wand movements and McGonagall wants an essay on the fundamentals of Transfiguration and how they’re used.”

Padma furrowed her brow. “Aren’t those a little advanced for a first year? I don’t remember doing anything like that at all.” She looked at Hermione. “Do you?”

She shook her head. “No. Professor Flitwick only gives us essays on spells and their functions. If you add in wand movements and pronunciation bits, he gives you extra points. But a whole essay on wand movements?” Hermione shook her head. “That sounds like something a bit out there. Really out there. Barely anyone has mastered all of the basic ten, much less any of the others. I’ve got the first ten down, but I had to ask Professor Flitwick for the advanced ones.”

Harry chuckled. “I think he was just surprised I could do all the basic ten so quickly, so he’s punishing me by having me write an essay on them. He seemed a bit ruffled.”

Blaise snorted. “I’m sure you’ll have all the professors up in arms at some point Harry,” he said wryly.

“Did you really get them down?” Hermione asked, eyes wide.

Harry nodded. “Yeah, I have good body memory. Rose has made sure of that.”

“That transfiguration essay sounds weird to. The fundamentals of transfiguration? We’ve barely covered them all,” Padma commented. “I mean, why did they give you such advanced topics?”
“I...might have made Professor McGonagall upset,” Harry admitted. “She did seem a bit baffled when I headed off to Professor Flitwick’s classroom.”

“You talked back to her during class, Harry,” Blaise pointed out. “No one talks back to Professor McGonagall.”

Neville jerked his head in agreement.

Harry shrugged. “Like I told you, being a teacher doesn’t mean you know everything. It actually guarantees that you will be learning more than you ever thought possible. That’s the nature of being a teacher.”

“Still,” Blaise said.

Harry dumped his papers and books on the table. “So, are we going to get started? Might as well get to work. Essays are time consuming but they aren’t that bad.” Harry stuck his tongue between his teeth in thought. “I’ve had worse punishments. When dad made me do pre-space age calculus all over again to make sure I would never mis-calculate basic maths again was a horrible horrible cycle.”

“Calculus?” Hermione said in mild astonishment. “You can do calculus?”

Harry shrugged. “Yeah, it’s pretty basic stuff. And the pre-space age stuff is child’s play really. I mean, when you start getting into the quantum formulas and the particle acceleration theory and string theory and vortex calculations, that’s where you get the fun bits, but calculus is...it’s like building blocks. Very basic building blocks.”

Hermione looked affronted at the whole explanation. “Calculus is secondary school work! I haven’t even started on it yet and they let me skip two grades!”

Harry raised an eyebrow. “Really? Secondary school? But…it’s only calculus....”

Hermione groaned. “I’m going to have to get used to you knowing an insane amount of information at some point,” she muttered. “Where on Earth did you learn calculus at age eleven?”

“I was five,” Harry corrected primly. “And dad taught me. He taught me everything.”

Hermione just groaned again.

“Calculus?” Neville whispered to Blaise and Padma.

“It’s some sort of math, but I only know that because there’s a seventh year in Ravenclaw, muggleborn, who is taking her entrance exams for muggle school,” Padma replied.

“Ah, I see,” Blaise said.

“Non-magical University? Fascinating. And really, muggleborn is a bit insulting,” Harry said. Blaise forgot how good his hearing apparently was. “First gen or New Blood is a better word.”

Blaise shrugged at Padma and Neville’s looks. “According to Harry, New Blood was actually the first word used to refer to magical children from mu--non-magical households.”

Padma nodded. “I see. In Hindi they refer to children of such households as “pahala khoon”.”

Harry grinned. “I didn’t know that. Thanks for the word!”

“What does it mean in English?” Blaise asked.
“First blood. I think it’s a good word.”

“It sounds nicer than muggleborn,” Neville said softly. “Muggle has always sounded weird. I mean, they’re human too, aren’t they? We’re human, they’re human, why call them something else?”

“And there’s the intelligence lying behind the soft, shy exterior,” Harry said with a smile. “You should speak up more Neville. No one here’s going to get angry at you for it.”

Neville offered a shakey smile. “Thanks, Harry.”

“Alright, let’s get started on the homework. Hermione can recover in her own time.” Harry pulled papers out of strange places and twirled a pencil between his fingers.

Blaise picked up a paper, hoping to look over it for some clues to his charms essay he had yet to start on.

“Harry, this isn’t English,” he said, gesturing at the weird squiggles and circles decorating the page. “What language is this?”

Harry snatched the paper from him. “Oh, this? Um, it’s my first language. I always take my notes in this language. It’s easier for me to review later. It’s a much more specific language.” He pulled out a few more papers.

Blaise looked at them. “This isn’t English either, or your other squiggly language. What’s this?”

“Oh, those are different notes. It’s in Latin. I figured I could finesse the details of magic here better if I used the language you all pull your spells from. This is transfiguration.” Harry grinned.

Blaise heaved a deep sigh. “And this?” he said, yanking yet another piece of paper out with formulas and squiggles everywhere.

Harry took it from him, glancing over it. “This is math. Not for Hogwarts. Dad has me recalculating the dimensional roller coaster issues after I destabilized it and got Uncle Jack stuck in a different pocket dimension for three cycles. He said I had to figure out what I screwed up when I put in the new updates to it before I could play on it again.”

“That’s math?” Neville exclaimed, peering at the paper in Harry’s hand with wide eyes.

“Yeah. Well, a bit of math and a bit of science, but at some point those two are like incestuous twins.”

Blaise, Neville, and Padma made a face.

Hermione rose up from the table to grab at the paper in Harry’s hand. “There’s more letters here than numbers,” she accused.

Harry looked a bit perplexed. “Well, of course. It would be troublesome to write out all the numbers, letters make good replacements, and they’re good for unknown variables and for infinite numbers, or finite patterns.”

Hermione just huffed. “You’re impossible. You know this right? You’re eleven. You’re eleven, you speak who knows how many languages, you do mathematical work far and above even some university students, you talk like you’re a professor of something, and you act like you’re on a permanent sugar high. I don’t even know how to categorize you anymore, and that frustrates me.”

Harry grinned. “I do love annoying people who like things in their little boxes. It’s probably the
“greatest bit of satisfaction I get in life.”

“I’m going to pick your brain for anything and everything, you know this right?” Hermione said.

Harry shrugged. “I don’t mind. You just have to know you might not like the answers.”

“I can live with that.”

“So, is it homework time?” Blaise asked blandly.

“It is.”

The table quieted and the five spent the next half an hour scribbling dutifully away on their essays.

Neville made a frustrated noise. “I don’t get this. Why do you need to put daffodil stems into a sleeping potion?” he asked.

Harry looked up from his paper. “Sleeping potion? What strength?”

“What do you mean, what strength?” Neville asked.

“Well, if you just want to doze off for a bit versus wanting to sleep until someone administers a reversal potion, there’s different reasons. Daffodil stems collected under a waxing moon will increase the strength of a sleeping potion, while daffodil stems collected under a blue moon will decrease the strength. Both in accordance to how many you add to the potion,” he said.

Neville looked a bit stumped at that. “Really? I didn’t know daffodils had any particular properties like that,” he muttered.

Harry shook his head. “It’s not the daffodil stems exactly. They have a particular cell structure that binds to other active ingredients in a sleeping potion and interferes with their functions.”

Neville scribbled this down. “Thanks, Harry.”

“No problem.”

“How do you know that?” Hermione asked. “I didn’t know that.”

“I like potions. It’s like cooking, but more interesting. I’ve been banned from cooking cause I’m more likely to create something sentient than I am to create something edible, but potions offers a different kind of challenge. To create something useful. And I think that’s fascinating.”

Padma was also jotting down the information he had said on a spare sheet of paper, as was Blaise.

“What?” Blaise said, noticing Harry looking at him. “I have a potions essay to finish too. I might as well use sources when they present themselves.”

“I too am thankful for your information,” Padma said.

Harry just sighed. “No problem. I’m nearly done with the transfiguration essay. How long are these usually supposed to be?” he asked.

Hermione frowned. “McGonagall usually assigns about a foot or a foot and a half,” she said.

Harry raised an eyebrow. “Excuse me?”
“Of parchment,” Padma clarified.

“What?” Harry held up his notebook. “I wrote four pages in here. Is that alright?”

Hermione snatched the notebook from him. “This is a normal notebook,” she said, wonder in her voice.

“Well, yeah, of course. Just because I had to buy all that stupid parchment doesn’t mean I’m going to use it,” he said.

“I would love a normal notebook,” Hermione said, a note of dreamy desire in her voice.

“I have plenty in the Tardis. I can get you one,” Harry offered. “Parchment seems so troublesome.”

Blaise looked at the bound pages. “I like it,” he declared. “How does it work with a quill?”

Harry shrugged. “Wouldn’t know. I use pencils or pens. Hate quills, remember.”

“I do,” Blaise said. “Let me see a page. I’ll test it out.”

Harry opened his notebook to a random blank page and ripped it out.

Blaise set his quill to the page, and immediately saw the problem as it soaked into the paper. “Ah, well, I couldn’t use a quill with this, that’s for sure,” he said, holding up the paper with a large black splotch on it showing clear through both sides of the page.

“Well, don’t use a quill,” Harry said. “I’m not going to.” He tore the pages of his transfiguration essay out in one smooth motion. “Here, Hermione, want to look it over for me? Check out any spelling errors or whatever?”

Hermione took the pages from him. “Alright.” She glanced over the pages, then sighed. “Harry, this isn’t in English,” she said.

Harry looked over her shoulder. “Oh, wait, sorry. Let me fix that.”

He took the pages back from her and opened up to a blank page and started writing again, taking glances at his not-English essay occasionally.

“Why would you even think I could read that?” Hermione asked.

“I forget not everyone can read whatever I write. At home Dad can read whatever I write so it doesn’t matter what language I write it in. I usually choose whatever language I think suits the subject best. Transfiguration seemed to call out for Latin, so that’s what I used.”

Padma, Blaise, Neville, and Hermione all exchanged looks. “Anyone want to bet any money on his turning in a paper not in English before the month’s up?” Blaised asked.

“Suckers bet,” Padma said.

“I don’t think so,” Neville said.

“He just handed me a paper in Latin expecting me to be able to read it. I don’t think I’ll take you up on it,” Hermione said.

Blaise sighed. “You lot are no fun.”
Harry just scribbled away with barely a smirk in response.

They got back to work on their essays, and Harry finished up the translation fifteen minutes later. “Alright, Hermione, it’s in English. Can you take a look at it now?”

Hermione look the papers from him. “Alright. And you have pretty good handwriting for how fast you write. I was expecting chicken scribble, to be honest, but this is really neat.”

Harry snorted. “Dad used to pound on me for bad handwriting. Says it’s a sign of carelessness not to take care of how you express yourself. So I got better to spite him. Now it’s neater than his.” Harry took pride in this fact. He was rarely ever better at anything that his dad.

Hermione chuckled. “I look forward to meeting your father,” she said.

She took his paper, spending the next five or so minutes in silence reading through it.

“What is this?” She finally said, looking at Harry.

“My essay.”

“It’s….this is not an essay. I don’t know what this is, but how…I mean, it doesn’t follow any standard formats, not counting from the wild and baffling theories you threw all over the place. How can you write like that?”

“It’s how I think,” Harry defended.

“Really?” Hermione said, looking baffled. “How does that even work? I mean, seriously, that was…” Hermione picked up the papers again, read through the first few paragraphs again.

Neville, Padma, and Blaise all looked up from their own work to see Hermione frowning at the papers.

“Is she okay?” Neville asked.

Harry shrugged. “Dunno what the problem is. It’s a paper.”

“Alright, when you said this is how you think, I can follow it better, but still, it’s weird. Like, you jump from point to point, but somehow it all ends up becoming coherent after a moment. You make everything connect and make sense, and fit it all together, but the way you do it is strange.”

“Well, I just need Professor McGonagall to not think it’s too weird to grade. Though grades aren’t really the most important thing in life.”

Hermione and Padma let out a small gasp.

“What?” Hermione said. “But, they’re you’re grades!” Hermione said, surprise in her tone.

Harry shrugged. “So what? Do they show how well you understood the material? Or do they show how well you conformed to that professor’s way of thinking? It’s a fine line.” Harry wibbled his hand back and forth.

Padma shook her head. “I don’t get you. Intelligent to the point of absurdity, but uncaring about grades?”

Harry shrugged. “Grades don’t measure anything practical. It’s why I like actually doing things. You can see the results then. If you can do the thing, and teach the thing, you understand the thing. Best
way to make sure you know something is to teach it to someone else. You learn a lot more about something after you have to teach it.”

Hermione and Padma looked at each other, then at Harry. “You’re weird,” they said.

Harry laughed softly. “I’ve been called much worse,” he replied. “So, Blaise, Neville, how’s the homework going?”

“I’m almost done with this charms thing,” Blaise said. “You have any insights on how the levitation charm works?” he asked, partially joking.

Harry pursed his lips. “Yeah, it’s one of the first spells I mastered. I was….seven or so. The trick is in how you concentrate on the object you’re levitating. You can’t just want it to float, that’s so unspecific. You need to direct it to where you want it to float, how you want it to float, what you want it to do. Just saying the words and the proper movements might get it in the air, but it won’t stay there very well unless you can focus on how you want the spell to work.”

Blaise nodded. “So like the Scribbilifors thing, yeah? Your desire is the main focus of the spell?”

Harry nodded, grinning. “Yep, exactly like the Scribbilifors spell.”

“Thanks. That’s helpful.” Blaise jotted down a few more lines on his essay.

Padma was scrutinizing Harry. “You were seven when you mastered the levitation spell?” she asked.

“Yeah, so?”

“Seven?”

“Didn’t I just say that?”

Padma looked at him once again. “I nominate you for study group leader,” she said. “Contingent upon your performance in class this week.”

“I second that motion,” Hermione said.

“Wait what?” Harry said, looking bewildered.

“Study group. You. Leading it.”

Harry looked at Hermione with wide eyes. “What?” he repeated. “A study group?”

“Yeah, a group that gets together and goes over lessons and helps each other with homework and make sure everyone isn’t falling behind in something and teaching each other things,” Blaise said.

Harry frowned. “Why would a study group need a leader?” he asked.

“Someone who’s good at things usually leads one because they can direct the study group. Well, that’s the idea. But you would really just be giving us good tips on magic and such,” Padma said. Harry raised an eyebrow. “And you’ve chosen me?”

“Well, you’re good at magic. Even after only knowing you a day I can say that.”

“He’s brilliant at magic,” Blaise confirmed.
“And you’re good at practically everything else…”

“Not Herbology, and you’ll fail Astronomy learning it from me. And I’m going to be less helpful in History than you might think,” Harry warned.

“Neville’s a herbology genius. Don’t blush like that Neville, Professor Sprout doesn’t let just anyone into Green House 3, that’s the greenhouse for third years and up. You’re brilliant with plants,” Hermione told the shy boy.

Padma looked at him with a new eye. “Greenhouse 3? That’s impressive.”

Neville’s blush became more pronounced. “I’m just good with plants,” he mumbled.

“So you can help us with Herbology,” Hermione said. “In place of Harry here who says he’s abysmal at plants and definitely not a potter.” She grinned.

Harry sighed. “Fine, whatever, but I’m not doing astronomy or History.”

“Why not? You said you know all the names,” Hermione said.

Harry shook his head. “I know all their pro---I know different names than you will be learning. And if I teach you what I know, you’ll just end up failing that class. As it is I’m going to have to slog through the books and figure out what star and system they’re referring to at any given time. It’s going to be a pain.”

Padma shrugged. “Astronomy isn’t going to be a big concern. It will be Potions, Transfiguration, Charms, and Defense. And with your knowledge and skill you can help with those.”

Harry groaned. “Do I get a choice?”

“No, no you don’t,” Blaise said. “You teach well, no matter what you say, so deal with it. You dragged us all together, the least you can do is make sure we are up to your level.”

Harry sighed, then grinned. At least this was part of his plan. “You all are going to be in for the ride of your lives,” he promised.

“I don’t like that smile,” Neville said. “It’s scary.”

“Harry is a scary person,” Blaise assured him. “But I don’t think he would do anything really bad. Well, not on purpose. Or not seriously.”

Harry chuckled. “Alright, let’s get these essays finished. I have charms left.”

“In English Harry.”

“I can write in English,” Harry defended.

“I’m sure, but if I remind you you’ll actually do it the first time around,” Hermione said.

They worked in relative silence for the next half hour, Harry flipping through the book Professor Flitwick had given him, jotting notes down on a page of his note book in, when Hermione looked closely, not English.

She rolled her eyes but returned to her own essay as Harry just continued jotting down notes. Padma looked at the strange boy she had befriend...
“How does he read in English but write something in a different language at the same time?” she asked, whispering to Hermione.

Hermione shrugged. “I’m not sure how he does anything at all. If he really speaks so many languages, what language does he think in? How can he ever separate them properly?”

Padma nodded. “This shall be an interesting year,” she said.

“For sure.”

Harry smiled behind his book. His adorable friends.

It was after Harry had set down the small book he had been flipping through and was scribbling furiously down on his paper, that the librarian walked over to them.

“While it is admirable to see such passion for learning in first years, it is also time for dinner, and I cannot in good conscious allow you to sit here while food is being served,” she said. “You have been here for well over five hours, food is a just reward.”

Harry snapped his eyes up to her. “Food?” he asked.

“Yes, young man. Food is being served in the Great Hall starting in ten minutes. You should go enjoy dinner.”

Harry started gathering the papers he had spread over his corner of the table. “Awesome, food!”

Blaise sighed. “Alright, food.”

The four others packed up with considerably less enthusiasm than Harry, though they were all hungry, they realized.

“Did we really just sit in the library for five hours?” Neville asked.

Hermione nodded. “Yeah, I was keeping an eye on the time. But we got a lot done.”

“I finished an essay not due until next week,” Neville said, wonder in his voice. “And all my homework this week is finished.”

“It’s an awesome feeling, isn’t it.”

Neville nodded.

“Well, let’s get going,” Harry said, sliding his materials gently into his bag, making sure to shift Pashti around until she was laying on top of everything again. She purred against his hand in thanks and curled back up to sleep.

“No running Harry. We’ve all been sitting for a while. Legs aren’t warmed up.”

Harry sighed. “Fine, fine. We can walk.”

“Where are we all eating?” Padma asked. “I mean, we aren’t all in the same House. Are we eating with our Houses then?”

Harry looked baffled. “Why would you do that? We can all just sit at the same table. Who would care?”
Hermione looked between the four of them. An unsorted student who was also possibly insane, two Gryffindors, a Ravenclaw, and Slytherin. Not exactly the most conventional of groups.

“Well, what table would we sit at?” Blaise asked. “I wouldn’t be welcome at Gryffindor, and Neville and Hermione wouldn’t be welcome at Slytherin, so?”

“Ravenclaw wouldn’t care overmuch if we all sat there,” Padma said.

“Then the blue table it is,” Harry said, settling the matter. “Let’s get going, I want food!”

And thus they all trooped to the Great Hall and garnered plenty of attention as they all sat down at the Ravenclaw table.

“We’re getting stared at,” Hermione hissed.

Harry shrugged. “So what? Don’t worry about it. Staring never did anyone any harm. Besides, we’re friends. It shouldn’t matter what anyone else thinks about us.”

Neville shrunk down. “I don’t like getting stared at,” he confessed.

Harry gave him a reassuring smile. “Just eat Neville. They’ll stop soon enough unless they don’t want to eat.”

Blaise had long practice ignoring people and proceeded to fill his plate. “Food,” he said happily.

Padma snorted at Harry’s cheerful expression. “Does anything phase you?” she asked.

“Not anything you could throw at me at this school,” Harry said. “Or, well, probably not.”

Padma just shook her head.

The noise around the slowly returned and chatter was resumed, though most of everyone focused on the strange fivesome currently occupying the Ravenclaw table.

Up at the head table, the headmaster smiled. At least his newest student could tear through house borders with as much ease as he tore through anyone’s preconceptions of him.

~~~In Which This is an Ending~~~~

Chapter End Notes

So, here it is, Harry’s first few friends. I wanted to pick people who were either ambiguously mentioned in the main series or started out as loners. So thus, Padma, Blaise, Hermione, and Neville have formed the first friends Harry collected. I hope I addressed some peoples’ concerns/questions about the topic. Classes will begin next chapter and much of it has been written. I just spent forever deciding what I wanted to filter out from this chapter, try to knock the wordcount for it under 30K.

If you have any questions, let me know. I will answer what I can. Comments, let me know, I love hearing any ideas, suggestions, whatever. Thank you!
And as always, See You!
In Which Classes Start (pt 1)

Chapter Summary

Part one of two, next chapter should be up by September 3rd, and if it's not, you have permission to PM me endlessly until it is...

Chapter Notes

So….I’m back?

Sorry, sorry, I got stuck partway through this chapter and it took a while to get things written. As is, this is part one of two, as I doubt even you, dear epic chapter length readers, want to read 100 pages in one go.

As is, I have a Beta! Thank you, Mischief Managed!! They checked over this chapter for all those little grammar and spelling mistakes that often slip through cause I can only read my own work so many times before I just gloss over things.

Part two will be going up by the end of the week (September 3rd at the latest), word of honor. If it’s not up by then, you have permission to PM me endlessly until it’s up.

And thank you for all the reviews! I really appreciate it!

And, as always, please enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

~~~~In Which This is a Beginning~~~~~

Cornelius Fudge stepped out of the fire with a thunderous expression.

The nerve of that...that...child and his father! Father! Harry Potter, raised by someone who worked with that insane half-wit muggle someone decided should know about the Wizarding World! What was Dumbledore thinking, giving someone so clearly unstable the savior?

But those eyes...he shuddered at the memory. Those eyes promised unspeakable things should Fudge try anything concerning Harry Potter.

The boy didn’t even acknowledge his last name, for Merlin’s sake! Clearly, the man was unfit to raise the Savior of the Wizarding World!

“Find me whoever is in charge of that annoying muggle man who keeps interfering with Unspeakable and Auror missions,” he snapped at his secretary, some young man he had hired a month ago.
“Sir?”

Fudge turned irritable eyes on the boy, probably just out of Hogwarts. “Get me whoever was put in charge of that General Ali-something. Now!”

The boy squeaked and scuttled out of the room.

Fudge settled behind his desk, hand twitched for the firewhiskey he kept in the bottom drawer. If he wasn’t about to have a meeting dealing with the security of the Wizarding World, he would have indulged. As it was, he needed his wits about him. As much as he disliked the General, the man was smart and had a dedicated team.

A woman with frizzy blonde hair and a scowl marched into his office. “What do you want? I have things to do, you know.”

“You’re in charge of that annoying muggle General, yes?”

“General Alistair and UNIT, yes. Why? You specifically instructed us to not inform you of their going-ons unless they were interfering with the Unspeakables or Aurors.” The woman’s mouth tightened and the files in her hands seemed to bend just a bit. “What would you need me for? You hate the man.”

Fudge scowled. “You’re disrespectful, you know,” he pointed out.

The woman snorted. “You wanted someone who wouldn’t put up with bullshit in charge of the General, so you got me. Unfortunately for you, I don’t put up with your bullshit either.”

“You don’t happen to be related to Madam Bones, do you?”

Another snort. “You don’t even remember my name. No, I’m not related to Madam Bones, but she’s a fantastic woman. I’m Kifern Lovegood, distantly related to Xenophilius. Fourth cousins, of a sort.”

Fudge mentally sorted through his catalogue of pureblood families and their members. “Ah, right. Well, I have some questions. What exactly do you know about this General?”

Kifern sighed, rolled her eyes. “General Sir Alistair Gordon Lethbridge-Stewart, part of the founding members of UNIT, United Nations Intelligence Taskforce, and they answer directly to the head of the UN Security Council and often not to anyone at all. They are a government in their own right often enough, with no oversight for most of their actions. Knighted by the Queen for exemplary service, been heading UNIT on and off for nearly 40 years. He’s a tenacious man and known for his dogged pursuit of the truth.”

Fudge waved a hand. “Yes, yes, all well and good, but what about his association with someone named “The Doctor”?”

Kifern blinked, then flipped open a file in her hands. “The Doctor? Are you sure?”

“I’m sure.”

“Well, the Doctor was a….scientific advisor at UNIT for some time...but there’s hardly any concrete paperwork on him. And we barely found that out about him. Everything on him was sealed or coded and none of the current recruits we spoke with could give us any information on him at all. It didn’t seem important, just a scientific advisor.”

Fudge frowned. “Well, that scientific advisor is the current guardian for Harry Potter,” he said. “And
not knowing who he is….vexing.”

Kifern felt her eyebrows reach her hairline. “Harry Potter? The-Boy-Who-Lived?”

“Yes, where have you been? It’s been all over the papers, his return. And now his blasted...this blasted Doctor is being all threatening and he’s friends with that General, close friends, he insinuated.” Fudge looked up at Kifern Lovegood. “Find out what you can about him, the Doctor, and his connection to that General.”

Kifern nodded. Her face was flush with glee. She loved UNIT, really she did, but most of the wizarding world didn’t care about them, or really even know they existed. Truthfully, she hadn’t cared at first, seeing this assignment as some kind of punishment for her flagrant disrespect for idiot authority figures, but the General had been kind enough to show her the reality of the world they lived in, on a promise that she would keep it from the Minister. If the Minister himself ever showed proper interest, the General would be more than happy to show him around, but they could do without the contempt of politicians, he had said.

So Kifern had taken what information they provided her with and kept a solid eye on their movements, pleased to have something exciting in her job.

And now she was given permission, freely by the Minister, to delve back into UNIT.

“Of course, Minister,” she breathed, and left the office, steps light.

Fudge somehow didn’t see the clear joy on her face, as he had been contemplating the consequences of downing the bottle of firewhisky at two in the afternoon on a Saturday.

This was such a damn headache. He would have to contact Lucius about this as well.

~~~~This is a Line Break~~~~

Harry groaned at the alarm going off, sighed as it woke him with a blaring klaxon sound that Pashti hissed at.

Harry sat up, rubbing his eyes, then tapped the stone three times to turn it off. He might hate the thing along with Pashti, but it never failed to wake him up.

“Allright, I’m up I’m up. Classes today. You ready for them?”

Pashti sat up, stretching, before purring and nodding.

“Let’s get going then. I told Blaise, Hermione, Neville, and Padma we would meet at the Ravenclaw table at 7:15 or something. You mind telling me when it’s seven? I’m still not good with time.”

Pashti huffed and Harry felt her amusement leak out at him as he rolled out of bed, but she nodded.

So Harry dressed, brushed his teeth, did his hair up, putting in a few small beads and tying some of it up, before Pashti meowed at him.

“Ok, ok, let’s go.”

And he dashed out the door and towards the console room. “First and second years have gym today!” Rose called out as he rushed past the kitchen.

“Ok!” he replied, grinning. His friends wouldn’t enjoy that.
“You aren’t wearing the robes,” his dad yelled out at him.

“Don’t care!” Harry replied, then skidded out the Tardis door and through the portrait, before running to the Great Hall, a smile on his face. Pashti curled up into his neck, holding on tightly, as he made his way down stairs until he was at the large doors of the Great Hall.

“Hey, Padma!” he called out.

Padma, the only one of his friends currently in the hall, looked up, then waved.

“Hello, Harry! Good morning! No robes? Did you not get any?”

“Don’t like them, pointless things. I prefer my jacket. So, what classes do you have today?”

Padma shifted until she could pull out a crisp piece of parchment. “The physical fitness class is right after breakfast from 8:20 to 9:20. Then, Defense at 10 to 11, Herbology after lunch at 2, and History at 4 to 6.” She gave Harry a once over. “And they’ll take away points for not wearing the robes.”

“I don’t have a house to get points taken away from, so moot point there really.”

Padma frowned. “You have a point. I wonder what they’ll do with you then…”

“Don’t care. Robes are silly things. My jacket is much better.” He smoothed down the length of said jacket. “So, classes are, what, an hour?” he said.

“Where do I figure out what classes I have?”

“One of the professors will bring you a schedule,” she told him. “Blaise, here!” she called out, and Harry looked behind him.

“Blaise!”

“You’re early,” he said, sitting down next to Harry.

“Yeah, well, I had a good alarm today. You have a schedule yet?”

“No, I have to wait for Professor Snape to hand it out.”

“What?”

“He’s head of Slytherin house. The heads always prep the schedules.”

“You get a new one every week?”

“No, just at the beginning of the month, unless there’s some weird change, or so say the older years.”

Harry nodded. That made sense.

“Mr. Zabini, I see you aren’t at the Slytherin table,” the silky voice of Professor Snape said behind Harry.

“No, I didn’t think I had to sit there,” Blaise said carefully.

The potions professor gave his student a dour smile. “No, it is not required. I just didn’t expect to have to go to Ravenclaw to deliver a schedule.”
Blaise took the parchment with an embarrassed smile. “Thank you.”

“Good morning, enjoy your breakfast.” Then he walked off.

Padma let the tension in her shoulders ease. “Wow, he makes me nervous.”

“Why?”

“He’s really strict. He favors his Slytherins. I’m just glad we don’t have lessons with them in Potions, as Ravenclaws. Gryffindor shares the lesson.”

Blaise sighed. “And it’s a nightmare too. We have potions today,” he said with a grimace. “The physical fitness class first thing, then herbology after. Potions and Charms this afternoon. Joy.”

“What’s wrong?”

“They’re all with Gryffindor and someone from either side always starts something.”

Harry snorted. “At least you’ll have Hermione and Neville in those classes,” he said.

“Harry, I have your schedule for the week,” Dumbledore’s voice interrupted the conversation, and Harry turned, taking it from him.

“Oh, hey, thanks!” he said, grinning.

“No problem. I see you have found friends.”

“Yep!”

“Wonderful. Friends are such precious things, I’m glad to see you getting along so well here. I also see you have failed to wear the assigned robes.”

Harry made a face. “I hate those robes. Really, I do. Can we just...ignore the fact that I’m not wearing them? I don’t have a house so their use as an identifier is sorta pointless.” Harry gestured at the colors decorating Blaise and Padma’s robes. “Why else would I be wearing them?”

“They’re part of the school uniform. Robes are a way for everyone to feel like they are part of the school, Harry. They also help with the winter chill that is so dominant in this region.”

Harry shrugged. “Don’t particularly feel that clothes would engender that feeling with me, Headmaster. Their use as markers of position only goes so far when overall it feels like a pointless waste of fabric. Robes are heavy, itchy, and they drag on the ground and catch on anything and everything. I feel that my jacket is both far more practical in terms of weather and far more useful in terms of being able to keep my supplies on me.”

Dumbledore looked him over. “Why you feel like this is something you must argue over I don’t understand. Why not wear the robes for classes as is required and just change into your jacket when not in class?”

“It’s the principle of the thing. I have several strong opinions on uniforms. Beyond just them being notorious at singling out someone who either can afford well-made robes or who can’t afford new robes at all, or making it easy to ignore someone, the way you’ve set up the uniform system, color-coded to houses, makes it easy for someone to become an unwitting target. Say I have an issue with someone who wears yellow and black. Now, I’m also a bit irrational, so anyone who wears yellow and black are now my enemies, and I have managed to effectively turn a fourth of the school’s
population against me just because of a uniform color.” Harry made a gesture around him. “Every student is color coded here, Headmaster, it’s not hard to see the grudges and anger between the houses, all of it circling around the various colors.”

Dumbledore looked at him, long and hard. “I see. And do you have a solution for this issue?”

Harry snorted. “Abolish the color coding. If someone doesn’t know what color you belong to first off, I would think the grudges would be harder to hold. Or make everyone wear all the colors and make it Hogwarts robes, rather than whatever color your house is. Have a rainbow party, let each student dye their robes. I mean, they have a house, they aren’t going to forget what house they’re in just because they don’t have color coded robes to remind them. And hey, you might get some inter-house unity between some of the colors.”

“The colors have long been part of House Pride. It would be foolish to abolish them at the whim of a first year who doesn’t want to wear school robes,” Dumbledore said.

Harry threw up his hands. “I don’t get it. You asked for reasonable responses to why there shouldn’t be color coded robes, and I gave you some fairly valid ones. Don’t think I haven’t seen the Red and the Green kids at each other’s throats more often than not. All this fighting over some colors? Why let it continue? Wouldn’t it be easier to just keep the peace by getting rid of the colors?”

There was a stretch of silence several seconds long, then, “I will allow your jacket. However, if it causes any difficulties, you will be banned from wearing it during classes.”

“And I sincerely appreciate it, but you’re gonna want to do something about the fighting sooner rather than later. Really, it’s just gonna blow up in your face at some point. Then I’ll be sure to be there with a knowing smirk and a reasonably leveled ‘I told you so’.” Harry grinned at the Headmaster as if he hadn't just done something very few adults would do.

Dumbledore nodded, now understanding what some of the professors had meant the previous evening. This child was clearly not a normal first year. “Well, enjoy your breakfast. Most of the students will start arriving in about five minutes, so I would grab whatever you prefer before it is gone.” He smiled before heading up to the head table.

“I have….the class with Rose and Uncle Jack this morning with you all, and then Defense with...Ravenclaw, then lunch, then Potions and Charms and Herbology I believe. Not bad.” Harry looked up from his schedule to see Padma, Blaise, and a good portion of the Ravenclaw table staring at him in various degrees of shock. “What? Is something on my face?”

“Harry….you just….argued with the Headmaster,” Blaise said slowly, maybe hoping the reduction in speed would hammer in the great shock of what Harry had just done. “And you won.”

Harry frowned. “I was told I would have to take up the robes issue with him anyway, and now was as good a time as any. Besides, I didn’t win, it was a cease-fire. We’ll have to see how it turns out.”

“No one argues with the Headmaster,” Padma said, and several other students all nodded.

“I’ve never even seen the teachers argue with the headmaster,” An older Ravenclaw chipped in, something close to awe in their voice.

“That’s just silly. Why not? Arguing, when done right, is a good way to come to an agreement on fundamentally different things. I’m not saying scream and yell, but disagreeing is human nature, and it’s best to see if you can find a compromise or something about an issue.” Harry shrugged, completely failing to realize how stunned the rest of the table still was. “Now, do I have any classes
with you?”

Padma cleared her throat. “Um, what did you have?” she said, hoping that just moving on would be easier for everyone. Harry repeated his class schedule.

“That’s a lot of classes in a day,” Blaise said. “I think you have potions and charms with us.”

“Defense is with me this morning, and I think Herbology is with Hufflepuff,” Padma contributed.

“No one in Hufflepuff as of yet,” Blaise muttered. “Who else are you with for that class?”

“Erm, not sure, let me look.” Harry glanced at the schedule again. “Gryffindor? I think?”

“Well, Hermione and Neville have a good head on their shoulders,” Blaise reasoned.

“We’ll all survive,” Padma chipped in, grinning at Harry.

Harry rolled his eyes. “I’m not horrible, you know.”

“I was listening to your family yesterday talking about you. I know better than to think you’ve got it all straight up there,” Blaise said.

“Well, I’m hungry and you’re being silly.” Harry grabbed a plate, grabbing several pieces of fruit, what appeared to be a cinnamon danish, and a few pieces of sausage and ham. Pashti jumped down to start snacking on the meat.

“Hermione and Neville are here,” Blaise said, and he waved the two over as more and more students began to flood the room. Hermione spotted them and dragged Neville over to the table, sitting across from them. McGonagall stopped by briefly to give the two their schedules.

“It seems we all have the fitness class this morning,” Neville said, face a little pale at the prospect.

“That’s going to be an interesting class,” Blaise muttered. “Putting all the first years together.”

“Rose said it was first and second years today,” Harry commented around a piece of the cinnamon danish.

Hermione groaned. “This is going to be a nightmare of a morning.”

“I like exercising, thank you!” Harry protested. Neville disagreed. “You lot are going to either hate or love this class,” Harry said. “You might as well like it, you’re going to have to take it.”

There were collective sighs from around them, and even more expletives from around the room, as more and more students realized the physical fitness class had been added.

Harry grinned. Rose and uncle Jack were going to have a wonderful week with these kids.

“Alright, everyone, listen up!” a loud voice rang out across the room, and everyone fell silent to see who had shouted.

Harry grinned. “Uncle Jack,” he whispered unnecessarily to his friends.

“I see you all are realizing you have Physical Fitness at some point this week. Well, I’m one of the instructors. Today, first and second years, at 8, I will lead you to the room we’ll be using. And if there are any stragglers to class you’ll be the first ones to volunteer for the warm up activity.” There was silence as these words were processed, and whispers broke out. “Which means you have ten
minutes to finish breakfast and get ready.”

Harry laughed just a bit at the looks of resigned defeat on the first and second years around him.

True to his word, ten minutes later, according to his friends at least, Harry’s uncle once more called out above the noise as food disappeared. “Alright, first and second years, make a group outside the Great Hall to the right near the lovely lady with blonde hair. You can line up or not, but be quick about it.”

Said first and second years dashed for the door, and Harry collected his friends and made sure they all joined the rest of the students.

“Morning Uncle Jack!” he said brightly.

“Morning. You ready?”

“Can’t be that hard,” Harry countered. “You two make me run the obstacle course often enough.”

Jack’s smile widened. “Funny you should mention that,” he said.

Harry groaned. “You set it up, didn’t you?”

Jack’s smirk turned downright evil. “You bet we did.”

Harry sighed, turned to his friends. “You all are doomed,” he informed them.

This did not relieve any of their anxiety.

The room for the lesson was in a little-used part of the castle, and most of the students had never been this way before.

“Where are we?” a red headed girl asked.

“West wing, actually not too far from the Hufflepuff common rooms, if I remember right,” Jack said.

“Really?” a honey blonde first year exclaimed.

“Really,” Rose replied.

“What are we doing over here?” Malfoy asked, sneer in his voice.

“Well, unless you would rather exercise outside, I suggest you enjoy the fact that we are holding this class inside.”

“I don’t even understand why this is necessary,” he complained again.

“You’ll see very soon why it’s necessary,” Jack promised, and Harry wondered if he wanted to know how he was going to make a bunch of unhappy eleven and twelve-year-olds look forward to exercising.

“Alright, here’s the room. Everyone, inside. We’ve set up mats in the center, and off to the left are bins with shirts and pants in them. Choose a set and go to the designated changing rooms. There will be lockers inside to store your stuff. Be back out in ten minutes. Stragglers get first chance at our warm up activity.”

“What?” was the general uproar from the students.
Jack’s eyes looked around. “We aren’t doing this class as a separate houses class. Everyone will be in the same style of clothing, loose and comfortable, and no house emblems. If you have any complaints, please refer them to your head of house or the headmaster, all five of whom have agreed to this. Move it,” he finished, drawing on his many years of command to get the students moving.

“I’m telling my father about this,” Malfoy threatened.

“Boy, what do you think your father will be able to do about an officially sanctioned Hogwarts class?” Jack asked, raising an eyebrow. “Get moving.”

There were plenty of mumblings as students took out shirts and pants before moving to the correct rooms, and it took the full ten minutes for everyone to be back out to the main room, all of them tugging on their clothes with some form of discomfort.

“We’re in your stupid clothes, are you going to tell us what we’re doing? Or, even who you are?” Malfor called out.

“Would you like to run the class? I’m sure if you’re up to talking back, you’re up to proving your physical prowess so you could be up here teaching? Or, you could be our first volunteer, if teaching isn’t your style.” She stared at Draco Malfoy for a few moments, until he looked away, clearly unnerved. “Alright, you may call me Professor Rose, and that’s Professor Jack. We are going to be teaching the physical fitness class, and before you get all up in arms about being magicals and not needing physical exercise, I would like to remind you that the best way to avoid a spell is to dodge. Jack, if you would?” she gestured to him, and he grinned, pulling out a stunning rod the Doctor had disguised as a wand the night before.

“I’ll use stunning spells only, and Professor Rose won’t use anything but her physical skills,” Jack said. “This is what physical exercise can do.”

Without warning, he shot a red beam at Rose, and she dodged it with whirling grace. For several minutes, Jack shot as many beams as he could at Rose, and she dodged them all effortlessly.

There was stunned silence from the room.

“As you can see, dodging is an effective method of dueling, and expends no magical energy,” Rose said, not even appearing out of breath.

“I’m learning that,” Ron Weasley said under his breath, eyes wide.

Harry glanced around the room at the various states of shock nearly everyone was in.

“Will we be able to do that?” one of the second year's asked.

“If you practice enough, and don’t slack off, yes you will,” Rose said. “Your body is as much a tool as your wand.”

“Don’t ever forget that,” Jack said. “Your body is as important as your magic. Improve your body and your magic will improve as well. Your control over your wand movements, your focus, your ability to dodge and counter spells, they all depend on your body cooperating with you. Improve it and you can improve your spellwork.”

There were mutterings of people who seemed to be less unhappy than they had been before.

“So, to start, we’re going to run a quick fitness test. First, warming up. Stretching is important. Everyone, spread out, arm length between you and the person next to you.”
There was shuffling as everyone spread out, and the 80 or so students moved about to find space. They moved through the stretches with minimal complaint and only a few groans as muscles were used that they weren’t used to using.

“Alright, now that you won’t kill yourself trying things, we have the fitness test. Harry, if you would,” Jack called, and Harry sighed, joining his family up at the front.

The whispers started again, but quieted quickly as Rose looked sharply over the room. “We have an obstacle course set up. And Harry here is going to set the standard time for everyone.”

“Why him?” a voice called out.

“Because they make me run it at least twice a se...week,” Harry replied sourly.

“Really?”

“You live with them?”

“You know them?”

Harry rolled his eyebrows. “Yes, I live with them. Uncle Jack and Rose are my family. Now, if you would be quiet, we can move on.”

There was silence. Rose hid a grin.

Jack had moved to the curtain that had covered the back part of the room, pulling a cord and sliding the curtain to the other side with quick efficiency.

Harry sighed at the revealing of his most hated enemy, the obstacle course of doom.

“Alright, you want me to do this fast or slow?”

“You’re setting the standard, Harry, do it however you like,” Rose said.

Harry cracked his knuckles. “Alright, fast it is then.”

“We’re supposed to do that?” a girl called out.

“You’re going to try as best you can. Wherever you fail we’ll make a note of it. And you’ll do it once every other month to see how you improve. Your scores here will also determine the fitness regime we’ll be giving you, personalize it more to your level.”

“You mean each of us gets one?” A girl demanded.

“Yes. Not everyone is going to be good at things at first and overextending yourself is a really good way to injure yourself.” Jack said, then turned to Harry. “If you would, Harry.”

Harry positioned himself at the start, right in front of the monkey bars, and when Jack blew the whistle he took off.

Across the monkey bars, drop and roll under the low bar, balance up the lily pads, then jump to the rope until he could shimmy up it to reach the bell, before sliding down and weaving between the poles. He jumped over the mid sized hurdles and swung up and over the shoulder height wall to stand on top of it so he could jump to the far rock wall.
“You don’t need to do that,” Rose assured the students watching. “Merely getting over the wall will be fine.”

Several sighs of relief were released.

Harry did the rock wall quickly before he dropped and rolled, springing to his feet and sprinting the last ten meters and ringing the bell at the end of the course.

“213 Harry,” Jack said. Harry punched the air.

“That’s 2 minutes and 33 seconds. Harry’s average is 2 minutes and fifteen, so he’s not too far off today,” Rose commented.

Harry stuck his tongue out at her before rejoining his friends. “Alright, line up, we’ll see how you lot do on this. Harry, make sure you give everyone a good explanation on how to do each part. You swung and shimmied your way through this, most people won’t be able to right now.”

Harry nodded.

And so it went. While groups of three to ten tried their hands at the obstacle course, Jack had those waiting running (or fast walking) laps around the room, to the chagrin of everyone involved. Most of them got past the monkey bars and under the low bars. A good number fell on the lily pads, more fell on the rope bit, and many couldn’t do the pole swing if they reached it at all. Only two students finished, a first year girl and a second year boy.

The girl grinned, admitting she had been an aspiring gymnast before she got her Hogwarts letter and the boy said he was a rugby player for his local team whenever he went home for the holidays.

No one else managed it.

“Not bad. I’ve got you down by score and level. Time’s almost up, so you can go change. Leave the clothes in the hamper in the room, they’ll be washed before next class. And make sure you press your schedule against the panel inside the door to the right before you leave,” Rose said.

Everyone groaned, rubbing at sore muscles.

“Oh, and one more thing,” Jack said. “Next week we’re imposing a new schedule for you in the morning. Every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday right after breakfast, you will be joining the rest of your schoolmates for half an hour of running outside around the lake. I would make sure you are ready for it. We’ll be making sure everyone joins us.”

There were more collective moans around the room.

“You can’t be serious!” came several cries from those around Draco Malfoy.

“Very. The Headmaster has agreed to this. And we are very good at names and faces,” Rose said. “So I expect to see all of you next week. Fail to check in with us and we’ll have you running it after dinner instead,” she finished with a grin.

Harry snickered.

“You’re family is nuts,” Hermione said.

“Well, I never said they weren’t,” Harry replied.

“That’s insane. We’re doing that all the time?”
“Well, you can’t expect to be in any kind of decent shape only doing things once a week,” Harry reasons.

“Can you do what Professor Rose did?” Hermione asked.

Harry frowned. “Not really. Rose has a lot of practical experience I don’t have. But I’m not that bad. Just, not that good either.”

Blaise groaned. “Well, I have class to get to. Which is going to be fun. I’ll catch up with you all at lunch.”

“Gryffindor has the same class as you,” Hermione said, snagging Neville who was trailing behind them, flushed and exhausted. “We’ll join you.”

Blaise gave them a look, but shrugged. “So long as you don’t mind the looks you’ll get from both houses,”

“You’ll get them as well,” Neville pointed out.

“Yeah, but they already judge me,” Blaise said, grimacing.

Hermione nodded. “Fine. Well, let’s get going.”

They split up at the stairs, Hermione, Neville, and Blaise heading down and out towards the grounds and Harry and Padma going up to the Defense room.

When they filed in, Harry got a look at the professor for the first time. “You’re telling me our defense teacher is the guy who fainted in the Great Hall when he saw a troll?” Harry whispered in mild incredulity to Padma.

Padma shrugged. “He’s a bit weird. Not sure what’s going on with him and most of Ravenclaw doesn’t like him because it’s really hard to understand anything he says. He’s got a terrible stutter. And he’s not exactly good at most of the things he’s trying to teach. Apparently he used to be the muggle studies professor, took a year sabbatical to get some practical defense experience, then came back. From what the older students say, before he left he wasn’t like this at all, and no one knows what happened, but it must have been something awful.”

Harry frowned. That sounded highly suspicious. People didn’t just change because they ran into something unusual. People changed because of profound events.

He settled down into a chair beside Padma, pulling out a pen and a notebook he had scribbled ‘Defense’ across of in large letters. He hadn’t decided if English was a good language or not for Defense yet, but he would know by the end of the lesson he was sure.

The Professor waited until everyone had filed in, groaning and moaning, slumping in their seats, before he looked at them all.

“I-i-s everyone a-a-all-allright?” he asked. “Y-yo-you do-don’t l-l-look very g-g-goo-good.”

“We had the physical fitness class,” someone muttered from the back of the room.

“I think I might be dead,” a boy said near Harry.

“He’s the only one who isn’t about to pass out,” a girl accused, pointing at Harry.

Harry snorted. “You all are eleven, it shouldn’t be that bad to run a few laps and do an obstacle
There were muffled groans of displeasure, but no one said anything else.

“I s-s-se-see,” Professor Quirrell said. “W-We-Well, I shall t-t-take r-ro-roll.” He pulled a sheet of paper out and started checking of names, pausing at Harry’s, a bit confused as to the lack of a last name, before checking Harry off when he answered.

Harry spent the rest of the class wondering what exactly was wrong with his defense professor. The man was...suspicious to say the least. His stutter was inconsistent and didn’t have a standard pattern. Rather, it seemed like he just tried to make it seem like he had a stutter. A stutter is caused by a difficulty in processing certain sounds, and though they weren’t always the same, if someone stuttered on one sound, they would usually stutter over it every time. Quirrell didn’t do that. It sounded like he just...chose words at random to repeat or stutter on. And it was frustrating Harry just a bit.

And there was something about his posture that seemed off as well. Something not right. He acted scared of something constantly. Not the students, though he gave Harry a fairly wide berth, but of something else, something nearby. And if Harry wasn’t mistaken, he had shoved a bunch of garlic in his turban. Which was weird. Harry didn’t know of any particular reason for garlic to be used. Besides really good seasoning and a couple species with an allergy to it, garlic didn’t have a whole lot of functions in his knowledge.

There was also that one time when the professor looked him in the eyes, and Harry’s scar burned. That would have to be investigated. And he would have to tell his dad. Something as suspicious as that was something definitely not good.

They had always known there was something strange about his scar, it never faded and any kind of treatment, no matter how advanced, never had any effect, but now, with this evidence, maybe they could dig deeper.

He wasn’t sure what the lesson was about, something about identifying dark creatures from non-dark creatures, Harry had a hard time parsing the stutters from the actual language. It was distracting. Usually Harry didn’t have an issue with stutters or other speech impediments, being able to filter them and adjust to the person’s individual quarks, but Quirrell had no such specific issue and Harry was spending far too much time trying to sort through his words to get to the meat of the lecture.

Padma next to him heard him muttering several unflattering words, then muttering in a language she didn’t recognize as he scribble with lines and symbols in his notebook.

She shook her head. Harry was by far the strangest person she had ever met. Frighteningly smart, but so very weird.

The end of class came and Harry groaned. “I didn’t get any of that at all,” he complained to Padma. “Why is his stutter so inconsistent? He doesn’t have a sound issue, he just...stutters. It’s frustrating to listen to when you can’t pinpoint a specific sound cause of a stutter.”

“I have no idea what you mean but if it helps, he was discussing pages 40 through 50 of our textbook.”

Harry sighed, rolling his eyes. “I’ll figure it out. Can’t be that bad. I’m sure self study will do wonders for me with this class.” Though he doubted it would be self study that would take up all his time in regards to this class. There was something definitely unusual about the teacher.
“The library is good for studying right now. Most students won’t be there and we should be able to get a table. You can go over those pages in the book and I can add anything Professor Quirrell said in class.”

Harry grinned. “Perfect! What about Hermione, Blaise, and Neville?”

“Double Transfiguration. They won’t be done until before lunch.”

“Alright. Let’s get going!”

Padma groaned. “No running! I’m still sore Harry. Please.” Harry sighed but didn’t dash up the stairs, keeping pace with Padma until they reached the library and situated themselves at a table.

And that table is exactly where Blaise found him several hours later, an impatient look on his face and frustration in every line of his stance.

“Harry, we have potions in twenty minutes and you missed lunch!”

Harry blinked, looking up at the intrusion. “What?”

“Potions. Twenty minutes. No lunch. What’s wrong with you?”

“Wrong with me?”

“Who misses out on lunch?”

Harry looked at the half eaten sandwich like thing on the table next to his book pile. “I didn’t miss lunch. Had a fairly standard sandwich esque meal. It was good. I always have food on me. Never know when I need to eat.”

Blaise sighed. “Padma said she told you when lunch started but you just muttered at her in several different languages and then said, in English, studying, so she left you to it.”

“Ah, I remember that. Sorry. But I was. Research, studying. It’s important.”

“You mean that…” Blaise craned his neck to look at the title of the book in Harry’s Hands. “The ‘History of the Fundamentals of Transfiguration’ was more important than food? And why are you even reading something like that anyway? That’s like, way more advanced than we’re at.”

Harry raised an eyebrow. “And that means I shouldn’t be reading it at all?” he asked.

Blaise sighed. “No, no, just, come on. Let’s get going. Being late to Snape’s class is like signing up for detention. He doesn’t like it when you’re late.”

Harry set the book back on the table, gathered his things, carefully slid Pashti into his pocket as she was sleeping still and didn’t want to be disturbed, her mood clearly said. And when he had finally shoved all the various things he had spread around himself back into his bag, he grinned up. “Let’s get going then!”

“Harry! Don’t run. My legs hurt, please.”

“First Padma, now you. Come on, we’ll warm up those muscles. Besides, you said it was a bad idea to be late. And while I still don’t really get the concept, I know that if you should be somewhere when someone asks you to and you aren’t there, it’s not a good idea.”

Blaise groaned. “Fine, fine. Just, please, don’t sprint!”
Harry huffed. “Fine, whatever. Let’s get going then. You’re legs are going to be sore for a while, until you get used to it, so you might as well also get used to walking up and down stairs while sore too. Otherwise you’ll let all that hard work go to waste.”

Blaise caught up with Harry in the hallways and they quick timed it down the stairs and to the potions room.

“I see you can arrive on time, Mr. Zabini. I was wondering, as it is nearly the start of class.”

Blaise gave his head of house a nervous smile. “Sorry, I had to go get Harry here out of the Library. He lost track of time.”


“I see. Well, now that you have finished being a responsible friend, there are but two seats left, next to Ms. Granger and Mr. Longbottom. Choose wisely,” Blaise knew from the tone that Snape clearly thought Neville the worst of the two choices. It didn’t help that Neville consistently ruined whatever potion he had, too nervous or uneasy to follow the directions well.

Blaise looked over at Harry. He knew very well that Harry was going to be helping Neville in potions.

Harry was sending a look of disapproval at Snape’s back as the professor headed to the desk at the front of the room. “He’s not particularly nice, is he?” Harry said.

“Not really,” Blaise said softly. “Are you going to be helping Neville?”

Harry nodded. “Yeah. He’ll be fine. I’ll make sure of it.”

Blaise let out a breath he had been holding. “Alright.”

They headed over to their friends.

The Slytherins on the opposite side of the room all looked at Blaise in a mixture of confusion and disgust, and Harry could hear the whispers from them.

“He’s sitting with the mudblood?”

“I’ve heard that he’s been hanging out with the squib and the mudblood all weekend, and a Ravenclaw.”

“What is he thinking? Is he crazy?”

Harry wasn’t impressed. “You lot, if you want to insult people you should do it to their faces. If you can’t you all are just cowards,” he said, raising his voice loud enough to cut over the chatter.

He didn’t bother looking at Snape’s raised eyebrows.

“What are you talking about Potter?” Malfoy sneered.

Harry narrowed in on him, eyes focused. “You, blonde haired abuser of language. Really, you can’t manage to remember a name I’m assured of is simple, you whisper your insults about people across the room from you just loud enough to be heard but not loud enough to be directed, and you can’t even make your point without being insulting. You’re the worst example of stuck up snobbery. You believe yourself to be above everyone else because that’s all you’ve ever been told you are your whole life. It’s an absolutely appalling point of view, and the fact that you can’t take in the fact that
your whole viewpoint is skewed points to you either being particularly dense or a special kind of idiot.” Harry twisted his mouth up in an unfriendly smile. “And I can insult someone to their face. Because the rule is, if you’re going to insult someone, they should have the chance to defend themselves, explain themselves, or respond. So, your turn Draco Malfoy.”

There was silence across the room as everyone just stared at the black haired boy with frightening bright green eyes boring a hole in Draco Malfoy’s face.

Gryffindor seemed to be holding their collective breaths. Slytherin seemed stunned. Professor Snape wasn’t sure if he was amused at the way an eleven year old boy managed to take apart Draco or upset that he had done it in the middle of class. He would also be having words with Draco in private about the use of a particular word.

“I...I....I’m not an idiot!” Malfoy blurted out.

“That’s all you got out of that? Really? Idiot? You aren’t worth insulting if you can’t even reply properly. Blaise is my friend, as is Hermione and Neville and Padma. And someone’s worth isn’t decided by what others think of them. Their worth is decided by their actions, the people they surround themselves with, their friends, and their choices. And from my perspective, Blaise, Hermione, Padma and Neville make far better choices than you seem to. Surrounding yourself by choice with bigotry and false superiority is the quickest way to failing at being a decent human.” Harry gave the stunned Slytherins a long look, then turned away.

“Harry….” Blaise started.

“It’s not a problem Blaise. You’re my friend. ” He paused, turned to Professor Snape. “Apologies for turning your class into a lesson in humility, Professor Snape,” he said, sketching a small bow of apology.

Snape wasn’t quite sure what to make of the boy. If he had a house, he would have taken points for, at the very least interrupting his class, more for language and insults. But with no house, there wasn’t anyone to take points from. And he couldn’t very well give him detention for calmly and effectively dealing with the mounting tension between the Gryffindors and Slytherins, not without causing a riot in the now somewhat peaceful nightmare of a Gryffindor-Slytherin class..

“Take your seat. And I would ask you to take your...lessons….outside of my class from now on.”

Harry nodded, then sat down to Neville.

Neville gave him a shaky smile, clearly wobbly from trying to hide his uneasiness and tears.

“Thanks, Harry,” Neville said.

Harry laid a hand on his arm. “You’re my friend, Neville. I always stand up for my friends. Not that I’ve ever had very many, but they’re always important to me. My family and my friends. And being impolite to people because they’re different from you is really really irritating.”

Neville’s smile solidified.

“Now, we will be working on a potion I believe shouldn’t be too hard for you. It’s simple, and while it doesn’t have many uses beyond it’s intended one, the method used to prepare ingredients is what we will be focusing on today. Preparing them even the slightest bit incorrectly with ruin the potion. So pay attention to what you are doing. I would like to not have any melted cauldrons.” Snape nearly set a significant look at Longbottom, before remembering the potions prodigy that showed up unexpectedly was sitting right next to him, and reigned in the look.
He didn’t need those green eyes boring into him like they bored into Draco.

He waved his wand and the potion transferred itself from the parchment on the desk to the board, writing itself out in his elegant calligraphic script.

“Take care to note that when you mince something, you should not be crushing it. Mincing is a very specific process, which you will have read in your books if you have done the required homework assignment.” He gave a significant look to the stack of papers on his desk. Blaise skirted out his paper and laid it on the upper corner of his desk for Snape to pick up.

“Now, take note. This potion is a simple cleaning potion. It works for hard to remove stains on fabrics, woods, and stone. The required ingredients are in the cabinet at the end of the room. You have forty minutes to work on this, before I will take a random sampling of your potions and test them on several materials I have for the occasion.”

Neville looked at the board and at Harry, who seemed to be examining the recipe with a discerning eye.

“You could make this much easier,” he said in an undertone to Neville.

“Aren’t we going to follow the recipe?” Neville asked, panic in his voice.

Harry rolled his eyes. “I could make a cleaning solution with my eyes closed. No, we aren’t. This takes too many steps it doesn’t need to take. And it’s beyond just being absurd. Sure, the prep for this is important and you can’t mess up, but you don’t need nearly so many ingredients.”

Neville wondered if he had made an agreement with the wrong person when it came to getting help with his potions work. “The ingredients though? Shouldn’t we go get them?”

Harry shook his head. “I’ve got everything on me. No need.” Harry opened his bag and pulled out his cauldron, then a box of what Neville believed where knives, before he grasped some other strange little box. A box with numbers on the front and a series of twisting contraptions on it.

“What...what’s that?” Neville asked.

Harry looked at the box with a look of pride. “This, Neville, is my ingredient box. It has every single ingredient I posses inside it.” It was his pride and joy, one of his first successes with multi-dimensional spaces.

“What is that?” Harry whirled around to look at Snape, who was hovering over them.

“It’s my ingredients collection,” Harry explained.

Snape frowned. “I fail to see how. It’s much too small for a standard potions kit.”

“Standard Potions Kit? No, it’s not one of those. Bought one because it was on the list, but the ingredients were just so….poor that I immediately discarded it. This is my personal collection.” Harry lifted it up.

“Explain,” Snape snapped out.

Harry grinned, cracking his knuckles. “If you would, Professor Snape, I shall explain to you how to get the ingredients required for this potion out of my box.” He held the box out to the professor.

Snape took it with mild trepidation. “Alright,” he said, unsure why he was indulging the boy but
“Well, we need essence of lemon, so type in 485.” Snape punched the numbers in, and a small hinge popped open a door. He reached in and pulled out a vial of something, he couldn’t read the writing at first, until he scanned down the symbols far enough to find English.

“Impressive.”

“Next is a base of pine sap oil.”

“That’s not on the ingredients list,” Snape said.

Harry rolled his eyes. “I am aware, but your recipe has way too many little things that aren’t necessary. So pine sap oil. Specifically pine sap from a tree harvested under a blue moon with a knife blessed by a druidic priest, then distilled to oil.”

“Where in Merlin’s name did you get one of those?” Snape asked, flabbergasted.

Harry refrained from chuckling at the use of his old mentor’s name. He would enjoy telling Merlin about this little tidbit.

“I have sources. And friends. They’re happy to lend a hand.” Actually, he had just asked a druidic priest on a trip once to bless a bunch of stuff, after explaining how it’s really very useful to magic study to have things blessed. The priest had given him a strange look but hadn’t complained much since Harry and his family had just saved their village from being razed by some misplaced Vrycarians.

“So, how do I get this oil out? This completely not in the recipe oil,” Snape asked, sighing. He would let the boy have his way, and when he failed he would use it against him to force him to comply with recipes and standard class behavior.

“It’s a bit more complex for the blessed stuff. Type in 1586, then you’ll have to twist the top three times to the right, before typing in 2487.”

Snape followed the directions, curious as to what magic made this little box work, before the same door as before opened, but inside was a fairly large vial of slightly yellow oil. And it slid through the door just fine, to his mild astonishment.

Harry grinned at the look of surprise on Snape’s face. “Next is the leaves of the Lotus plant, the magical variety to be specific, so type in 4568, turn the side panel 90 degrees, then press 2.” Again, the same door opened, but this time, it was the leaves.

And so it went for the next four ingredients Harry needed, until he was finished.

And Snape was sure Harry was some kind of weird mad genius. “What is this? And how do you remember where everything is?”

Harry grinned. “It’s how I’ve mentally organized all my ingredients. All the numbers correspond to their position on my mental list.”

Snape gave him a long look. “I’m quite sure you’re not all there mentally, but you are smart enough to know that if this little experiment of yours fails, you will be following all my recipes until you can sufficiently prove to me you can do potions properly, so I expect your potion at the same time as everyone else’s.”
Harry nodded. “Neville’s working with me.”

“Well, I hope you manage to not blow anything up. Longbottom has an unfortunate habit of ruining every potion he tries to make.”

Harry frowned at the potions professor. “I’m sure your lack of faith in him is not very helpful, professor,” he replied.

Snape just shook his head before starting his stalk around the class.

Neville let out a breath he hadn’t known he’d been holding. “How can you talk to him like that?” he asked, voice shaking.

Harry grinned. “He’s not nice, but he’s passionate about potions, and if you can prove you know what you’re doing, he’s not going to be as harsh on you.”

“He scares me,” Neville admitted.

Harry sighed. He could understand why. Snape wasn’t exactly the most friendly of people, and if Neville wasn’t good at potions, he didn’t think Snape would take the time out of his day to make sure Neville would be okay. Because he didn’t seem to be that kind of person. Which irritated Harry somewhat.

“It’s alright. I’ll help you out. First, we need to slice these leaves, long ways. Not crosswise. They need to be long and very thin. Follow me.”

Harry pulled out one of his knives and grabbed one of the leaves. He motioned to Neville to copy him. “Now, we cut them longways because we need thin material to mix with the oil base properly and bind with the other ingredients. We cut along the line of the leaf so as to let the juice seep out naturally and not to squish it out.” He demonstrated the technique to Neville, who copied it without messing up too much. Harry nodded at him. “Make sure you keep a straight line, and make sure the pieces are very thin. We need four leaves of this.”

They worked in silence for a few minutes, Harry correcting Neville’s grip occasionally and his slicing technique.

“Is this good?” Neville asked, gesturing to the small pile of sliced leaves he had.

Harry nodded. “Indeed. Now, I’ll put the base on to heat up to a simmer, then we’ll add the leaves. Stir those three times to the right, then two times left. We’ll add the lemon extract after that happens, though we have to do that carefully. If we drip a bit too much, it’ll be useless, though it’ll smell pretty.”

Neville eyed his desk partner with a bit of trepidation. “Where did you learn potions?” he asked.

“Sal taught me all the basics, after he realized trying to teach me recipes just ended with me blowing up the cauldrons. I was too impatient to wait for things, I wanted to experiment. So instead he would teach me techniques and skills, and leave me with books to memorize ingredients and their properties. After a bit he would quiz me by making me create potions based off a given topic. Nothing too fancy, but I can parse out a number of fairly useful potions.” Harry grinned.

“You must have studied for years,” Neville said. “I’ll never be able to do it.”

“Don’t say that! You’re good with plants, and there are more in potions than you think. You must have some way of remembering plants, just apply that to potions!” Harry encouraged.
Neville gave him a considering look. “Do you think that will really work?”

“Well, it can’t hurt to try, and if you can associate the thing you’re good at with the thing you’re not so good at, you can improve the latter. It took me a long time to remember so many ingredients, but I used a system that I’ve always used.” Harry tapped his temple. “Association is a recognized way of improving at least your ability to remember things and connecting dissimilar things to make them easier to recall.”

Neville frowned. “I didn’t understand a couple of those words, but I think I get the gist.”

“Awesome. Well, we need to grind the seeds up into a fine powder. A measurement of about 10 microns should be sufficient.”

Neville gave him a blank look. “I have no idea what that means.”

“Very very small. Do you know what sand looks like? Smaller than that,” Harry clarified.

Neville nodded. “Okay, I can do that. What about...whatever these flowers are? I’ve never seen that color before.”

“They’re Lotus flowers, and they go with the leaves under them. The flowers need to be crushed, well, three of them do, the last flower needs to be left whole. They’re a hydrophobic plant, and they self-clean. If you get a hold of lotus flowers grown in any magically rich environment, their self cleaning properties extend to the waters around them, and they’re the crux of this whole potion. They go in last, and the full flower goes in at the very last second.”

Neville nodded, digesting this. “Is there…..is there any way I could, maybe, try to grow this?” he asked, suddenly nervous sounding again.

Harry grinned. “Of course! I’ll give you a few seeds I have for them. I’m a poor hand at plants, so much that my dad banned me from any experiments in the gardens. I was going to try something with them, but I’m not allowed to anymore, so you can have the seeds. If you get it to work, I can restock my supply from you. They’re a rather useful plant, aside from cleaning potions. They work for nearly anything that you want to be pure or anything you want repelling properties in.”

Neville nodded again.

Behind the two, Blaise and Hermione were watching Harry and Neville work with a look of mild wonder. “Have you ever seen Snape so quick to not...not take points of give detentions for someone talking back like that?” Blaise whispered.

Hermione shook her head. “And he even indulged Harry’s weird box thing, and is letting him do his own recipe,” Hermione said, wonder in her voice.

“What did Harry do to the potions professor?” Blaise asked, something like respect and horror in his voice.

“I think Harry’s corrupting everyone around him,” Hermione confided.

“Are you two finished discussing your...friend? Your potion is about to boil over, and I would hate to take points from Slytherin for carelessness, Mr. Zabini.”

Blaise and Hermione nearly jumped, the slick voice of their professor right behind him.

“S--s-soo-soorry sir,” Hermione stuttered out. She turned to their potion, on the verge of being
ruined, and quickly moved to the next step.

Blaise tried to settle his nerves. “It won’t happen again,” he said.

“I trust it won’t. And your friend knows that if he fails here, as I expect him to do, he will have to follow all my directions from here on out. It is easier to wait for him to fail and then enforce the rules, don’t you think?”

Blaise nodded mutely.

Snape left to go hover over other unfortunate students’ shoulders, and Blaise let out a sigh of relief.

“Why doesn’t he ever say Harry’s name?” Hermione hissed.

“I have no idea,” Blaise replied.

In front of them, Harry was instructing Neville in the delicate art of adding ingredients at proper intervals.

As class was wrapping up, Snape swept around the room and collected the various flasks of the potion.

Most were a light yellow color, varying in intensity based on how well that group did. There were a few obvious failures, one a distinct bright green color that Snape merely looked at with skepticism, casting an eye between the Slytherin girls who had turned it in, before sweeping on. He stopped at Ron Weasley’s desk. “And what, pray tell, is this?” He picked up the flask, where the liquid inside was tinted orange.

Ron fisted his hands in his laps, made to say something, but his partner’s hand on his arm stopped him.

“A failure, I see.”

Harry sucked in a breath. He hated bullies.

“Not now, Harry,” Neville whispered.

“He’s being unfair. He didn’t say anything to the Slytherin girls who messed up, but he taunts the Gryffindor boys?”

“He’s always like that,” Neville said.

“Doesn’t make it right,” Harry argued back.

Snape stopped in front of their desk. “Your potion?” he asked.

Harry frowned at him. “You’re unfair and a bully,” he said. “And here’s our potion.” He set the vial on the edge of his table.

Neville froze next to him, literally wishing he could be ice.

Snape’s eyes frosted over. “Excuse me?” he whispered silkily.

“You’re unfair. You don’t treat the class equally. You stalked the Gryffindor side, nearly upsetting people’s potions by popping up behind them, while you barely walked the Slytherin side. You didn’t say a word to any of the Slytherin groups who messed up, but you berate the Gryffindors who do.
As a professor, you have a duty to teach everyone equally, not just those you prefer.”

Snape’s mouth twisted. “Detention. Friday evening. I will not be spoken to that way.”

Harry shrugged. “I’d like to see you try to enforce it. I’m sure we could have quite the conversation with whatever authority figure you would care to name about why you’re giving me detention.”

“A week of detention, and I will be speaking with the headmaster about your disrespect.”

“As will I,” Harry replied.

Snape visibly seethed, knocking the potion Harry had set out on the desk off with what looked like a careless hand movement.

Harry smirked as it landed, unbroken, on the floor. “Ah, glad to see my experiments in glass solidification went well. I hadn’t gotten around to testing them, so thanks, Professor.” Harry grinned at the livid look that flashed across Snape’s face, before he picked up the potion, took Blaise and Hermione’s with barely a glance at their color perfect potion, before he stalked to the front of the room.

The stained clothes were lying up on a desk and Snape took delight in picking Longbottom’s and the irritant’s potion up first.

It wasn’t the right color, though he hadn’t expected it to be after he hadn’t used any of the correct ingredients aside from the leaves and the lemon extract. It was instead a light pink, and when he uncorked it it smelled faintly of flowers.

He chose the most difficult stain and dripped the potion on it.

And he seethed internally when the stain seemed to literally slide off the cloth.

He shot a glance over at the boy’s direction, only to be met with bright green eyes set with determination and obviously well aware that the potion he had provided was perfect.

He dismissed the class with a wave of his hand after assigning a two foot essay on the proper methods of preparing ingredients, to be written in detail.

If only the little pain looked a bit more like his father, and acted like a dunce, he could find the hate for the boy far easier. As it was, the boy’s remarks had cut him to the core, and he hated the feeling of being exposed.

~~~~In Which This is a Scene Break~~~~

Harry walked out of class without actually realizing the impact of his actions. The Slytherins stared at him in a mixture of awed disdain and curiosity, the Gryffindors were awed and mildly horrified, and his friends just sighed. They hadn’t expected Harry to actually get a detention on the first day, much less a week of it, not that he was going to attend, they knew.

“Really Harry? The first day and you have to go and do that?” Blaise said, exasperation in his voice.

Harry spun around, eyes flashing. “You all let him get away with what he does by sitting there and doing nothing. He’s a bully. He favors the Slytherins and hates the Gryffindors. He hates me, I can tell, but he can’t figure out any way to bully me yet. But he knows how to terrorize students who are scared of him. And he’s a professor, a teacher. It’s a disrespect to all teachers, what he’s doing.”
Blaise hunched his shoulders a bit. “You can’t just say things like that to a teacher. They have the power here, Harry,” he said softly.

“That’s not an excuse.”

“We aren’t like you Harry. You have this confidence in whatever you do, this knowledge that you can do it, that it doesn’t matter who you’re speaking to, you can talk to them as if you were equal to them. We can’t,” Blaise said, gesturing to himself and the others around him. His voice was soft.

Harry breathed in deeply. “Well, we’re just going to have to fix that then,” he said, then whirled around and headed for the stairs.

Hermione sighed. “I don’t know where he gets that confidence from,” she said. “I’m terrified of Professor Snape.”

Blaise tapped his chin. “I would like to know what Padma thought of Harry’s dad. She had History this afternoon. I’m curious to know how similar the two of them are.”

“You’ll have to ask at dinner. We have charms next, then Neville, Harry, and I have herbology,” Hermione said.

Blaise sighed. “Alright. Well, let’s get going. Charms is quite a walk from here, might as well make sure Harry’s made it.” And hasn’t wandered off to the library in protest, Blaise thought.

They found Harry in the charms classroom, Pashti sitting on his lap, paws pressed to his chest, purring softly. His eyes were closed and he seemed to be napping, of not for the overwhelming amount of magic that Blaise could feel heavy in the air.

“What’s wrong with the classroom?” a girl asked, walking in.

“It feels weird in here. Did professor Flitwick do something to it?” he friend agreed.

Blaise shuddered. If he was right about where this magic was coming from, Harry was scary.

“Harry,” he said, moving close enough that he didn’t have to raise his voice. He would prefer to not be heard by those around them. “Class is starting soon, Harry,” he repeated.

Harry’s eyes flicked open, and he stared at Blaise, eyes blank, before he shook his head. “Blaise, hello.”

“Class is starting and you’re making the room uncomfortable,” he muttered.

Harry frowned. “What?”

“Your magic is seeping out and saturating the air. It’s making it uncomfortable for everyone in here. Whatever you’re doing, can you please stop?”

Harry frowned again, then his eyes lit up and he reigned in a gasp of surprise. His empathy was magic based, he knew that, but for it to actively project his own feelings when he was meditating was a new one for him. He wasn’t usually around other people when he meditated, so he wasn’t aware that it leaked out, but now that he knew, well…

He grinned, reigning in the magic, slipping his necklace back on and thankful that Blaise hadn’t sought to touch him. His magic was sucked back under his skin. “Sorry, I was just calming down. I
sometimes forget that it takes a lot of willpower to stand up to people. Apparently it’s harder if you’re younger than them too, so Rose tells me.” He gave his friends an apologetic smile. “Sorry. I just, people who stand by and let things happen aren’t any better than those who bully or hurt others, and it’s really frustrating to see.”


“Yeah, um, well, thanks. I mean, for everything you said in potions class. It meant a lot.” Blaise fidgeted.

Harry nodded his head and gestured to the seats around him. “Well, sit down then. Class starts soon, yeah?”

As he said those words, Professor Flitwick walked in through the back doorway. “Ah, hello! What a lovely day! And you’re all here, good good. Does everyone have their homework?” Bags were set to rustling as people dug through them for essays, pulling the parchment out on their desks.

Harry took the several sheets of notebook paper out of his notebook, letting it in front of him. Hermione looked over his shoulder.

“At least it’s in English. Last time I looked at your charms work you were writing it in some script you write from right to left,” she said. “Arabic?” she asked.

Harry nodded. “Yeah. I like Arabic, it’s got a lot of freedom with how you structure the words, since vowels are added to the word after you write it, and you can change the word by placing a different vowel instead of the one intended. It’s got creativity, and it’s beautiful to look at it.”

Hermione heaved a sigh. “Your mastery over languages astonishes me,” she said with a sigh.

Harry just grinned, then raised his hand. “Professor Flitwick? I have the assignment you gave me finished, if you want it,” he said.

The professor’s eyes went wide. “Already? I wasn’t expecting it until next week, to be honest.”

Harry shook his head. “I like to finish things early rather than late. It makes it easier if I do it when it’s given to me.”

“Well, that is certainly a good attitude to have about homework and studying. You can pass it up with everyone else’s work.”

Harry added his essay to the pile that was passed to him, and after a few moments, said pile was sitting on Professor Flitwick’s desk.

“Alright, thank you. I’m sure you all have done a wonderful job on your essays. Today, I would like to review the levitating charm. Who remembers the incantation?”

Several hands went up around the room on both sides of the House line. “Ms. Greengrass, if you would.”

“Wingardium Leviosa,” she said, pronouncing it with stresses on syllables that made little sense to Harry.

“Very good. Indeed. One point to Slytherin. Who would be willing to demonstrate the wand movement associated with this spell? Ms. Granger, then.”
Hermione pulled her wand out and swished and flicked it as was proper. “Yes, perfect. One point to Gryffindor. Now, if everyone would repeat the incantation for me, I would like to check your pronunciation. Yes, one at a time, if you would, starting from Ms. Parkinson in the back.”

Harry watched as each student said the phrase, some being corrected, as Professor Flitwick went around the room to each student.

When he got to Harry, he paused, remembering Harry’s demonstration, before sighing. “Harry, we will see your demonstration later. Now, Mr. Zabini.” Blaise sent him a look as he stood up and repeated the incantation as directed.

“Very good everyone. Now, wands out, and the movement as well. Yes, very good. I have the feathers again, and before we move on the a more difficult challenge I would like to see all of you levitating the feather.” He sent them out to each of them with a flick of his wand, and Harry wanted to learn that spell. It seemed very useful.

His feather settled in front of him, and he eyed it with amusement. A feather. Really, absurdly easy. If Merlin had started him on feathers rather than breakable things, Harry wondered if he would have been so determined to get the spell right at all.

Still, he raised his wand, ready to execute the spell, when Flitwick’s voice stopped him.

“Harry, if you would wait a moment, I would like to use your demonstration in a few minutes to show what we plan to work on.”

Harry sighed, slumping in his chair, but nodded. “Alright, I can wait.”

“What did you do this time?” Blaise asked him.

Harry shook his head. “I know this spell already. I showed off to Professor Flitwick before and now he’s using me as a demonstration.”

Hermione looked at him. “Showed off?” she asked, trying to divide her concentration between her levitating feather and Harry.

Harry waved a hand. “You’ll see. Concentrate on your feather. It’ll be important later. Neville, you have to mean your spell. Don’t be afraid of it. Your magic will follow your intentions. Want the feather to rise when you say the spell. That should be all you focus on.”

Harry leaned over Hermione to get a look at Neville, who was looking a bit panicked. “Focus?” he repeated.

“Yeah, your willpower is as important as the words you use or the motions you make, so make sure they’re in line with what you want to do,” Harry said.

Neville tightened his grip on his wand. “Okay.”

Harry watched as he narrowed his eyes, focusing on the feather, before waving his wand and repeating the spell. His feather wobbled shakily into the air, then stayed, settling into a stable position nearly a meter off the desk. Neville grinned at Harry, delight in his eyes. “I did it!” he said.

“Good job Neville,” Harry praised, a smile blossoming on his face. Neville seemed to be someone who wasn’t praised very often, with very little self confidence. Harry intended to change that.

Blaise and Hermione also had their feathers aloft, as did nearly everyone else in the class. A few of
the Gryffindor boys seemed to be having some problems, but the look Hermione sent them made Harry rethink his offer to assist for the moment. He would help out later, after he gave his demonstration.

“Very good everyone. Now, Harry, if you could come down here, I would like you to demonstrate what you showed me last Friday.”

Harry nodded, slipping past Blaise and heading down the stairs to the pit where Flitwick had several feathers.

“Just one of them?” Harry asked.

“indeed. Just one for now. Multiple levitation spells are taxing.” For the average child, Flitwick mentally added.

Harry took his focus out of it’s holster, holding it lightly in his hand, before he snapped out the incantation under his breath and waved his wand in the appropriate manner.

The feather lifted aloft with no hesitation, and Harry grinned as he began to direct it around the room, twitching the tip of his focus minutely to direct it where he wanted. Between him and his focus, they had the feather playing with his peers feathers and dancing in and around the students.

Several sets of wide eyes watched the show Harry was putting on.

“Thank you, Harry, “Flitwick said. “As you can see, the next objective is to move the feather around, in more directions than just upwards. It takes focusing your wand on the feather and directing it with the tip. Small, smooth motions are best, if you can manage them.”

Harry directed the feather back to his hands and let it drop into an outstretched palm. “Do you want me to do anything?” he asked.

Flitwick gave him a bright grin. “If you could, offer some advice to those who seem to be having some trouble. You’ve got a very good way of explaining things, if you managed to get Mr. Longbottom to get the spell right.” He sent Harry a sunny smile.

Harry gave him a thumbs up, heading back to his seat.

“You can do all that?” Hermione breathed. “How did you learn how to do that?”

“I had very poor control over my magic as a child, and it would cause more problems than it was worth. I had a mentor that would make me levitate glass vases through busy marketplaces and I couldn’t break it, or I would have to levitate the pieces. You learn focus really fast that way.”

Hermione sucked in a breath. “You can levitate multiple objects at once too?” she explained, “Who was your mentor? How did you learn so young? How old were you? Are you some kind of magic prodigy?”

Harry laughed at the barrage of questions. “Yes I can, My mentor wishes to remain unnamed, I was determined at the age of seven, and I don’t think so.”

“I think you have no idea what the term prodigy means,” Blaise said dryly.

Harry shrugged. “If you all practiced, you could do it to. I’m just willing to put in more effort than the average person.”
“Well, help us out, would you?” Blaise said. “I mean, that was really impressive what you did.”

Harry grinned. He could do that.

So he spent the rest of the lesson offering advice to anyone who would listen, which was a rather small number, unfortunately. Most of the Slytherins remembered the verbal beatdown he had given Malfoy, and the only one willing to listen to him had been the girl who had answered first, Daphne Greengrass. In Gryffindor, there were more open ears, namely among the girls who all looked at him and giggled, but Ron Weasley wasn’t quite sure he wanted help. There was something…hostile about his attitude towards him, so Harry just gave them a few words of advice that they might have listened to, before Professor Flitwick wrapped up the lesson.

“Alright, I saw some good attempts out there! We’ll pick this back up in the next lesson, so if you have a chance you should practice on your own, though not in the hallways, as I’m sure you remember. Now, there’s no essay for this class, I would just like to see improvement with your spellcasting.”

Students shuffled around, sighs of relief at the lack of homework making the rounds, and Harry slid his shoulder strap on, heading towards the door.

“Herbology next, right?” he said to his friends.

“For you three, yeah. I’ve got a free afternoon until dinner. I want to ask Padma a few questions, she had history this afternoon, I wanted to get the gist of it from her.” Blaise looked towards the Library.

“Maybe see if you can figure out if Harry’s dad is as….Harry-like as he is,” Hermione said, grinning at Harry.

Harry stuck his tongue out at them in a childish retaliatory strike.

“Well, I’m going to the greenhouses. I want to check them out.”

Neville’s face looked panicked. “I’m coming with you! Don’t touch anything!”

Harry left, laughing, as Neville chased after him.

Hermione and Blaise shared a grin. “He’s really getting more confident,” Hermione said. “Before Harry came along, I don’t think I heard him say much of anything unless he had to.”

Blaise shrugged. “I think Harry scares him around plants. And we all know how much he loves his plants. Slytherins say he’s a teacher’s pet in Sprout’s class.”

Hermione sighed a huff. “Well, he’s getting louder, at least. We can only hope he’ll get some confidence outside of plants and herbology.”

“Yeah. Well, I’ll see you later. I’ve got a Herbology paper to at least start.” Blaise waved to Hermione and they split up in the hallway.

“Why are you hanging around with a mudblood like her, Zabini?” Malfoy said, sidling up next to him.

Blaise shot him a poisonous look. “She’s rather nice, and intelligent. If you could ever look beyond your own nose, you might realize the value in someone who could intellectually stimulate you, though I doubt you need more than Crabbe or Goyle for that,” Blaise said with a raised eyebrow at the oversized eleven year olds hovering behind Malfoy.
They shifted, taking offence at the statement.

Draco flushed. “You’re taking the wrong steps for a Slytherin, Zabini. Making friends with mudbloods and squibs and...and whatever Potter is,” he spat.

Blaise grinned. “Harry’s got you scared, doesn’t he?” he said. “He’s smarter than you, and you know it, and he doesn’t play by your rules. And that scares you. Well, deal with it, because Harry’s here to stay, I hope you know that. And he’s going to be here to change everything you know.”

Malfoy shook. “He’s just a loud mouthed brat who thinks he knows more than he does, and he’s going to get what’s coming to him,” he spat.

“I would dearly love to see you try,” Blaise said. “Let me know when you plan on it, so I can ask Hermione for one of those recording devices. I’m sure Harry could get it to work in Hogwarts.”

Malfoy reached for his wand. “Zabini,” he hissed.

“Try it, Malfoy. Right in front of the charms master’s room, no less. I’m sure it would go splendidly for you.”

“You’ve always been an outcast in the dark circles, Zabini, you’re not doing yourself any favors hanging out with the likes of them,” Malfoy tried to change tact.

Zabini shrugged. “As you say, I’ve always been on the outside. I’m sure it won’t be much of an issue to just stay there. Besides, Harry’s a better person than you are and would ever be. And Hermione, Padma, and Neville are interesting. More than I can say for the rest of Slytherin, really.”

Malfoy stood, staring at Blaise in shock. “You can’t just…”

“I can, and I will. You all never accepted me, why should I care what you think? Now, I’m going to the library, where you can find me and try the patience of Madam Pince if you wish to continue this conversation.” He brushed past the fuming Malfoy scion, feeling a sort of vindictive pleasure in having managed to stand up for himself and his new found friends.

Maybe Harry had a point about standing up for yourself.

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Harry meanwhile was being chased by Neville, Hermione following at a decent distance, laughing.

“Greenhouse 1, Harry!” Neville called out after him.

Harry turned towards the glass building that housed all sorts of plants he was not good with.

People in yellow were filtering into the greenhouse as well, and Harry took the stairs quickly.

“Hello. I’m Professor Sprout, Harry. It’s nice to have you in my class.”

“I’m sure you won’t be thinking that after class is over,” Harry said cheerfully. “Most of the others think that right now. I’m not the best example of a conscientious student.”

Neville slid to a stop, panting slightly, behind Harry. “I’m his partner,” Neville said.

Sprout grinned. “Perfect! You can show him the ropes. Today we’re replanting the Aromatic Charmed Roses. They’re due for some new soil.”

Neville nodded.
Hermione was relieved to find out that Harry was as crap at plants as he said he was. Really, he wasn’t very good. After his speech about plants and their properties in potions, she had expected the statement about his ability with plants to be a false modesty of sorts, but she had never seen someone so unused to handling a shovel before. Or such…interesting uses for the shovel.

“No, Harry, that’s not how you dig out the roots. Are you trying to kill the plant?”

“Well, I mean, do they need all the little dangly roots? That’s a lot of roots,” Harry replied.

“Yes, they need all of them. The big ones especially. Be careful!”

“No, Harry, that’s not how you handle a plant, you can’t just…just rip it out! You’re going to kill it!”

“Harry, please, please don’t pull at the leaves or the flower petals! They’re really important to the plant and they’re not sick!”

“Harry, don’t touch that plant, it’s really painful. And, it’s territorial.”

Hermione replotted her rose with care, taking the time to tamp everything down as she had been shown and examining the rose as was proper. Aromatic Charmed Roses were a special breed of rose that released the smell of things based on colors, and they were wonderful additions to any garden.

“Harry, what are you doing? I was repotting my rose and you’re not fini-, what’s that vial?”

Neville’s voice was panicked.

Harry was holding a small vial with vivid purple liquid inside it. His finger had slid the stopper off and he was dripping it onto the roots of his not yet repotted rose.

“It’s nothing, really. I mean, I just want to see how it interacts with a magical plants,” Harry said.

“You can’t just….just….do whatever to plants! They’re very sensitive, stop, no, don’t add that, HARRY!”

“I already added some, I was just adding a bit more. Look, it hasn’t done anything yet. I think the magic is halting the process….no, wait, there it goes!” Harry’s voice was delighted.

Hermione, on the other hand, now understood why his dad had banned him from the garden.

The rose had grown a good two feet and the petals had turned a deadly looking shiny. The leaves had spread out. And the flower itself was growing….teeth.

“Harry, what did you do?” Neville asked, horror in his voice.

“What did you do to the rose?” Neville asked again.

“It’s just a growth solution, and a bit of self-awareness. I mean, on non-magical plants I managed to make some ankle snapping daisies. I guess flowers have this idea of wanting to eat things, going by the fangs on this one.”

“Harry, why did you add that to the rose?” Neville asked.

“Well, I mean, plants, I get them, they’re important, but they’re such a good thing to experiment on. Their cell structure is so rigid that adding or taking traits away is much different. And it’s always fun
“What is going on over here? What is with the commotion? Back to your roses everyone, back to your ro-Oh Merlin, what is that?” Sprout had wandered over at the sight of the crowd that had gathered around the plant and the boy who was responsible.

“What is this? What did you do? How did you…” Sprout trailed off, lost for words.

Harry grinned. “I made it, it’s a formula I designed,” he said.

“Why did you even think you could use it?” Sprout asked, clearly confused and little terrified at the flower monstrosity stretching it’s root legs in front of her.

Harry shrugged. “Well, I mean, I know how it works on non-magical plants, but I’ve never tried it on a magical plant before. I wanted to see if magic would add anything, or if it would even work in the first place.”

“And you didn’t think about asking me first?” she said, trying really hard to keep her voice even and not shouting.

Harry rubbed the back of his head, a little sheepish. “Well, um, I, sort of forgot,. I’m really sorry. I didn’t mean to forget to ask for permission.” He looked genuinely upset at that, something Hermione was a bit at a loss for.

“How do you stop it?” Sprout asked.

Harry gave his rose monster a look. It was bobbing its head-flower around, searching for something maybe? It’s petal teeth opened and closed a few times, and he gave it a considering tilt of his head. “Hmm, not sure. Dad did something last time, though it only worked on the lilies. The dandelions are blocked off, they like to bite ankles. I could ask him. He never let me learn, said I would screw it up and make them worse.”

Sprout breathed deeply. “Go get your father. And bring him here. And you’re explaining what you’ve done,” she said.

Harry gave his rose monster a look. It was bobbing its head-flower around, searching for something maybe? It’s petal teeth opened and closed a few times, and he gave it a considering tilt of his head. “Hmm, not sure. Dad did something last time, though it only worked on the lilies. The dandelions are blocked off, they like to bite ankles. I could ask him. He never let me learn, said I would screw it up and make them worse.”

Sprout breathed deeply. “Go get your father. And bring him here. And you’re explaining what you’ve done,” she said.

Harry blanched just a bit. “I…er…” he dodged as the flower head came towards him. “I’m in for it now, aren’t I?” he muttered. “I wasn’t supposed to mess with plants anymore.”

Neville gave a soft huff from his position flattened against the wall. “More like you should never be let anywhere near plants ever again,” he said.

“I am of a mind to agree with you, Mr. Longbottom. And I will have to consider your placement in my class. Herbology is not the place for experimenting with the plants. It is a place to learn about their care.” She stepped back nimbly as the flower reached towards her. “It is a place to learn about their uses, and to cultivate them. Not to turn them into carnivorous monsters when they aren’t that way already.”

Harry gave her a sheepish look. “I’ll go get my dad,” he said. “I’m so going to be in trouble,” he
muttered.

It was the first teenage-like sentence Hermione had heard from him all day. She really wanted to meet Harry’s dad.

Maybe.

Harry rushed out of the greenhouse far faster than he had ever ran before, and Sprout looked at Hermione and Neville. “You two, out. I’m going to contain this rose monster until Harry can bring his father back. I would like to not have to worry about you two on top of the flower.”

Hermione and Neville nodded, edging out of the greenhouse and onto the grounds, where the class was gathered.

“What happened?” Weasley asked. “Why did Sprout send us out?”

Neville leveled a look in the direction Harry had run. “Harry,” he said flatly.

“Harry? What did he do?” Finch-Fletchly asked.

“He did something he shouldn’t have. And Sprout’s dealing with it.”

“What could he have possibly done in a greenhouse to make Professor Sprout worried?” Susan Bones asked.

“He made the rose carnivorous,” Hermione replied.

There were whispers of disbelief. “You can’t do that to a flower!” Weasley denied.

Hermione huffed. “You can if you’re insane,” she replied. “And believe me, Harry certainly qualifies.”

The first years whispered amongst themselves as they waited anxiously out on the lawn.

It wasn’t much longer until they saw Harry running back, followed by a thin figure in a pinstripe suit Hermione could only assume was his father.

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Harry raced into Hogwarts and immediately discarded the idea of searching the castle on foot. By the time he found his dad that way it would possibly be too late. The formula had taken hold much faster than he had thought it would after the initial delay, faster than it had with the non-magical plants, so he slipped into an alcove and took his necklace off, letting his magic rush out of him, and he rested against the walls.

_Hogwarts? Can you help me find my dad? He’s the one who’s teaching History of Magic. Tall, skinny, very old on the inside, young on the outside._

_I know of whom you speak. He is currently in the room your strange box is in. There is a secret passage behind you to the same floor_, Hogwarts replied.

Harry breathed a sigh of relief. _Thank you._

The wall behind him swung back to reveal a fairly well lit spiral staircase, and he took the stairs up two at a time.
He felt a shift in the magic and he was certain the passage had moved in space, a phenomena he would have to study later, and he stumbled out from behind a tapestry down the hall from their rooms.

He gave the password as quickly as he could and sprinted into the rooms.

Sure enough, his dad was outside the Tardis, sitting on the floor with a bunch of papers and a confused look on his face.

“Ah, Harry, good. You can help me with this. The kids all turned in these essays, but they’re rather pointless. Nothing I’m going to cover, don’t know why they even bothered at all, but I don’t know what I should do with the-”

“Dad, I turned a magical rose carnivorous and it’s in the greenhouse right now, and I don’t know how to fix it,” Harry interrupted.

The look his dad fixed him with promised many many cycles of painful studying and remedial lessons. “What exactly did you do?” he said. “Be specific.”

Harry took out the vial of the purple formula he had used. “I dropped about fifteen milliliters of this onto the roots of the rose. It was magical, I wanted to see if it would behave the same was as a non-magical flower did. But I think the magic exacerbated the problem.”

His dad sighed. “Harry, what am I supposed to do with you?” he said.

Harry crossed his arms defensively. “I mean, I didn’t intend for it to be so bad.”

“Yes, well, intentions are the best way to pave yourself a path to destruction. Alright, let me go grab the formula I used last time. I kept a few vials because I know you. You’d better hope they work like they should. They didn’t work on the dandelions.”

Harry also hoped it worked.

It was only a few minutes later and they were headed down the secret passage and back out to the greenhouses.

The class was still hovering outside the greenhouse when Harry got back, and he eyed his classmates before he turned to the greenhouse. “It’s in there.”

“You’re coming, don’t think you can get out of this because you aren’t. I’ll make sure Professor Sprout is aware you shall be punished as you should for experimenting without permission.”

Harry blanched.

Hermione was enjoying the sight of Harry behaving like a child for once. Sure, he had far too much energy and bounced everywhere, but he never acted like a kid, not really. But here, in the presence of his father, he was like any other pre-teen being scolded. Sure, he was being scolded for something none of them would have been able to do, but it was still a calming scene to know Harry had someone to answer to.

Harry followed his dad up the stairs and into the greenhouse.

“My dad’s here, Professor Sprout,” Harry called out.

“Good. This thing’s grown near a meter and I think it’s fangs are getting longer,” the professor called
The Doctor sent Harry a very significant look. “We will figure out what you did later,” he promised.

Harry gulped. “Okay,” he said in a quiet voice.

The Doctor headed over towards the herbology professor, and when he came across Harry’s monstrosity, he sighed. “Harry, you are impossible. I told you no more experiments on plants. Do you remember what happened last time you did anything to plants? We never managed to repair that bit of the Tardis and she was so angry we didn’t have hot showers for a whole set.”

Harry sighed. “I’m sorry. I wasn’t thinking. I’ll take full responsibility for my actions.”

“That’s a start. We’ll move on to you analyzing the proper make up of the plant you so impulsively decided to experiment on, and you’ll be writing the proper formula for it’s standard growth pattern and how it interacts with every single base chemical until I’m satisfied that you are aware of what magical plants do in the presence of chemicals. And then you will be extrapolating that information into a chart where you will document the entire process. When I’m satisfied that you understand the base chemicals and their reactions, I want you to speculate on how you could have possibly done what you intended to do to the plant properly, and I want a ten page report on the process.”

Harry shuddered. He hated plant biology.

Professor Sprout was torn between being amused and horrified at the punishment meted out. She had planned a detention or two where she would lecture the boy on proper greenhouse safety protocols, and maybe she would have a discussion with Dumbledore about allowing him in her greenhouse at all, but this.

“That...that’s a bit...severe. I understand this is a rather unusual situation, but such a punishment, surely.”

The Doctor turned his intense gaze to the herbology professor, a smile forming. “Harry understands his actions here well and good, and that he shouldn’t have done this without both telling you he would and also telling me, and having formed several hypothesis for what would happen, and how he could solve the problem should one arise. But he’s always been rather impulsive, and he needs to understand that his behavior has consequences. You can only be impulsive if you’re well prepared beforehand, and his need for my assistance tells me he wasn’t well prepared for his little ill-timed experiment.”

Harry groaned. This was an ongoing argument between the two. Harry argued that his dad always impulsively did things. All the time. His dad replied that he had many many centuries to test many possible permutations of his various trials and was prepared for the worst, where as Harry was still in the single digits (or most recently just into double digits) and not near ready to do off the cuff impulsive experiments with dangerous chemicals.

He usually lost those arguments with his dad.

The Doctor fished out a small vial from his pocket. It was filled with clear liquid that shimmered in the light. “I’ll handle it from here, professor. This should do the trick. If not I’ve got a couple ideas, though Harry will have to assist.” The Doctor shot a look at his son. “Which is something you should have thought of. You have magic, you should have thought of something you could have done to counter this if it happened. You remember the Daisy Incident.”

Harry sighed. “Yes dad.”
His dad stepped around the professor, opened the vial, pulled out a small piece of sausage from his pocket, and dunked it in the vial. Then he tossed it at the flower.

True to its carnivorous nature, it snatched the sausage out of the air and munch ed it down.

The effect was immediate. If the flower had had vocal cords, Harry was sure it would be making some horrific noise. As it was, the rustling of its petals and leaves were creepy as it curled in on itself and crumpled to the floor.

It gave a few weak attempts to stay upright, before it collapsed, and was once more inert.

The herbology professor stared at the flower. “Thank you, I suppose, for getting rid of the carnivorous rose. I shall have to watch Harry closely whenever he’s in the greenhouse. He won’t be allowed in here on his own,” the professor said.

Harry sighed. “I figured as much. Can I have Neville as a partner whenever I have class with the Gryffindors?”

“I would almost demand it. He’s the best first year student,” Sprout said. “And when you don’t you will stay up beside me.”

Harry nodded, though he knew it was pointless to tell her there wouldn’t be a repeat of the incident that took place. He was already going to be doing so much research and work that he didn’t think he would be able to enjoy the sight of a plant for quite a while.

“What would you mind terribly if I took this with me?” the Doctor said, gesturing down at the rose.

Professor Sprout waved a hand. “Please. I don’t know if I could use it as fertilizer and I don’t trust it with the other dead material. I would be thankful if you could take it off my hands.” She looked a bit considering. “I would like to see that paper when you’re done with it, Harry. It sounds like something worthy of being looked at and may be valuable to how we deal with plants.”

Harry nodded. “I can get a second copy to you,” he said. “Dad’ll probably make me give one to you as an apology anyway.”

The Doctor levelled his son with a look. “You will be spending quite a bit of your freetime with this poor rose you decided to transform instead of, I believe you were supposed to repot it?” he said. “How in the Universe did you decide that playing mad scientist was a good idea while repotting a plant? Nevermind, I’ll get your answer later. For now, I’ll be taking this back to the Tardis, and you’ll be coming back after dinner to start on your punishment.”

Sprout tried to keep a smile off her face. “With the knowledge that you will be sufficiently punished for your actions, I suppose I can let the detentions I had been planning on giving you a pass. Though should something like this ever repeat, I shall not be as lenient.”

Harry nodded.

“Now, get to your friends, have dinner, and let them know you’ll be absent after dinner today. And for a good number of days.” The Doctor raised an eyebrow at his son.

Harry nodded, heading out of the greenhouse with his shoulders slumped.

Professor Sprout watched him. “Are you sure he can handle that? I mean, he’s only eleven,” she said. “I don’t mean to tell you how to parent him, but eleven year olds aren’t known for their excellent research skills.”
The Doctor grinned. “This isn’t the first time he’s had to do something like this. Once he had to review remedial maths for three whole weeks before I let him near his experiments again.”

Professor Sprout raised a skeptical eyebrow. “I’m not sure if I should believe that or not.”

“Well, Harry shouldn’t be causing too many more issues in class. I mean, he’ll be a handful, but he shouldn’t be creating any more plant monsters.” The Doctor hefted the flower up. “I’ll take this with me then. Get it out of your hair, so to say. I apologize for my son. He’s impulsive.”

Professor Sprout smiled. “I’ve seen worse. Thank you, for handling the problem. I wasn’t sure if I could have taken care of it without destroying it. I do so hate damaging plants when it’s not needed.”

The Doctor grinned again, then headed out the door. “I expect you back at the Tardis after dinner, Harry,” the Doctor said, before he headed back to the castle.

Harry slumped to the ground. “I’m so screwed,” he said.

Hermione really tried to comfort him, but she ended up holding back a bit of a giggle. “You should have listened to Neville,” she said. “He told you not to do anything stupid.”

Harry groaned. “I know, I know. It’s just, it was so tempting. I just wanted to see, and now I’m going to be stuck researching plant biology for cycles. Sets of cycles.” He moaned, reaching up to run his hands through his hair in exasperation.

Hermione let the giggle that had been threatening to escape go. “It’s nice to see you can act your age,” she said.

Harry glared at her.

Neville sat next to him. “You’re really not good with plants,” he said.

Harry scowled. “How did you figure that out?” he said, sarcasm heavy in his voice.

“No I mean, even before you turned the rose into a monster, you weren’t very good with the tools or anything. So I mean, if you promise to not do anything else to the plants, I’ll still help you out in Herbology,” Neville said quietly.


Neville gave him a tentative smile.

“It’s nearing dinner. Let’s go see if we can find Blaise and Padma,” Hermione said, reaching out a hand to pull the two boys up.

Harry let himself be leveraged off the ground, then stood, with his friends, looking at the castle.

“Food. Food sounds good.”

~~~In Which This is a Scene Change~~~~

Blaise found Padma also in the Library, pouring over a book on magical history, if the title was anything to go by. She wasn’t alone. About half a dozen other first years were there as well, all Ravenclaws, as well as a number of older years.

Blaise furrowed his brow. “Padma, what’s up?”
Padma looked up at him, eyes wide. “Harry’s dad is, he’s a walking dictionary example of genius. Seriously. He’s insanely smart and quick. And he’s amazing. Blaise, if Harry ever got the ability to talk to people like his dad can talk to people, the world will never be the same. If the Doctor ever wanted to, he could rule the world. And he wouldn’t need to do anything but talk to people.”

Blaise raised an eyebrow, settling down across from Padma. “What?”

“The Doctor, Harry’s dad. He’s….he’s amazing Blaise.”

“Truth, little firstie,” a tall Hufflepuff walking by said. “That man is amazing. Batshit crazy, but amazing.” He wandered off after this little tidbit.

“Pardon?”

Padma frowned at the Slytherin. “You’ll just have to see for yourself. You have him tomorrow, yeah?”

“Yeah, double period. Gryffindor Slytherin.”

Padma waved a hand. “Don’t worry about house rivalries. The Doctor will just wave through them all anyway.”

“What are you reading?” Blaise decided that Padma’s newfound hero-worship for Harry’s dad was a bit creepier than he expected and turned his attention to the book she seemed to have been so intent on.

“Oh, Harry’s dad gave us all one of these. It’s about the origins of magic. And it’s fascinating. I mean, I never knew there was actually an origin to magic. It’s universal, Blaise. Universal.” She looked a little starry eyed.

Blaise hoped Hermione would be able to keep a straight head on after their class tomorrow. If Padma was this star crossed with the man, he feared what Hermione would be.

A small shudder spread through him. He really really feared what Hermione would be.

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Harry left right after dinner, sighing and dragging his feet, as his friends laughed at his misfortune behind him. Really, they were so inconsiderate. Even Neville chuckled when he heard Harry’s punishment.

So unfair. So well deserved

Blaise gasped for air. “He turned a rose carnivorous?” he said. Harry had already left, sulking, and he hadn’t been able to properly ask why Harry was so moody until after he was gone.

Hermione nodded, pressing her mouth together tightly to keep the giggles from escaping. “And it grew nearly a whole two meters taller. And it’s petals turned into teeth. It was brilliant. Scary, but brilliant. But seeing Harry genuinely acting like a kid was totally worth the mild fear that I would be bitten by a flower.”

Blaise let the chuckles escape him again. “Oh I wish I had been there. I really do.”

Padma nodded. “Me too.” Her face danced with mirth at the situation. “And now he has to write an entire paper on how he should have properly gone about what he wanted to do.” Padma sighed
dreamily. “I think the Doctor makes the best punishments.”

Blaise eyed her warily. “Is this still part of your whole ‘Harry’s dad is amazing’ thing?” he asked.

Padma gave him a look. “Just you wait, Blaise Zabini. After one of his classes you won’t see magic quite the same.”

“It’s just one class, how much could have changed?” Blaise asked.

Padma shook her head. “You have to experience the Doctor for yourself. It’s not something I can put into words.”

Hermione looked intrigued at the book Padma was clutching to her. “What is that book? It wasn’t part of our shopping lists and I’ve never seen it before in the Library.”

“And you just happen to know every book in the Library on sight?” Blaise drawled.

Hermione gave him a look. “No, but I’ve looked all through the Magical Theory section and that book is clearly a book on magical theory, judging from the title.”

Padma grinned. “I’m not spoiling the Doctor’s class for you. You’ll get it tomorrow. And it’s amazing. We are seriously going to need to talk about some of the things in here after you get it.”

“Really? Why?”

“It’s just...it’s so interesting! Hermione, it’s on the origin of Magic!”

“There’s an origin?” she said, eyes wide.

Padma nodded. “And it’s amazing!”

“You think Harry knows?”

“I’m sure Harry definitely knows.”

Neville looked over at Blaise. “Will we be alright tomorrow?” he asked, hesitant.

Blaise shrugged. “Can’t be much worse than the Carnivorous Rose, yeah?”

Neville shuddered. “No, I guess not.”

Hermione had pulled out her schedule again. “Oh, we have flying classes tomorrow.” She paused, looked thoughtful. “You think Harry’s going to be okay?”

“We’ll be lucky if Madam Hooch doesn’t give him detention for tampering with the brooms or unauthorized flying,” Blaise said.

“I hope he doesn’t fall,” Neville whispered.

Hermione smiled at him. “Harry’s probably not going to fall off the broom. And if he did, Madam Hooch is there to make sure he doesn’t get too hurt.”

Neville refrained from pointing out his bad fall at the beginning of the year.

“Alright, well, I’m tired and ready for bed. I’ll see you all tomorrow.” Padma stood up, looking around at the small group of mismatched friends.
“Yeah, tomorrow. Night Padma,” Blaise said.

“Good night.”

“Night.”

Padma leaving was a signal for the rest of them to check the time and yawn, and they split off for sleep.

~~~~In Which This is a Scene Break~~~~

Harry slouched into the Tardis where his dad was waiting for him in the console room, obviously there to make sure Harry didn’t attempt to wiggle out of his punishment. Harry groaned.

“Alright, alright, let’s get started on this,” he said, sighing.

The Doctor rolled his eyes. “No need to be so down about it, it’s research!”

“I hate plants,” Harry said. “I mean, aside from their uses in potions and them generally being useful to continued life, I’m not all that fond of them. Good for experimenting with but other than that, I don’t really like them much.”

“Well then, you shouldn’t be doing unauthorized experiments with them at all,” his dad replied. “Now, start with the basic measurements, and tell me about your day. How were classes?”

Harry snorted. “We’re turning into a right proper domestic aren’t we?” He peered at the deceased rose laying across a table in the back of the console room. “Also, why are we out here instead of back in the labs?”

“Don’t want to go for the tools just yet, I want observations, mundane and magical. And I don’t want the latter to interfere with the other things going on back there. So get on it.”

“Fine fine. Also, there’s something weird going on with the defense teacher. He’s the guy who fainted in the hall, screaming about the troll. Whenever he looks at me, something under the scar on my forehead twinges. It’s not that painful but it’s uncomfortable.”

The Doctor frowned. “Are you sure it’s only when the professor looks at you?”

“It’s worse when he looks at me. Just being in the same room is uncomfortable. Also, he has an inconsistent stutter. There’s no pattern to it, no specific reason for the stutter to exist. It’s hard to understand what he’s saying, to be honest.”

“That’s strange. I’ll keep an eye on it. You as well. When do you have defense?”

Harry fished in his pocket, pulling out the schedule Dumbledore had given him. “Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday,” he said. “So I have it next cycle too.”

The Doctor sighed. “You are going to have to use the local vernacular here, Harry,” he said. “And you’re going to have to get used to how humans tell time. No more specific unit measurements from Gallifreyian sciences, you’re going to have to use Earth time.”

Harry groaned. “It’s so...imprecise though. And subjective. I mean, at least with what I use I can denote what I’m referring to so that subjectivity can be taken into account!”

“And I’m the only one who understands it, so you’re going to have to get used to human standard time.” The Doctor hummed for a moment. “Alright, in relation to your strange Defense teacher, keep
an eye on him in your next class and make a record on the actual events that happen. Anything else that strikes you as odd as well. I’ll see if I can get some readings from the energy levels around the defense room in my spare time and we’ll put our heads together over this tomorrow or the next day.”

Harry nodded. “Sounds good.”

“Now, back to studying the rose you so rashly decided to turn carnivorous today.”

Well, he wasn’t getting out of this one, he could tell. Harry sighed, but dutifully started cataloguing the rose.

~~~~~In Which this is the Ending to Part 1~~~~~~

Chapter End Notes

And there is Part 1 of the first week. Hope you enjoy the next part! I do love this story, even if I take forever to update.

Thank you for your patience, your kind words in your reviews, and all the ideas you send my way! I really do love reading all of them!!

Until next time

Kuroi
Hey, lookie, I’m back~! I did mean Sunday when I posted that date...I apparently can’t date very well anymore...sigh.

Thank you to Mischief Managed for running through this so quickly and reminding me I was hitting my self-imposed deadline for posting! You’re awesome! Thank you!

And that’s that! Onwards with the rest of the chapter!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

~~~~In Which This is a Beginning~~~~

Harry did manage to stumble into the Great Hall in time the next day, blinking around for his friends. His morning had started with the stone screeching at him and Pashti licking his face, apparently over her nap time from the previous day.

He had scrambled around, getting ready and mildly irritated at having to stick to a schedule, but made it out the Tardis doors in time for breakfast, he believed.

The group was at the Ravenclaw table again, empty space surrounding their seating choice. Neville looked somewhat uncomfortable but more willing to sit with people who talk to him than ignored him. Blaise was trying hard to be nonchalant, but the Slytherins had said something to him to make him uneasy, if his occasional glances back at the green table were anything to go by. Hermione was trying to bluster through the odd sensation of breaking social rules on purpose by talking far too loudly. Padma seemed overly amused by it all.

Harry grinned. His little group would get on just fine. And they were obviously different enough that any new friends would know just what they were getting into.

He sauntered over. “Morning!”

“Harry! We were just talking about you. There’s the flying class this morning and we were wondering whether you’ve ever flown before.”

Harry blinked, pulling out his schedule with a frown. “Flying class...yeah, right. Um, yeah, flown plenty of times, me. Love flying. Why?”

Hermione sighed in relief. “That’s good. It’s an all houses class, so we don’t have to split up for it. and it’s a bit after breakfast, so we can go down to the field early and introduce you to Madam Hooch. She’s in charge of all the flying equipment.”

“So what exactly do we do in a flying class? I would figure it would be fairly self explanatory, really,” Harry asked.

Padma shook her head. “Not really. We have to learn control, balance, how to fly properly. I mean,
flying isn’t mandatory for all years but first years have to learn, so they won’t ever be in trouble in an emergency.”

“Ah, that makes sense. So, are any of you here good flyers?’’

“I’m not bad,’’ Blaise said.

“I hate heights,’’ Hermione said.

“I don’t much like flying. It’s tricky and I’m always afraid I’ll fall.”

Neville swallowed and shook his head. “No.’’

Harry sighed. “Helpful lot you’ll be then,’’ he said. “Ah well, just have to get you up to speed there as well.’’

~~~

“You lot use brooms to fly?!’’ Harry exclaimed when they reached the pitch.

Hermione frowned. “You said you’ve flown before,’’ she pointed out.

“Not on brooms! Carpets, hoverboards, things like that sure. But brooms! How cliche are you trying to be?’’

Hermione couldn’t help snorting a bit at that, while Neville, Padma, and Blaise looked a tad bit confused.

“Cliche?’’ Blaise asked.

“You do know that non-magicals have this belief that witches ride around on brooms, yeah?’’ he said.

“It’s a popular scary story, or it was when I was a kid,’’ Hermione pointed out.

“Really?’’ Padma asked.

“Yeah, it’s everywhere.’’

Blaise scoffed. “Must have been some careless witch that had got ten herself seen,’’ he said.

“Well, it still stands. I mean, you all are almost walking cliches of non-magical witches half the time.’’ Harry gestured at the robes and the broom. “You even have pointy hats!’’

Padma sighed. “Let’s put aside the magical and non-magical ideologies of the wizarding world. We do have a class to attend.’’

“You do know that those stereotypes came from non-magicals who saw witches and wizards first, right?’’ Hermione pointed out.

Harry scowled. “Yeah, but those stereotypes are ages old, and you lot are still the same! I mean, try some variety! Color, shape, something! You have magic, you should be able to do whatever you want!’’

Blaise sighed, shook his head. “The UK Wizarding World is still a regressive society compared to most others around the world,’’ he said. “You’ll see more colorful fashion outside of the UK ,
though.”

Padma nodded. “In India, many people wore colorful outfits, and it was a very vibrant culture.”

“Oh, are you talking about India? I’ve always wanted to go!” A girl with blonde hair braided back bounced into their circle. “I’m Susan Bones, sorry about intruding, but I love travelling and I’ve always wanted to go to India!”

Padma smiled. “It’s no problem. India is a very lovely country and the magical sectors are just as vibrant as the non-magical ones.”

Susan beamed. “That sounds amazing!”


“Yeah, she’s my aunt. Raised me, really. She’s awesome!” She blinked, looked around the circle. “Oh, wow, I didn’t realize how diverse this group was. Two Gryffindors, a Ravenclaw, a Slytherin, and….I don’t recognize you. What House are you in?” Susan pointed at Harry.

“Me? Oh, no house, me. Just hanging out here. Edward Scissorhands, nice to meet you Susan Bones.” Harry had felt the part of him that had probably spent far too long hanging out with Jack rearing its head.

He ignored the muffled choke of laughter from Hermione.

“Edward Scissorhands? I don’t think I’ve ever heard of a family with that name. Are you muggle-born? And how can you have no House?” Susan’s puzzled frown just fed Harry’s desire for mischief.

“Oh, I’m from a rather...bland family. Just me, honestly. No other Scissorhands to speak of. I feel like the lack of scissors on my hands makes that name rather pointless though. It’s descriptive, but when the thing it’s describing resembles nothing like the name, it sort of looses meaning.”

He wondered if Hermione was dying. She was certainly making enough choking noises.

“Really? That’s a rather odd name, Edward. Unique. Unique names are appreciated in the Wizarding World. Makes it easier to be remembered.” She grinned again, stuck out a hand. “Susan Bones.”

Harry took it with a grin. “Nice to meet you.”

“Now, why don’t you have a house, Edward?” Susan asked.

“I can’t...I can’t...” Hermione managed to say, face red. “Please...please stop!”

“I don’t know what’s wrong,” Padma confessed.

“I’m thinking Harry here has a good explanation though,” Blaise said.

Neville nodded. “She started laughing when you said your name was Edward Scissorhands,” he offered quietly.

“Harry?” Susan questioned. “You said your name was Edward though...”

Harry smiled. “Sorry, I’ve always loved that movie, and you were the first person not to recognize me on sight the entire time I’ve been at this blasted school.”
Susan frowned. “Harry...Harry…” her eyes went wide. “Oh, you’re Harry Potter!”

Harry winced. “Ah, not a potter, please. Just Harry is fine.”

“Oh, but...you’re a hero! I heard all about your entrance at the feast! I was in the Hospital Wing, broke my wrist pretty bad taking a tumble down the stairs, had to have the bone regrown.” Susan gesticulated wildly as she spoke. “I was so upset I missed you, and I haven't seen you at all!”

Harry blinked. “But I've had several classes with the yellow colored group already,” he said.

Susan grinned. “Yeah, I've not been at class. I had a bad reaction to the skele-grow so I was stuck on bed rest until today. I was so glad to get out of the infirmary. Who knew slugs could cause your lungs to fill with fluid.”

“Allergic reactions are a response by your body’s immune system to unfamiliar foreign bodies that are relatively harmless. Most of the time there aren't any adverse reactions but sometimes the immune system mistakes what would normally be harmless as something far worse and attacks it violently.” Harry shrugged. “Guess your body thought slugs were a particular threat.”

Susan blinked. “Really? I had no idea. That's so cool!”

Harry beamed. “Yeah, and the whole reason you get an allergic reaction is because the cells in your body that deal with foreign bodies mistake them for being dangerous and bind to mast cells and basophils and when they activate, they trigger a release of histamine and several other inflammatory agents. They spread to nearby tissues, and depending on your body's response several things could happen.” Harry recognized the glazed look in Susan's eyes and let out a sigh. “Bit of an information dump, I know.” he offered.

“I don't think I'd even heard half those words before.” Susan said.

“He does that a lot,” Blaise told her. “You get used to it.”

“Wow, you're so smart! Are you sure you're not in Ravenclaw?”

“No house for me. Don't need one, to be honest. Seems like a waste of time,”

Susan looked confused. “But...everyone has a House. Shouldn’t the headmaster have placed you in one by now?”

Harry shook his head. “No, the Sorting Hat couldn’t Sort me, so I’m houseless, and the four teachers who head the houses don’t seem too keen on having me join. I think Dumbledore’s plan to let it sort itself out will end with me in no house at all.” He chuckled. “Well, that’s not necessarily a bad thing. I mean, why would I need a bed when I have a perfectly serviceable one already?”

“You mean in that blue box?” Neville asked.

“Yeah, the Tardis! She’s my home.”

Hermione narrowed her eyes. “I’ve read a little bit on expansion charms. Your dad must have used a lot to make that blue box big enough for four of you.”

“Don’t know how big the Tardis is, actually. She always seems to have exactly what you need when you need it, unless you upset her. Did that once and she shut off all the hot water for a whole cycl...week,” he informed them.
“Your blue box is sentient?” Padma asked.

“Of course she is! She’s a living being in her own right, you know!”

“I didn’t know there were any magical creatures shaped like police phone boxes,” Hermione said.

Harry scratched his head. “Ah, well, that’s not her true shape...she just got stuck like it once. And we’ve never gotten around to fixing the bit that broke.”

Blaise sighed. “Somehow, I’m not surprised.”

“Well, we always get distracted by other things so we ne-” Harry was cut off by the loud voice of an older woman with a severe face entering the pitch.

“Nice to see you all out here and ready to practice. Now, you’ve have two months to get acclimated to flying, I’m going to be putting you through your paces today. After November, you will no longer have mandated flying classes. There will be a time slot open for those who would like to practice in hopes of joining your House’s quidditch team, but it will be an optional class, so I want to make sure you all are comfortable on brooms before I let those of you who dislike flying out into the world.” Her flint eyes looked over all the gathered eleven and twelve year olds.

Hermione raised her hand. “Um, Professor?” she called. “Harry’s never flown on a broom before.”

“I see. Well, if you’re anything like your father, this should be easy,” the professor said.

Harry raised an eyebrow. “My dad’s never flown on one either,” he pointed out.

Blaise heaved a sigh. “She means your biological father, James. He’s in the records for being one of the best seekers in Gryffindor.”

“Ah.”

Susan frowned at Harry. “You don’t know your parents?”

Padma, Hermione, Blaise, and Neville all winced. Harry turned to Susan. “I have parents. Several of them. Dad, Rose, Uncle Jack, and the Tardis. I never knew James or Lily, and expecting me to associate mother or father with them instead of the people who actually raised me is a bit shortsighted, yeah?” he said, far calmer than any of his friends expected. “What, she’s being curious, not brash. I’m not rude.”

“Say that to Draco Malfoy, or Ron Weasley,” Blaise muttered. Harry studiously ignored him.

“Alright, everyone, go get a broom from the shed and line back up in front of me. Mr...Harry, just stay on the ground while I make sure everyone is doing okay, then I’ll go over the basics with you.”

Harry snorted. Like he was going to stay on the ground when there was a possibility for flight involved.

“Please Harry,” Neville asked. “Flying is really dangerous if you don’t do it properly.” He had read Harry’s intentions correctly.

“I’ve been flying for ages, just not on a broom. Can’t be that different,” Harry replied.

Neville looked solemnly at his wrist. “I broke my wrist falling when I tried to fly the first time,” he said in an undertone.
Harry got the point. “I’ll give the professor a chance, ” he conceded.

“Thanks, I don’t want you to have to go to the Hospital Wing either.”

Blaise, Hermione, and Padma watched the proceedings with a bit of wonder. “If we ever need to dissuade Harry from doing something, I vote Neville,” Blaise said.

“Seconded,” Padma agreed.

“Me too.”

“Is Harry difficult?” Susan asked, having been stood behind them.

“He’s impossible, but he’s got a soft spot for Neville,” Blaise replied.

“I see.” They all grabbed brooms and lined up, and in no time were all hovering with differing degrees of success. Hermione and Neville barely managing a scarce two meters from the ground, Padma just above them, and Blaise and Susan doing lazy circles around them.

“You gotta have confidence if you want the broom to listen to you!” Blaise told the three.

“Easier to say when you don’t feel like you’re going to roll off the broom!” Hermione shot back.

“I don’t like flying,” Neville responded.

“You don’t have to like it, you just have to not kill yourself trying. I mean, knowing how to fly is important in case of emergencies,” Susan told them.

“5 points to Hufflepuff and Slytherin, Ms. Bones, Mr. Zabini. It’s always nice to see inter-House cooperation.” Blaise and Susan blinked at each other, then grinned, high-fiving.

Harry was staying sullenly on the ground, having given his word to Neville he would wait for the teacher. Sure, he could probably manage it just fine, but the boy looked worried for him, and it wouldn’t hurt to listen. He was trying to improve Neville’s confidence after all.

“Alright, Mr. Harry, let’s get you settled.” The teacher landed in front of him. “I’m Professor Hooch, or Madam Hooch, either one is okay. Now, lay your broom on the ground, hold you hand over top, and say ‘up’.”

Harry did as instructed, pleased when the broom jumped into his hand. “Alright, now what?”

“It’s nice to see your father’s talent is inherited. Legs over the broom, straddle position. You’ll feel the comfort spells take into effect when you kick off, so don’t worry too much about sitting on the handle. Hands partway up the shaft. Yes, just like that. Now, on the count of three, I want you to rise slowly, stop, and come back down. One, two, three.”

Harry sighed but did as she asked, feeling the relevant spells kick in. He felt his weight balance on the broom, adjusted it to descend, and touched down softly. “There, am I good? Can I at least stay in the air now?” he asked.

Madam Hooch gave him a critical look. “If I see you having any trouble, I’ll put you in remedial lessons,” she said. “It’s dangerous to play around on a broom, so mind your perimeter and don’t do anything you can’t control.”

Harry beamed. “Cool! Thanks!” Then he pushed off with force and zoomed up into the sky, feeling the wind on his face and loving the freedom from gravity flying gave him, even it was only an
illusion of freedom.

He looked around for his friends, startled to find them, along with all the rest of his classmates, a good dozen meters below him. He wasn’t that high up, was he?

“Mr. Potter! What are you doing up this high?” The shrill voice of the flying instructor penetrated his ears.

“Not a potter, and I’m only maybe 20 meters off the ground, hardly that high up. If I fall, my magic will instinctively kick in and prevent me from hitting the ground too hard.”

Madam Hooch looked less than impressed. “You are much too old to be having such bursts of accidental magic, Mr. Harry. What would more likely happen is I would be escorting you at wand-point to the Hospital Wing if you fell!”

Harry looked taken aback. “But...self protection magic isn’t accidental magic! It’s a part of your body’s systems responding to a threat and using the means at its disposal to protect you! I mean, what about all those stories of magicals falling down stairs and not getting more than a few bruises or maybe a broken bone when they should have died, or the countless magical accidents that don’t end in death?”

“You...you...” the flying instructor tried to find some argument to leverage back at him. “That is not the point! You are eleven! You are on a broom for the first time and you take off to the high heavens!”

Harry rolled his eyes. Really, these adults got worked up about the smallest things. “If you can’t trust that I won’t fall off my broom, put some sort of limiter or whatever on it. I mean, I’m not about to go zooming out of the arena, this is a big enough area to play in. I’ve also been flying before, just never on a broom. These are rather outdated things, though the spellwork on them is impressive. I can control it well enough, and as soon as I figure out all the little things, it should be easy as pie. Though pie is rather difficult to make, if you think about it. Troublesome thing, pie. If Rose didn’t like them so much I don’t think dad would bother about them, the number of times he’s caught the kitchen on fire....”

“You are getting away from the point, Mr. Harry,” Madam Hooch said, face stern. “And be that as it may, this is still your first time flying in my class. I would prefer you to be closer to the ground. Now,” she demanded when Harry hesitated.

He sighed, but angled downwards towards his friends and took off at a speed he was sure Madam Hooch thought would be too fast.

Sure enough, he did hear his name being called out by the irate professor, but he really didn’t care much. He felt perfectly comfortable on the broom, however odd a flying instrument it was. The magic that created it was easily accessible to his magic and that connection helped strengthen his connection to it, allowing him to fly near perfectly. So when he swooshed to a halt near Blaise and Susan, he couldn’t keep the grin from his face.

“I love flying!”

Hermione glared up at him. “Why is it that you just have to be good at everything?” she asked with a mild snarl in her voice.

Harry raised an eyebrow. “Erm, sorry? I’m not, really. Good at everything. But I love flying!” He pulled a quick loop, making all of his friends choke on air, before beaming. “It’s such an amazing
feeling!"

“You’re going to send us all to an early grave,” Padma said, eyes wide. “Why do you insist on pulling such stunts?”

“It’s not really that difficult! I mean, your magic should connect with the broom’s magic, that’s the whole point of several of the spells! They’re there to allow the rider’s own magic to guide the broom. It’s rather ingenious, really.” Harry looked thoughtfully at the broom. “I’m sure when you get a personal broom, the spells can be set to accept only that rider, so only they will ever be able to use that broom as efficiently. It’s a handy trick when you think about it.”

Judging from the expressions on the others faces, they probably hadn’t known about that particular piece of magic.

“What spells?” Blaise asked.

Harry frowned. “I don’t know what they’re called, but their purpose is to allow your magic to connect with the broom to create a bond that allows the broom to respond to your wishes,” he said. “It makes it easier to maneuver and perform complex tricks.”

Blaise, Hermione, Neville, Padma, and Susan all looked down at their brooms, eyebrows furrowed.

“I’ve never heard of anything like that,” Neville said. “I...I mean, I’m not re-really into Quidditch but my uncle is and he’s never said a-anything about that.”

“I don’t know much about brooms,” Susan confessed. “My aunt made sure I learned cause it’s important to know how to fly, but I didn’t really care to know more than the basics.”

Padma was frowning, staring down at her broom in consternation. “That could be an explanation for why some people have a much better initial ability to fly,” she said. “They have a more intrinsic connection to their magic and can unconsciously use those spells while those who have a tougher time of it might either hold tighter onto their magic or unconsciously reign it in so they won’t get the benefit of the spells assistance.”

Harry grinned at Padma. “That’s a brilliant theory! Hadn’t thought of something like that! Hey, wanna try testing it out?”

The five others exchanged looks. “Isn’t it a bit...dangerous to try weird magic on a broom?” Blaise queried.

Harry furrowed his brow. “But it’s magic meant to make it easier to fly, and besides, we aren’t that high up and Madam Hooch has us all under a fairly strong observation spell of some sort. I’m sure she’ll notice if someone starts to lose control.”

Hermione decided this was enough of a reason to attempt the theory, and started at trying to figure out how one accessed their magic. “How do you relax the hold you might have on your magic?” Hermione asked. “I’ve not read anything on how one connects with their inner core yet.”

Green eyes gleamed. “It’s quite simple, actually. Your magic is always waiting to be used, you just have to let it know that you’re willing to use it. Center yourself and reach towards that tingling you feel, probably somewhere near your sternum. Then….just let it go.” Harry waved a hand around in demonstration of what he meant.

“That’s...sorta vague,” Hermione replied.
“Well, I don’t know what it feels like to actively keep my magic reigned it. I’ve never had that option, so I don’t actually know the feeling, but magic always feels like a hum or a buzz along my skin. I figure it’s rather similar since you’re human as well, no different biological make-up to change the way your body would react to magic.” Well, he was mostly human, he thought. Enough so that it should be a similar principle.

“So I should feel a hum or a buzz or a tingle of some sort,” the frizzy-haired girl confirmed. Harry nodded. “And I just...what? Think at it?”

Harry through his hand up. “I don’t know! You’ll have to let me know when you find it, cause I’ve never been able to not let my magic go.”

“Alright, alright, no need to overreact. Let’s try this and see.” Hermione frowned, bit her lip, and stared at the broom handle. Her eyes slipped closed, and she hummed a bit as everyone else hovered around her, eyes narrowed.

“What’s supposed to happen?” Blaise asked in a whisper. “I mean, is something supposed to happen?”

Padma shrugged. “Not sure. I mean, I don’t think anyone’s ever really tried before.”

“We’re flying right now…” Neville started. “Is...is it safe to be doing this in the air?”

“We’re all right here. If she starts to tip over, we can grab her,” Susan said, confidence in her tone.

“Quiet! It’s really hard to concentrate when you all are talking!” Hermione’s voice cut through the quiet chatter. They subsided with murmurs of apology. “Thank you.”

There were a few more moments of silence, before Hermione’s eyes shot open. She looked at Harry, mouthing something, no noise giving her words shape.

Harry’s face split in a grin. “Knew you’d feel it! Now you just gotta work on letting it go.”

Hermione beamed.

“You felt your own magic?” Blaise asked, a tinge of awe in his voice. “What did it feel like.

“Tingly,” she managed to say. “Very tingly.”

Harry snorted. “Playful, your magic,” he said.

Hermione turned to look at him. “What do you mean?”

“Well, magic has its own personality, in a sense. I mean, it is an entity in its own right, just one that lives symbiotically within you. So its personality might not always match your own 100%.”

“How can you even know that?” Padma asked. “Magic hasn’t been studied like that before!”

“Just because you haven’t seen the studies done on magic doesn’t mean they don’t exist. Magic is extensively studied in places that aren’t the U.K. Backwards lot, this country. I protested strongly against coming here for just that reason.” Harry hovered slowly away from them, having started muttering again, Pashti now sitting up on his shoulder and rubbing her face against his. “Come to Hogwarts in the 20th century, Harry, you’ll love the history Harry, you can study how magic began its transformation , Harry. Last time I listen to dad again when he starts making arguments.”

Blaise glanced around. “Anyone else get the feeling that Harry leads a very strange life?”
“All the time,” Neville said. “And I’ve only known him for four days.”

“So he’s always this...odd?” Susan asked.

“Well, we only have four days experience but I would say yes,” Blaise replied. “So, Hermione, wanna tell the rest of us how you managed to...what was it, feel your magic?”

Hermione tapped her chin. “It’s a little weird. Like...you have to...search your body? It’s a strange idea, but if you concentrate enough on the sensation of looking at every part of your body, you’ll start to feel something strange. I mean, that’s how it was for me.”

Blaise was about to continue the line of questioning when the shrill sound of Madam Hooch’s whistle blew. “Everyone, down! Time is up! I’m glad to see all of you looking much more comfortable on a broom. We’ll have a quick discussion about the next class’s flying test then I’ll send you on your way.”

They all touched down before they were corralled by the flying teacher.

“Isn’t this our last month of class?” someone called out.

“It is indeed. Which is why I’m going to be holding several tests to make sure you all actually qualify as competent on a broom and don’t require any remedial classes. Being able to fly is an invaluable skill should you find yourself in unfriendly territory. So if anyone wants to get some extra practice in before the tests start next week, either let me know now or before Friday.” Whispers broke out among the first years. “Class is over, so if you would put your brooms in the shed and start heading off to wherever your next class is, we could finish this lesson in a timely manner for once.”

“You’re not going to hand out wholesale ‘sorry I’m late’ passes this time?” a kid with spiky brown hair called out, grinning.

Madam Hooch shot him a look. “If you manage to be late now, you’ve been doing something wrong. I’ve called time a whole half an hour ahead of your next scheduled class. So I would suggest hurrying up if you want to avoid being late.”

There was a mad scramble for the broom shed, aside from Harry, who lingered behind to talk with the professor.

“Ah, Mr. Harry. Did you have any questions?”

Harry grinned. “The magic words! So, how exactly are the spells on the broom structured? Are they layered one on top of the other or are they anchored into some sort of rune or mark on the broom? Do they weave them into the construction or are they placed on after the broom is completed? Do you know how often what you call accidental magic has saved a magical’s life when they’ve fallen from great heights while on a broom? Have there been any fatalities from high falls off of a broom? Do you know why the students have no idea as to the assistance spells on the broom? Those would be really useful to know, I mean because it would allow those who aren’t as confident to have more trust in the broom they’re using. Also, why are these brooms ancient? Isn’t it a bit dangerous to have new flyers on a broom where the spells are starting to wear thin at the edges?”

Madam Hooch blinked as Harry let loose the barrage of questions he’d been saving up. “Um...I suppose the brooms are old because the school has never been able to afford to get new brooms, or so I’ve been told. How can you tell the spells are wearing thin? I’ve never been able to see the difference.”

Harry shrugged. “I’m a magic sensitive, according to Professor McGonagall. I can feel the magic of
an object I touch. Dunno how to recreate it or what you call it, but I can tell you what it does, for the most part. Which is why I asked you how to recreate it.”

“The art of crafting a broomstick is highly secretive. Companies protect that knowledge with rather elaborate spells and runes, so even if I did know, I couldn’t tell you.”

“Hmmm, guess I’ll have to figure it out on my own then. Runes are hard to break. And what you call accidental magic?”

Madam Hooch bristled. “It is! A wizard or witch of schooling age should be well past the point of their life where magic has haphazard outbursts! They should be controlled. Where you get this idea that it’s a defense mechanism I have no clue.”

Harry resisted the urge to roll his eyes. “Magic is part of the body. To think that the body wouldn’t use something as versatile as magic when a magical is in danger is absurd. So how many people have died from high flying accidents versus just been seriously injured despite the fact that the fall should have killed them?”

There was a long pause. “I’m not sure,” Madam Hooch finally answered. “I don’t think there have been any fatalities in recent years. Though there are a lot of Healers at scheduled games. That would lesson the fatality rate by quite a bit.”

“Whatever helps you sleep at night, I suppose,” Harry replied.

“Young man, I will not be spoken to like that!”

“Why? You seem to insist that things that are rather obvious are untrue and refuse to see the truth in several obvious points. Disregarding something before you’ve even looked into it is the exact opposite of what a teacher should be doing.” Harry heard his friends stumble to a halt behind him.

“And besides, just because you’re a teacher doesn’t mean you automatically get my complete and total undying respect. I would rather have interesting and involved discussions over cowering and listening to everything you say because your position dictates that I should. Stimulating conversation is far more fun than whatever this one-sided talk you seem to have with students is.”

“Harry...what are you doing?” Hermione hissed from behind him. “You can’t talk to a teacher like that!”

Harry turned, raising an eyebrow. “Why not? I mean, aren’t they here to ask questions of and challenge? Teachers don’t stop learning just because they become teachers. And maybe I could have been a bit more respectful, but outright dismissing a valid point isn’t exactly the sign of a good teacher.”

“You’re grades! And she could tell headmaster Dumbledore?”

“I don’t really care about my grades, to be honest. I’m not here to score high on things, I’m here to learn. If that means getting bad marks because I think challenging a point is more important than staying quiet and letting something I think may be incorrect be taught is just fine by me. And Dumbledore isn’t that scary. What’s the worst he could do, expel me? Perfect, a good excuse to convince my dad I should have gone to Emerald in the first place.”

Hermione stared at him, eyes wide, flabbergasted. She seemed to mouth words, but couldn’t actually make any sound. The rest of his friends seemed just as lost for words.

“Mr. Harry, I’m sure you mean well, but disrespecting authority figures won’t get you far in this world. You’re still a child and the responsibility of those who teach you, and many of them won’t be
as lenient as I am.”

Harry turned to Madam Hooch. “With all due respect, there is very little you could realistically threaten me with that would be sufficient deterrent from making my point. My dad has come up with some rather creative punishments that I doubt you could touch.” Harry grinned, and it seemed to take Madam Hooch by surprise. “Really, I don’t mean to be disrespectful, I think teachers are some of the greatest people in the Universe, but teachers who refuse to change their thinking, or at least examine it in case a new idea that’s been presented has merit, reminds me of all the things wrong with the teaching profession. If you constantly stay stuck in the past, the future will never look any different, and if it means I rub some egos the wrong way, I don’t really mind doing it.”

Blaise rubbed his hand over his eyes. “Am I really seeing an eleven-year-old talk back to Madam Hooch?” he whispered.

“You’re seeing Harry talking to Madam Hooch as if he believes he is her equal, rather,” Padma replied. “I don’t think he has a concept of children being deferential to adults.” Her voice was equally soft.

“But how???” Hermione breathed.

“I don’t know...I really don’t,” Blaise said.

“His dad,” Padma said at the same time. The four of them turned to look at her. “What, I mean, when you have his class, you’ll realize it. His dad is...something else. Whatever question anyone asked, he treated them all the same, no matter how foolish, out of line, or disrespectful they seemed to come off as. And he never made it seem as if they bothered him in the slightest. I can only imagine what that kind of environment would do to a child as intelligent as Harry is.”

Susan looked thoughtful. “My aunt encourages all sorts of questions,” she said. “I mean, I’ve gotta be respectful if I ask them, but I can ask just about anything I want. And she always takes it seriously. I’ve asked some pretty stupid questions just to see, and she would always make an effort to answer it. I think Harry must have grown up the same.”

“Times ten,” Blaise re-joined.

“So want to meet up during lunch?” Padma said. “We’ve got different schedules for the day.”

“Yeah, come meet us at the Hufflepuff table! I’m sure they won’t mind.”

“It’ll be better than the Slytherin table, that’s for sure,” Blaise said. He looked down at his watch. “Merlin’s balls, it’s nearly time for class. HARRY!”

“What is it Blaise?” Harry replied.

“Unless you’re planning to be late to your dad’s class, we should get going now!”

Harry jumped, startled. “Now? But I told dad I wouldn’t be late!”

“Harry, you can’t tell time, how could you possibly be late?” Blaise asked, sarcasm in his tone.

“It’s the principle of the thing, Blaise! Bye Madam Hooch! We can talk about brooms and inherent magic another time!”

Madam Hooch was left in flustered confusion as her students took off at a run. Or, more accurately, Harry took off at a run and his friends were forced to follow.
She would have to look into this child more, and his family. They were staying at Hogwarts, right? She would have a talk with this father figure that desensitized his charge to adult authority. And maybe get a handle on how to deal with the impertinent child.

~~~In Which this is a Scene Change~~~

“See! I can get to places on time!” Harry’s voice echoed up from the bottom of the dog pile he and his friends had become.

“And here I thought you couldn’t tell time at all,” Blaise called back from somewhere among the tangle of limbs.

“As I said, it’s the principle of it all, Blaise! We made it before class started.”

“How did we end up sprawled in the doorway while your cat managed to escape?” Blaise asked.

Pashti was sitting a few feet away looking unscathed and more than slightly amused at her partner’s unfortunate situation.

“Pashti’s too dignified to end up in a dog pile,” Harry replied.”

“Unfair,” Hermione muttered.

The Doctor watched the spectacle with amusement. “You’re going to be late if you can’t untangle in the next two minutes,” he told them.

“But we’re here!”

“You’re half here Harry,” the Doctor corrected.

Harry scrambled out from the bottom of the pile. “I’m here!”

“You’re leaving your friends to suffer being late?”

Harry dragged the trio attempting to disentangle inside the threshold. “Now we’re all here.”

“Harry!” Blaise protested, echoed by Neville and Hermione.

“You’re here,” Harry said.

“You…” Hermione shook the dust of her robes. “It was your fault we were almost late! Madam Hooch gave us all plenty of time to get to our next class, but you were arguing with her and we had to run to make it!”

“You didn’t have to wait,” Harry pointed out. “I would have met you in class.”

“We didn’t know where it was,” Neville said softly. “Since your dad’s teaching it, we figured it would be better to wait for you.”

Harry snorted. “Dad put up neon signs everywhere. Kinda hard to miss that,”

The Doctor gently tugged Harry out of the argument. “Class is starting. Take a seat.”

They shuffled into a block of four seats and Harry grinned when he recognized the camera tech his dad had put on every desk. And was that a holo projector set up? He grumped a bit. He had wanted to try out the kit before his dad got around to messing with it.
“Now, welcome to History of Magic, which is actually not going to quite encompass everything I’ll be teaching you, but it’s a decent enough start. My name is the Doctor. As I know only a small number of you, let’s take the first few minutes as self-introductions. Harry, if you would.” The Doctor gestured. “Name, something you want to learn in History, and least favorite food.”

Harry stood up, noting the camera on his desk focus. “I’m Harry. I’d like to learn about the way magic has changed throughout Ea-history, and I dislike fruit drops. No matter what anyone says, that much sugar in a single piece of food is enough to rewire the brain.” He sent a pointed look at his dad.

When the holo-projector started up, the sounds of amazement from the students was enough to overpower his disapproval of the sweet overdose his dad like to indulge in.

Harry % Doctor, TARDIS, Rose Tyler, Jack Harkness

How magic changed through history

Dislikes sweet candies

And a photo of him in his current attire, courtesy of the camera, was above his name.

Whispers immediately filled the room.

“Is that runes work?”

“I’ve never seen runes do that! My dad works with them too!”

“Enchantments?”

“How did he do that?

“I didn’t know you could make a spell voice triggered.”

“Who’s TARDIS?”

The Doctor let the whispers continue for a few moments before gesturing grandly. “Next up, the redhead. Always wanted red hair, but I never seem to get it.” He shot a look up as his gravity-defying plain brown hair.

“Don’t get it next time either!” Harry told him with a grin.

“Oi, you! Spoilers!” The Doctor glared at him.

Harry stuck his tongue out.

Ronald Weasley stood nervously. “Um...I’m Ron Weasley….Ronald Weasley….I want to learn….er...anything not about goblins….and I don’t like corned beef.”

A picture of Ron appeared followed by:

Ronald Weasley % Arthur Weasley and Molly Prewitt nee Weasley

See also Fred/George/Percy Weasley

Gryffindor

Not Goblins
Ron sat down, a grin of mild disbelief on his face. “That’s awesome!”

“Next, blonde one! Never been proper blonde either, and no spoilers!”

Draco Malfoy stood as confidently as he could manage. “I’m Draco Malfoy. I’d like to learn about… Magic’s strength throughout history and I dislike bananas.” The information appeared on the holo.

“Ah, love me a good banana. Next, Hermione if you will.”

It took about fifteen minutes to go through everyone because the class was fascinated by what the holo could do, but soon everyone had spoken.

“Alright, thank you. This will be used to determine attendance every time as well as your participation. Your appearance will be registered by this every class and the number of times you speak up will be recorded as well. Part of this course’s grade is determined by your level of interaction with the material presented. Any cheating during tests will also be caught, as fair warning. So either don’t cheat or cheat smart.” He gave them a roguish wink. “And now that we’ve got that out of the way,” he made a flapping motion with his hands, dismissing the holo projection of everyone’s names. “We can move onto the first lesson.” He made another gesture, and the holo sprang to life.

Harry was so getting his dad to teach him the hand signals the holo was designed to register.

“This is the Origin of Magic.”

A wash of sound filled the room.

“Origin? Of Magic?”

“There’s an origin to magic?”

“I’ve never heard of it!”

“Do you think it’s here?”

“An origin?”

“Harry? Did you know this?” Hermione whispered, her voice sharp despite the volume.

Harry nodded. “I had to do a project once on the subject when I blew up the science lab playing around with a spell.”

Hermione narrowed her eyes at him. “You’re joking. No one even knows if there’s an origin to magic! I did research as soon as I got my letter! There’s no definitive proof!”

Harry just gestured grandly towards the holo. “Just watch and learn.”

The Doctor had pulled up what looked like an amorphous blob of mismatched colors, then motioned for silence. “This… is the Universe. Have to go macro to find an origin to magic, you know.”

“Macro?” Blaise queried.

“You have to see the larger picture. A big scale. Micro is small, macro is large, in simple terms. Very
Can’t get much bigger than the Universe,” Blaise agreed mildly.

Harry chuckled. “Don’t challenge him on that.”

Anyway, big picture. The Universe. Magic is not just an Earth phenomena. Magic is, in essence, all over the place, but the origin started some…oh, about 14 billion years or so ago, give or take a few hundred million. Around this time, this Universe was being born. Who knows what the Big Bang is? A show of hands.” A few people put hesitant hands up. “Ah, I would guess non-magic raised kids then. New Bloods. Well, the Big Bang, is in essence, this.”

He twisted his fingers and the blobular cloud shrunk to a pinpoint of light.

“What just happened?” a girl asked.

“Thank you for asking Parvati Patil. This is what the Universe looked like before it was born. A small, nearly invisible compaction of atoms, compressed beyond what we can currently achieve. Everything that you are now was once part of this pinprick of energy and….stuff.” Silence filled the classroom. Then…

“What? Are you saying we’re all...stuff from a ball of things from ages ago?”

“I am indeed, Ronald Weasley. You, me, the desk, your wand, that lake, the clouds. Everything that is and was all started here.” The Doctor pointed at the speck of stuff.

“But...how did it get from there to making us?”

“That is a spot on question Daphne Greengrass! And the answer is the Big Bang.” At a gesture, the ball of stuff expanded so rapidly that the flash of light it released forced everyone to close their eyes. When they could see again, a blob of amorphous shape sparkled once again, though much smaller.

“Was that the Big Bang?” Blaise asked, blinking rapidly.

“It was indeed, Blaise Zabini.”

Harry huffed. His dad had taken actual footage of the Big Bang and fed it into the holo set. Cheater. Still, it was more efficient than doing the animation by hand.

“How...how long did it take?” a boy asked.

“Wonderful query Theodore Nott! The Big Bang took less than a second to expand to a tenth of it’s current size, though it was so full of energy and movement that not even light could function. It took quite a while before that settled down and for atoms to start forming the building blocks of life, and for all those little particles to stop being so energetic and calm a bit. The energy expended is still littering the universe to this day as cosmic background radiation. Quite soothing to listen to when there’s no rain.”

“What are you saying?” Hermione asked. “I’ve heard a bit about space when I was in school, but nothing like this. Atoms and particles and something about radiation? All I know about radiation is that it’s dangerous.” There were gasps of shock from some of the students.

The Doctor grinned. “Alright, quick science lesson. Atoms are the building blocks of life. Everything you physically interact with is made up of atoms. We’ll cover what they are specifically in more detail, but they are necessary to any kind of matter being formed. Particles are small bits of matter.
Atoms are classified as particles, as is dust, but particles can also be smaller than atoms. Radiation is a form of energy that moves in waves and can be dangerous in some forms but not all of them. Cosmic Background Radiation is not dangerous.”

Silence for a few moments, then “How can you know all this? How do we know you aren’t making it all up?”

“Draco Malfoy, excellent point.” The Doctor twisted his fingers again. “This is the Hubble Telescope, launched as part of mankind’s effort to learn more about the Universe. These are radio telescopes and high altitude labs designed to study space. At all of these places, the Universe is intensely examined and the Big Bang was pieced back together from the information they gathered. At sites all over the world, the smallest building blocks of life are studied and described.”

“But...those are muggles!” Draco Malfoy said, increduloness on his face. “They can’t possibly know all that stuff!”

“Why ever not?” the Doctor asked, curious. “The presence of magic doesn’t indicate intelligence level. Some of the smartest people on the face of the planet were non-magical. And this is science, a field pioneered by non-magicals.”

“But you’re talking about the origin of magic! How can muggle whatever tell us anything about magic?” Draco replied, frustration in his voice.

“I’m getting to that, Mr. Malfoy. Now, if you would look at the model of the Universe again, you’ll see I’ve highlighted a number of lines. Can anyone guess as to why? Someone not Harry?” Harry grumbled but put his hand down.

Hermione’s hand tentatively replaced his. “Magic?” she hazarded when the Doctor called on her.

“Yes, indeed! Perfect! Magic. Everyone here has heard of ley lines. Hands, please, if you know what they are. Good, most of you.” Still, the Doctor explained them again, then pointed at the blob shot through with shimmering silver lines. “So, wanna take a guess at what these are? Ah, yes, Neville!”

Neville stumbled at first, but got out, “Um..ley lines? For the Universe?”

“Brilliant! Yes, they are ley lines for the Universe, often called the Origin. Created from the excess energy of the Big Bang and the Void mixing, along with a few bits of the vortex, a slip of dark energy, along with a couple other things. These lines of power now criss - cross the Universe. No one knows exactly where all of them are, but it is known that if they cross, converge, or gather near or on a planet, that planet becomes a magical source, where the life that evolves there has a chance at being able to use the power contained within those channels. In Earth’s case,” he twisted his wrist, and the blob flickered until Earth hung suspended in the middle of the room. “There are two convergences and a cross.” The indicated lines shimmered into view.

Two points where lines crossed glowed brightly next to the planet while one line fully entered and exited.

“That’s awesome!” several students voices exclaimed.

The Doctor grinned. “If you want awesome, take a look at Diagon57.” He made a few hand motions and a planet lit up in silver flickered into view. Uncountable lines spring from every angle, crossing, converging, twisting around until the planet was more silver than blue.

“Is that for real?” Blaise asked, eyes wide.
“It’s the most magical planet, actually the only purely magical planet that the only magical astronomy lab on Earth has ever found,” the Doctor confirmed. “It’s theorized that non-magical beings would never have evolved on Diagon57 as there is too much magic in the air and that any being without enough magic would either perish from the overdose of magic or be changed by the exposure. But there’s no concrete evidence.”

“Is it normal for a planet so to have magic on them?” a boy with an Irish drawl asked. “I mean, me da’s in sciences and he says that there’s life everywhere in the Universe, but magic? He ain’t magical so he’s not really sure what to make of it all.”

“Seamus Finnegan, excellent question, and your da d’s right about life. Magic, though, is much like the magical population. Only maybe .01% of the population is magical, so about 1 in every 10000 people, which is still quite high when you think about it. The same can be said for planets. 1 in every 10000 planets fall s near magical lines. In the Milky Way alone, that’s a hundred million planets that fall near magical lines. And even if only .01% of those planets were inhabited, that’s a million or more planets with magical life of some sort.”

Harry resisted the urge to facepalm. Even he knew that Earth in this century still hadn’t worked out that much about space, and here was his dad, reeling off facts as if this were the 23rd century and space exploration had been in the works for well over a century.

“But...that means there’s over a billion planets in the solar system!” Hermione exploded. “Science hasn’t proven any of it! There’s only been the rare case of a possible extraterrestrial coming to Earth, and those aren’t very well substantiated, so proof of life beyond Earth isn’t possible!”

Harry snorted, looked at his dad, and mouthed “your problem.”

“You think there can’t be that much life?” the Doctor asked, a small smile on his face.

“There’s no evidence!”

“So science must say it’s so before you’re willing to believe something? What about magic? Science says hogwash to all that, yet here you are at a school for magic.”

“But I can see magic, I can do magic, even if science says it’s impossible. What you’re saying about planets isn’t just something you can accept!”

“I see where you’re coming from Hermione, and I can provide several papers that go into detail about the possible number of planets in the Solar System if you would like,” the Doctor offered.

Hermione lit up. “I would love to see those!” she said.

Harry covered a grin. Her enthusiasm was infectious.

“What does this have to do with magic and it’s origins anyway?” Draco Malfoy asked. “This is all muggle stuff, why are we even learning about it?”

The Doctor raised an eyebrow. “Still on about non-magical’s? So what do you think about trains? Or houses? Or writing? Or language?”

“What does that have to do with anything?”

“Because all of those things first originated in non-magical communities. Before magical communities were separate entities, non-magical people created the foundations of civilization. Before cities, magicals were part of their society as healers, mystics, and shamans. It was only after
civilizations started that magicals developed away from non-magicals, and only in part for many years. For millennia magicals lived alongside non-magicals, trading potions and charms for food and crafts. Education was done at the home unless it was standard education in which case all children attended the local priest or school. Schools were another thing created by non-magicals. More of your life in influenced by non-magicals than you think, so wouldn’t it be prudent to know more about it?"

Draco Malfoy huffed but settled back, glowering. Muggles couldn’t really be the source for so much of the stuff in his life, could they? He would have to see. And this….Doctor’s magic was impressive. He’d never seen magic work like this before, creating floating images and listening to vocal commands. And he didn’t use a wand! His father always said only the most powerful could forgo a wand, and usually only for little things. So he would listen, and maybe he could learn how this Doctor was so powerful. And why that insufferable….Potter was so smart.

“Now, onto the Origin of Magic.” The blob they were starting to associate with the Universe appeared again, silver lines threading it. “Magic is a Universal Fundamental, part and parcel with things like gravity, inertia, electromagnetism, such and so on.” The Doctor, far too used to getting looks of confusion, ignored the bewildered looks on his students’ faces. “The likelihood of you being born with magic is tied to your family genetics, proximity to ley lines or high concentrations of magic from conception to early childhood when your core settles, or even a surge of luck in some cases. Magic is very finicky. If your parents are magical, you’re likelihood of being magical rises. If you were born near or around ley lines, same thing. If you were born on a day that magic decided to chuck out a wave of fresh energy, good chance you’ll be magical.” The Doctor grinned.

“Doctor, what about squibs?” someone from the back of the room asked.

“You’re referring to those born into magical families but can’t use magic, yes, Pansy Parkinson? That’s caused by a gene mutation when both sets of parents pass on a faulty code for magical access. Those born non-magical in a magical family have a core, but because of faulty genetic instructions, they can’t access it.”

There was a hush over the room. Then…”genetics?” a few voices echoed, followed by a multitude of head nods.

The Doctor sighed. “We’ll get to that soon. It’ll take too long to explain on top of the rest of this lesson. I’ll make note and we’ll add it to the lesson plan. Speaking of…” he waved his hand and the hologram changed. “This is the tentative schedule for the rest of the semester. I’ll have hard copy for you by the next class.”

“Can’t you just use that copying spell the rest of the professors use?” one of the Gryffindors asked.

“Nah still got some changes to work on Lavender Brown. No point in making multiple copies of something that’s going to be changed quite soon.”

Lavender’s eyes were wide. “You know my name?” she said, clearly unnerved. “I mean…you know all of our names!”

“Of course, you all introduced yourselves not an hour ago, why wouldn’t I?”

There was a mild clamor, before the Doctor, using his Sonic Screwdriver, pitched a high whistle above the noise.

“If we could move on, I do have a textbook for you, since your….previous ones were inadequate.” He said the word with reluctant disdain. “You’ll find them in the bag hanging from your desks.”
As he said this, everyone started as said bags seemed to appear from thin air.

Harry held back a chuckle. His dad was so cheating, but it was fun to watch. He pulled out his copy of the book, intrigued as to where he go so many on such short notice and flipped it open in curiosity.

Only to slam it shut and glare at his father.

“You aren’t supposed to use my research essays for your book!” he said. “That’s my work!”

“But everything else was too wordy to use and even you admitted it was difficult to get through some of it. Besides, it’s not all your work. Not even you’ve written that much on magical theory. I took a bit from the book you got on Haleysio and even some from contemporary Earth writers. Granted I had to translate most of that stuff cause Britain is nothing if not behind the times, but not all of it is yours.”

Harry settled back into his seat with a huff. “I figured you would use some of my work but making it half the textbook is a little much,” he muttered.

“Deal with it Harry.”

“You’re not the one who’s going to have to listen to lectures on their own essays,” Harry said, glaring at the textbook. His father didn’t reply.

The rest of the class watched on in shocked silence as their new (weird) teacher and new (weirder) classmate argued in a language they had never heard before.

When Harry finally sat down, make was appeared to be a pithy last remark, then proceeded to glare at their new textbook, they felt like they had survived a storm.

“What was that all about?” Blaise asked.

“And what language were you speaking in?” Hermione interjected.

“Dad did something without telling me and that’s my first language,” Harry answered tersely.

Hermione, Blaise, and Neville all sat back at his tone.

“This will be the textbook for at least the rest of this semester and part way into next. Can you all open to the table of contents and we’ll skim together.”

1. The Beginnings of Magic, the Universe, and Just About Everything Else
2. Traces of Magic through the known Solar System - A Study
3. Why you can use magic effectively, and how it works.
4. Why is MY planet magical: a discourse on the origin of Magical Planets
5. The Structure of the Universe: Added magical study The Chapter
7. How does magic change a planet, being, or plant: a discussion
8. The movement of the solar system and the effect of magic
9. Why you should never try to warp ley lines and the consequences of Magic Oversaturation in a being or planet

“This will be your companion for the rest of your time in my class, whether we are actively using it
or not. If necessary, I will add supplementary reading and you will receive a copy during class.” The Doctor waved the book around. “So, any questions?”

Hermione’s hand went up. “Why are there no authors listed? What if we want to look up other papers they’ve written or something?”

Harry froze. He shot his dad a look that clearly said ‘Tell them and you won’t find the bananas for a whole cycle.’

“Oversight on my part. I added the authors to the back pages.”

Harry frantically flipped through to the back, clear horror in his eyes.

Then he saw the author list.

-H. Ilson, Chapters 1, 4, 6, 8
-Kifeern, Chapters 3, 9
-Karl Volstaag and Katrina Orstoff, Chapters 2, 5 translated from Russian.
-Haruka Kobayashi and Sooyoung Kim, Chapter 7 translated from Japanese and Korean.

Harry could feel the relief coursing through his veins. His dad had used his pen name, which he preferred when writing papers someone else would possibly look at.

“Doctor, why are so many of the chapters written by the same person?” Hermione asked.

“Because they’re the most relevant and easy to understand essays on the subject of magic and its origin on various planets. There are, of course, many more works on the subject, but I felt that these were the best for your level.” The Doctor smiled at Hermione. “Alright, class is coming to an end here today, and I know I’ve dumped a lot of information on you. To get better acquainted with it, I want you all read chapter 1 and write no more than a 1500 word summary of the main points. No less than 1000 words as well, please.”

“A word count? You don’t mean parchment length?”

“Indeed I mean wordcount, Blaise. Parchment length is subjective to how big or small a student writes. Wordcount means you have to fulfill a requirement and either be succinct or more explanatory. It also means I won’t get novel length papers to look over.” He cast his eye around the room, landing on Hermione with a smile. Her obvious shock at the request was amusing. “Now, everyone, you can scoot off now, get started on that homework. I’ve got a class of seventh years in a bit that I’ll have to prep for, now off you hop.”

The students took a moment to collect themselves, but were up and out the door quick enough, hushed conversations turning into full blown discussions the moment they were in the hallway.

A few minutes later, only Harry, Hermione, Neville, and Blaise were left.

Harry picked up the book, staring at his dad with a look of mild amusement. “I hope you aren’t expecting me to write a summary on an essay I wrote,” he said.

“Rather I would like you to look it over. You wrote that two years ago, I expect your current knowledge and writing ability has grown since then. Thus I would like a compiled list of things you believe are faulty, poorly written, or can be expanded upon.”
There was a moment of tense glaring from Harry and calm amusement from his father before Harry sighed. “Fine, fine. I’ll get it to you. It’s lunch time now and I’m hungry. Wanna go grab food?”

Hermione, Blaise, and Neville all nodded. “Padma and Susan said to meet at the Hufflepuff table,” Neville said.

“They did? When?” Harry asked.

“You were too busy arguing with Madam Hooch,” Hermione replied. “Why you think it’s a good idea to argue with the teachers is beyond me.”

“If they can’t take criticism, they’re in the wrong profession,” Harry stated.

Hermione leveled the Doctor with a look but didn’t say anything.

Blaise decided to play mediator. “Alright, lunch at Hufflepuff it is! Let’s go! I’m starving!”

With more than a little bewildered amusement, the Doctor watched Harry get dragged off by his friends. “He always manages to find the odd ones, doesn’t he Pashti,” the Doctor commented to his son’s companion, who had curled up on the corner of his desk at the start of the lesson.

Pashti let out a soft ‘mreow’ of agreement.

“Well, seeing as I have a bit of free time, wanna hit the Tardis up for some salmon? Rose made some with that weird yellow sauce she picked up last time we stopped at the Galactic Market.”

Pashti immediately made herself at home on the Doctor’s shoulder. “Mreow!” She pointed imperiously forward with her tails.

The Doctor chuckled. “Onwards towards salmon!” They dramatically headed out the door, becoming the subject of the afternoon’s gossip by the time they made it back to their rooms.

~~~~This is a Scene Break~~~~

“Harry, Blaise, Neville, Hermione! You’re here! Good! Today’s make your own sandwich day! I love sandwiches!” Susan waved her arm at the four the moment they stepped into the hall. Padma peered around her with a peanut butter and jelly sandwich in her mouth.

“Hey you two! Padma, I have got to ask you about the History class! Oh, my god, it was fascinating!” Hermione hurried over, nearly shoving a Hufflepuff fourth year out of the way to plop down next to Padma, pulling out the textbook and crowding over it. The two were soon in deep conversation.

Blaise eyed them with a hint of amusement and silent despair. “I’m never going to get away with not having done homework, am I?” he sighed.

“Not if you’re friends with us, nope,” Harry said. “Though really, he assigns this book.” Harry resisted the urge to groan as Hermione and Padma erupted in excitement over some passage or other.

Neville gave Harry a confused look. “Do you know this book?” Neville asked.

Harry tilted his head, considering. “Sorta...ish,” he settled on.

“Good! You can help me catch up then! I missed the lesson yesterday!” Susan snuck up behind the three boys, dragging Harry to the table, snickering at Harry’s look of shock.
Blaise and Neville dutifully followed.

The lunch hour was spent reviewing the history class, filling a steadily awed Susan in on what had happened in the class.

Well, Blaise, Neville, Hermione, and Padma did. Harry sulked and ate his sandwiches while trying to ignore the fact that his new friends were basically discussing his essay.

Why his dad thought it would be a good idea to put his work into the text for the students he had no idea.

He was immensely glad when Hermione suddenly looked at her watch, then scooped her books up and started shoving them in her bag. “We’ve got defense in fifteen minutes!” she said, panicked.

Blaise snorted but stood up, stretching. “Alright, let’s get going. Might as well get through Mr. Stutters class as fast as possible. So glad it’s not a double lesson. I don’t think I can handle two hours of p-p-poo-o-r st-t-tu-t-ter-r-in-n-ng-g.” Blaise made a face.

Harry grimaced. “That’s the thing. It’s weird. There’s something wrong with it. And there’s something weird about him. He makes my head hurt whenever he looks at me or is nearby. Dad said to keep an eye on him and let him know if he does something weird.” The group at the table gave him a skeptical look. “Well, weirder than normal.”

Hermione moved closer, her eyes on Harry’s face. “Your head hurts when he’s nearby? That’s weird Harry.”

Harry rubbed his forehead. “I know. It’s never happened before and lots of strange things have happened to me, so dad’s taking it seriously.”

Hermione nodded. “Well, we can help, right?” She looked around the group, getting nods of assent. “Now we have eight minutes to get to class or we’ll be late!” She took off, and Harry, Neville and Blaise took off after her with varying looks of amusement and exasperation. Though Harry was amused that the prospect of being late for a class would get Hermione running.

They skidded into class with a minute or two to spare, having to take whatever seat was empty as there wasn’t a convenient cluster of desks like there was last time.

Immediately the spot on his forehead directly beneath his distinctive scar began to throb as Quirrell drew closer. “E-e-veryo-o-ne, p-p-ple-e-ease tak-ke your ho-o-mew-w-ork out-t and pass it f-f-orw-w-ard.” Harry, at a loss as to what homework, just passed the papers he was handed up without adding anything to the pile.

The rest of the lesson was spent listening to a painfully difficult to process lesson on the origin of defense in modern times, and why it was useful. Harry took note of the professor’s attitude and posture, his rather skittish demeanor and that smell of garlic, which had grown stronger over the course of a day if possible. The sharp pain grew more so when the professor looked at him directly and faded if he was on the other side of the room.

*Our Harry, we keep feeling strange pulses from your magic. Are you alright?*

Harry started as his focus spoke to him. *I’m fine. The teacher here is very strange and he keeps making my head hurt, the spot directly under my scar. It’s affecting my magic as well?*

*It is indeed. We are concerned about you, Our Harry. This is a very strange phenomena. Are you certain the pain is from your scar?*
My scar? No, the point under my scar. It’s not on the surface of my skin. Is something wrong?

There was silence from his focus. Then... We shall investigate. It may take some time. Narrowing down on a cause for such disturbances that has hidden itself from us so far is going to be quite the process, Our Harry, but we shall figure it out. Your magic is receptive to our wishes. You may feel tired or sluggish if we must use more of your magic than expected.

Harry gave the magical equivalent of a shrug. I’d rather know what’s causing the issue. I can deal with being tired.

The please give us some time. We will let you know when we have an answer, Our Harry.

His focus faded out of contact, but Harry could feel the difference in his magic. It felt like it was being drawn through a sieve one particle at a time.

Very very slowly.

This would take a while.

And the lecture was less than useful. He wasn’t getting anything important out of it as he could barely parse through the stutter and his headache was making it worse. He would ask Hermione for notes or something.

When the lesson was over, he gladly left the room as quickly as possible, wanting to put as much distance between him and the professor as possible.

His friends hurried to catch up.

“Are you okay?” Neville asked, face worried.

Harry’s expression darkened. “There’s something wrong with that man. My magic is reacting towards his presence and I need to know why and if he’s a threat. I’m going to go talk to my dad. We don’t have any classes this afternoon so if I miss dinner it’s fine.”

Hermione’s eyes went wide. “But...he’s a professor,” she said, voice low.

Harry spun in his foot. “Your undying loyalty to the teaching profession is admirable, but you can’t excuse everything someone does just because they’re a teacher, Hermione. Someone is going to get hurt one day if you do that.”

When he headed off this time, Hermione, Blaise, and Neville were rooted to the spot.

Hermione’s eyes were a bit watery. “He’s so stubborn! I mean, they’re teachers, professors! Why does he think he can come in here and argue and criticize them when he’s just a first year like us?” she said, voice wavering, a mix of anger, confusion, and tears.

“I don’t know, Hermione,” Blaise said, placing a hand on the girl’s shoulder.

“And...do you want to follow him?” Neville asked.

Hermione wiped her face. “I want to give him a piece of my mind,” she said, sounding frustrated. “Let’s go.” She followed after Harry, who had turned and disappeared up the stairs.

Blaise and Neville hurried to catch up. For the first time, they ran willingly, hoping to get to Harry before he got to the portrait leading to his family’s quarters and that impossible to say password.
They were in luck, catching up to Harry just as the portrait swung open, and the startled look on his face was worth the two floor mad dash.

“You all want to talk to my dad about the professor too?” he asked.

Hermione looked like she was trying to keep from growling at him. “Among other things,” she said.

A grin spread across Harry’s face. “Alright, I’ll go grab him. Come wait inside. I think Rose set up a couch or something for people who come over so it’s not just a bare stone room.” He gestured them into the room, and the three followed, seeing the mentioned couch and the same blue box. “Take a seat, I’ll be back in a few.”

“Um…alright,” Blaise said. “Any reason we can’t go find him with you? I mean, it can’t be that hard to find your dad, even if there are some wicked expanding charms on that box.”

Harry shook his head. “You’ll just get lost. Better to wait out here. I’ll be back soon.”

The trio discovered Harry’s idea of ‘soon’ was far longer than they had expected.

“How big do you think that box is?” Blaise asked.

“I didn’t think you could make expansion charms so…..big,” Neville replied.

Hermione frowned. “I read something on expansion charms, but they’re not covered for a few more years yet. What do they do?”

Blaise cracked his fingers, a grin on his face. “Ah, expansion charms! The space-hungry wizard’s best friend! It basically expands the space within an area without affecting the outside. So a small box like that could be as big as a good sized house if the charms are strong. If the Doctor tied them into runes, I hear it could be as big as a mansion inside. There are limits on how much space can be created, but most people don’t need anything bigger.” He looked at the box, contemplative. “But he used some really impressive magic earlier. It might be a lot bigger than that, if he’s that good at runes and enchantments.”

Neville hesitated. “My gran….she says that an object can only take so much space being added to the inside before it explodes, runes or not.” He twiddled his thumbs a bit. “Her aunt used to experiment with expanding charms and she died in an accident like that, trying to add more space to a cardboard box than it could take.”

“That can happen?”

“Well, magic is dangerous, Hermione. If something goes wrong, it often goes disastrously wrong. There’s all sorts of cautionary tales about wizards and witches screwing up a spell and blowing something up, often themselves, or something else unintended.” Blaise gave the girl a look.

She frowned in consideration. “Hmmm.”

“You’re...what, great aunt? She experimented with expanding charms?” Blaise directed at Neville.

“Um...yeah. She was really good with them, my aunt said. We’ve still got all sorts of things around the mansion that are still expanded. Which is impressive, since most of those charms fade without someone around to power them. I don’t know how my aunt made sure it stayed.” Neville gave them a small smile, still fidgeting. “I think it’s really cool, honestly. But gran…” Neville trailed off, a frown covering his face.
Blaise nodded with a knowing, solemn expression. “I’m sure when you’re older you can do whatever you want. I mean, she can’t control you for the rest of your life.”

Neville just looked morose.

“Alright, how long can one possibly be inside that thing? You said it couldn’t be bigger than a reasonably sized mansion right? How long would it take to go through a place that big?” Hermione turned to Blaise.

“No idea Hermione. But it has been a bit long.”

As he said that, Harry burst out the door, a whirlwind of energy and sputtering.

“I never gave you permission to use those!” he shouted back behind him.

“It was punishment Harry, I think I can make use of the end result however I would like.”

“But it’s still mine! You didn’t even bother to ask me, or tell me!”

“I didn’t know I would be using them until the last minute. Besides, you can’t deny they’re useful.”

“That’s not the point dad! You went and just…argh!” Harry looked on the verge of pulling his hair out. He caught sight of the trio on the couch, palling for a second before he got his face under control. “Besides, that’s not what I came here to tell you about. You wanted to know if there was anything strange about Professor Quirrell, right?”

The Doctor stepped out of the Tardis, wearing the same striped suit pants but with the jacket off and his cuffs rolled up. His eyes narrowed. “Yes. I hadn’t gotten around to checking out his office or classroom yet cause I needed to deal with the influx of students. Something come up?”

Harry nodded. “They told me it was also affecting my magic somehow.” Harry gestured towards himself. “Said they’re going to look into the how and let me know, but it’ll take awhile. Also it’s not effecting my scar, but rather a point directly behind my scar. It’s weird. And it fades with proximity and eye contact.”

The Doctor hummed. “They’ll be checking out your magic for whatever it is that’s reacting?” he confirmed.

Harry nodded. “It might take a while, but they’ll have some sort of answer. It feels weird though.” Harry shook his limbs. “Like my magic is being drawn through a very small sieve.” He shuddered.

“But it’s not painful, right?” the Doctor confirmed.

“Nope.”

“Then we’ll worry about it when they have some kind of result. Now, what brings Hermione, Neville, and Blaise here?”

The three started. “Um...Hermione...well,” Blaise chucked the baton at Hermione and settled back on the couch.

Hermione gathered herself. “I just...I mean,” she took a deep breath. “I don’t think Harry’s very respectful to the professors,” she blurted out. “They’re our teachers! And he talks back to them even though he’s a first year just like us!” She looked defiant for a moment, then her face fell. “I just...I mean, I don’t understand why you can even do that to a teacher, Harry,” she finally said, aiming her
words at the ground.

Harry looked a bit startled. “Um...come again?” he said, clearly puzzled.

Hermione’s head whipped up so fast Blaise feared she might have given herself whiplash. “Do you not remember Madam Hooch this morning? Or Professor Snape yesterday? Or what Blaise said you did in Professor McGonagall’s class and to Headmaster Dumbledore this morning? Or outright ignoring Professor Quirrell?” she blurted out.

Harry shrugged. “Well, I remember the teachers, but I don’t really recall why you’re so upset about it. It was a class. I was challenging their authority, I mean, aside from Professor Quirrell. He I was ignoring, couldn’t understand a word he said. But, yeah. I was in class, that’s what you’re supposed to do, isn’t it? They’re teachers, they’re supposed to be able to answer questions or direct you to places that have the answers, if they don’t know the answer themselves. But being downright ignorant or ignoring things that are clearly in front of their face, I can’t understand why a teacher would deliberately do that.”

The Doctor tried to keep a grin off his face. He really did try. But the look of agonized frustration on the clearly education-loving girl was hard to ignore.

He finally took pity on her. “Hermione, I think you and Harry have had a very different experience with the education system,” he said.

“Well, yeah, she actually went to a proper school,” Harry pointed out.

Hermione blinked. “What?”

Harry quirked an eyebrow. “When I said this was my home,” he thumbed at the Tardis, “I meant it. I live here, and have for all of my conscious memory. And I was taught here too.”

It took a moment for that to set in. “But...how? I mean, did you have teachers come to you or something?”

“What? No, no. My dad taught me everything, and when I was old enough I taught myself quite a bit, with supervision. Can’t go playing with dangerous physics or mathematics on your own when you don’t have a solid grounding in them.” Harry grinned. “Or rather, you can, but it’s not advised. Spent a few days bouncing around in weird places a few times.”

Hermione looked at her new friend, then at her new teacher, then back at Harry. “You’re homeschooled,” she breathed, as if it finally made sense.

“Um...I would guess that would be implied, yeah.”

Hermione nodded. “Well, I guess you’ll just have to learn how to socialize in a normal school environment then,” she said, a note of finality in her voice.

The look of panic that flashed over Harry’s face had Blaise holding back snorts of laughter and Neville looking more than a little amused, though he also seemed to be staring at Hermione in concern.

“Homeschooling? Is that a special term mug-non-magicals use?” Neville asked.

Hermione nodded. “Kids who learn at home often don’t develop proper social skills since they don’t attend a school and interact with other kids their age.” She pointed at Harry, as if this explained all the inconsistencies she had found with him. “And that’s what you are! You’re a homeschooler!”
Harry looked every inch the confused non-Earth raised kid. “I...don’t think I understand what you’re getting at,” he admitted. “Social skills? I have plenty of those, I mean, I talked to you lot just fine, and I talk with the professors and other students. Aren’t those social skills?”

Hermione spluttered. “You’re disrespectful to the teachers. I don’t think I’ve ever seen Professor Snape so angry, and Madam Hooch! And the other students all think you’re weird,” she said frankly.

“So, that’s been my whole life. I mean, if I’m not getting weird looks, I’m doing something wrong, yeah?” He looked a bit too pleased at this. “Anyway, don’t we all have essays of some such to get done? And we should find Padma and Susan. We can go claim a table in the library and finish them in one shot.”

“Harry, remember to keep an eye on your magic. If anything, and I mean anything, comes up, let me know. I don’t care what I’m doing.” The Doctor gave Harry a searching look.

Harry rolled his eyes. “Okay, got it dad. I’ll keep an eye on my magic. I was planning too already as is.”

“And you don’t always remember to tell me important things until after they’ve happened. I would rather not be left out of the loop.”

Harry sighed dramatically, but didn’t disagree. “Alright, fine. Let’s go, we can hunt up Padma and Susan then go to the Library.”

“Why can’t we study here?” Blaise asked, pointing at the Tardis. “I mean, it’s big enough and we don’t have to worry about keeping our voices down.”

“Don’t want you lot getting lost, which always happens. Library’s safer, less likely to run into something deadly there.”

Blaise scoffed. “It couldn’t possibly be that big!”

Harry grinned, secretive and mischievous. “You’ll regret those words one of these days, Blaise. Not today, but someday.”

Blaise wasn’t sure he liked that look at all.

“Um….let’s...let’s go find Padma and Susan,” Neville interjected. “I wouldn’t really mind getting some of my homework done before dinner.”

“Which is in….an hour and a half,” Hermione confirmed, looking at her watch. She shook her head at the clueless look on Harry’s face. “Don’t worry, we’ll let you know when that is,” she said, tone clearly patronizing.

Harry huffed. “I don’t see what the point of knowing what all that means anyway,” he snapped, then marched out the portrait hole, a snickering Blaise and amused Neville following him.

Hermione stayed back for a moment, looking at the Doctor with something close to awe in her eyes. “Um...earlier you said you had something close to awe in her eyes. “Um...earlier you said you had something I could read about the planets?” she asked, tone soft.

The Doctor grinned. “I do indeed Hermione! I’ll make sure Harry has it before breakfast tomorrow and that he remembers to give it to you. It’ll take far too long to dig up now without you missing dinner.”

“Thanks,” the girl said. “And...all of that in class, that was true right? I mean, I’ve never even heard
about a magical astronomy lab before, and that there was a magical planet, or that other planets could even have magic! And that there was an origin to magic! It all sounds too fantastical,” she blurted out.

“It’s as true as your nose, Hermione. And if you think that’s exciting, wait till we get to how the Origin interacts with planets to create magical life. Or how magic evolves to the planet’s own use, so that no two planets with magic are ever alike. Or how each magical species uses magic in a different way, but there’s still a lot of overlap in spells.” The Doctor winked as Hermione’s eyes grew wide.

“Wow,” she breathed.

“Now, get off after your friends. I’m sure you’ll have plenty to discuss with them about classes.” He gave her a mysterious wink, and she raced out the door with a squeak and a flush.

“Meow!”

“Alright, Pashti, let’s get back to that salmon I promised you. Sorry, I completely forgot that the fifth years were right after the first years!” He turned and headed into the Tardis and his son’s impatiently waiting companion. Salmon awaited.

~~~In Which This is a Scene Break~~~~

Jack wandered the halls to the castle that had been his home for decades upon decades. He had missed Hogwarts, he must admit. Being back was nostalgic.

All the students he had taught, watched grow into young adults and take their first steps into the world, confidence on their shoulders, then their children coming, young and hesitant, back into the halls their parents had grown up in.

Helga, forever fussing over someone or something, making sure everyone was fed, making sure no one ended up with life-threatening injuries following sword practice, making sure everyone knew how competent a dueler she was when someone pissed her off. Nurturing the plants she lovingly tended to, making even the carnivorous ones adore her. Laying the foundations for sturdy magicals and giving them the confidence to practice new spells.

Rowena, tinkering with whatever she could get her hands on. Pulled from her studies only by her eventual husband and children. Willing to cut down whomever disturbed her with a new curse she had invented in the lull between interruptions, but also willing to indulge a curious mind and a sharp wit, especially one interested in her work. And the most powerful Enchantress this side of the continental divide, creating works of magic that shocked even the most experienced.

Godric, too powerful by half for his own good, and with twice as much energy as anyone should ever need. Tending to his weapons with more care than he often showed with youngsters learning the sword for the first time, and brandishing sticks as wands when he couldn’t be bothered to hunt up his own, having misplaced it once again. Forever creating some spell or other that no one could replicate, often to try and one up Salazar’s newest potion.

And Sal, his Sal. Calm as a mountain in a hurricane, but woe betide the one who pissed him off. Often that was Godric, and the two’s fights were legendary. A passion for creation in all its forms, potions to transformation, and an endless well of empathy and affection for the students who passed through Hogwarts, though he was second to Rowena in harshness as a task-master. And Sal, Sal was probably the best thing to happen to Jack since he had lost Ianto all those years ago.

Sal, who stood by him even as the physical differences in age mounted. As it was clear he would die...
and Jack wouldn’t look a day older than the first time they met. Who mourned the loss of their daughter with him, for Morwen was their world.

And who died trying to preserve the peace and harmony Hogwarts fostered.

He reached into his pocket and pulled out the small, iron key the goblins had given to him. He knew exactly where this led. According to the goblins, before the last of the four, Godric, had died, he put whatever he thought was more valuable hidden away from society in this room. It had been Jack and Sal’s private quarters, acquired after Morwen came into their lives. Away from the main living area of the castle as babies weren’t exactly the quietest of humans, it had been spelled to be ignored by all those who didn’t know it was there.

This was also the room Jack had put the portraits he bullied the four into getting.

His feet found the right door without his mind really needing to be engaged, and he stood before what had been his home for 70 years.

He took a deep breath, then slotted the key in and opened the door.

Well, it wasn’t three inches deep in dust, which was good news.

Also odd, but maybe those little beings from before had some way of accessing areas in the castle to clean, even if no one lived there.

He walked through the entranceway, into the side room they had used as an entertaining area, and found everything as he had left it.

Four trunks crowded the center of the room, one for each founder, and the couch he had convinced Sal to get still rested opposite an empty fireplace.

And four portraits hung on the wall, their occupants sleeping.

Rowena, looking powerful and enchanting. Helga, stern but caring. Godric, playful but deadly. And Sal, as gorgeous and reluctant as the day Jack bullied him into doing the portrait.

He felt his throat choke up a bit.

“I’m back,” he said, trying not to choke on the words. “I’m back guys.”

Rowena blinked awake first, startled. “Jack? Is that you?” she said, stunned.

“Yeah, I’m here.” He smiled, strained at the edges. “Sorry it took me so long.”

“Jack!” Godric roared from his frame. “I see you have returned! We must have a party!”

“If you can’t keep your voice down, Godric, I’ll find a way to seal it shut! For once we have company and you insist on shouting at them!” Helga berated from her frame. “Even if it is Jack.” She grinned at him.

Jack grinned back.

“Jack…”

He spun to look at Sal. “Hey Sal,” he said. “I’m here.”

“Of course. You think I would break my promise?” Jack gave his lover a look. “I’ve never broken one.”

Sal gave him a brilliant smile. “It’s good to see you again after all these years.” He frowned. “How many years has it been?”

“About 900. It’s 1991, right now.”

“Magic’s grace, it’s been ages!” Godric exclaimed. “I think we slept through most of it, to be honest. Not much company when it’s just the four of us, really.”

“So you’ve returned to Hogwarts. How many years has it been for you?” Helga asked.

Jack grinned. “Not nearly as long. It’s been just about three for me. Harry turned eleven, so we decided it was time to get his time stream issues handled before he explodes into tiny time hards.” Jack mimed blowing up with his hands.

“That is not comforting Jack,” Helga said. “Could that really happen?”

“The Doctor says so, and he’s rarely been wrong. This is Harry’s birth timeline and Harry had quite the rough start. His birth parents were killed by a madman that, according to the headmaster, hasn’t actually gone away. And if Harry’s timeline is tied to this planet and this century, I would guess there’s more to this madman than just a weird desire to kill small children.”

Godric hoisted the sword he had insisted he be painted with. “Let me at the blighter!” he roared.

“You’re a painting, Godric, I don’t see what you think you could do,” Rowena said, a sneer on her face. “Shout threatening catch phrases at him while you wave your painted sword around?”

“Hey, words hurt too, you know,” Godric said.

“I’m sure the madman will be absolutely devastated by your well aimed verbal blows from within the confines of a painted canvas.”

“I see those two haven’t settled anything down,” Jack said.

Sal shook his head. “They’ve almost gotten worse. Aside from stretches of years where we’d just...sleep, those two always had something to snipe about.”

“Well, I’ll be around more. I can bring your portraits elsewhere. We have the Tardis. It could make it less boring for you all,” Jack offered. “Voice activated TVs and hologram sets. Separate rooms so you don’t have to talk to each other unless you really want to. And other people to interact with.” Jack dangled the tempting morsel in front of the four founders.

Rowena immediately went for it. “Anywhere I can be away from this moron would be a blessing.” She jerked her head at Godric, refusing to look at him again.

“I too wouldn’t mind a change of scenery. These past centuries stuck in this room have been rather dull at times,” Helga rejoined.

“These….TVs...what are they?” Godric queried.

Jack grinned. “Oh, my friend, you shall see.”

“I wouldn’t mind either, Jack. These rooms have been too long our prison.” Sal’s quiet voice gave them all pause.
Jack swallowed. “I’ll get the Tardis set up for you all. And find a time when the students aren’t roaming the halls to get you up there. The closest secret passage back to the teacher’s hall is still a bit away, so it’ll have to be when they’ve all been put to bed.”

“We have been here for centuries, Jack. We can hold out for a day or so,” Helga said, voice gentle. And we can explain everything we decided was too important to leave to the world but still too important to destroy. You can choose what to do with all of it.” Helga gestured to the trunks that had been stored in the room.

“Can you...stay for a bit?” Sal asked.

Jack’s grin brightened. “I can stay as long as you want me here.”

“You’ll never be leaving then,” Rowena drawled. “If Sal had been able to, and if you could die, he would have insisted your portrait be painted alongside his.”

Jack gave Sal a long, steady look. “I’ll be here, Sal.”

“I know, Jack, I know.”

Jack settled on the floor, unconcerned about his clothes collecting dust or dirt. “So, tell me some of the things I missed.”

The clamor from Godric was enough to remind him of those long, happy years he spent with these four inseparable friends. Despite the clash of personalities, he doubted these four would ever want it to be any other way.

~~~~~~In Which This is a Scene Break~~~~~~

Dumbledore was sitting in his office, staring at the irate potions master in front of him.

“Please, clear this up for me. You gave Harry detention for...?”

Snape scowled. “That child was disrespectful. He spoke not only out of turn but accusing me.”

“And was this accusation untrue?” Dumbledore asked, already knowing the answer.

“That’s not the point! He’s disrespectful of authority and doesn’t give his professors proper deference.” Snape clenched his fist. “And he was not available when I went to go inform him of his detention times. There is no way I can enforce authority if I cannot use punishments effectively.”

Dumbledore pursed his lips. “I believe he is currently serving a kind of detention every evening for the next two weeks with his father, for his actions in the greenhouse yesterday.”

Snape looked taken aback. “Pardon?”

“Ah, yes, none of your Slytherins were in the Greenhouse yesterday. Harry apparently decided to experiment with something on the aromatic roses, and turned his two meters tall and carnivorous. He had to go get his father to help deal with the problem as Professor Sprout ordered everyone outside and kept the monster plant within the greenhouse. Rather than give him detention as she was planning, Professor Sprout deferred to the Doctor’s punishment, which seems to be some sort of essay and rumination on his mistakes, as well as a close examination of the plant he experimented on and a full categorization of its....chemical reactions and properties?” He said these last words with a measure of caution.
Snape couldn’t look any less gobsmacked with his mouth closed. “He did what?” he asked. “And his punishment is doing….muggle science?”

Dumbledore shrugged. “Pomona said he was to write at least a ten page paper complete with diagrams and charts detailing what he did to the plant and how it should react to chemicals. Since Harry wanted to experiment on it because it was magical, the Doctor is making sure he knows how the plant would react to every single chemical, or so I was told. I found it a fitting punishment, seeing as it reinforces the mistake while also being educational. Pomona as well, as she didn’t bother assigning detentions after that.”

“He’s….writing an essay and experimenting on a flower because he turned it carnivorous on a whim?” Snape clarified. “And this is okay?”

“Indeed. I rather think that it is a far better use of detention time than cleaning things.” Dumbledore smiled. “So even if your detentions were reasonable, Harry would be unable to attend for quite a while.”

Snape couldn’t stop his face from pinching. “The disregard for authority showed by that child is unreasonable?” he asked, voice low.

“Severus, you cannot deny that you dislike the Gryffindor students, and that you were prepared to hate Harry on sight. That Harry spoke back to you is unexpected, but probably not uncalled for. If you wish to not be confronted by our newest student, I would suggest toning down your obvert unkindness towards his friends and the the Gryffindors.” Dumbledore gave him a bland stare.

“You are pinning the blame on me for his actions! Are you going to start treating him like his father?” Snape accused.

Dumbledore sighed. “I am doing no such thing. But you cannot deny that your actions will not go unacknowledged any longer. I have been more than willing to let you do what you must in your classes, as you never fail to turn out one or two high level potions students every year, but Harry...Harry is another matter entirely.”

“Why is that? He’s a child, eleven years old. How can you have no control over what he does?” Snape demanded, voice sour.

“That child is not” Dumbledore breathed deeply. “That child argued with Madam Hooch about accidental and instinctive magic, accusing her of willing ignorance. He argued with me and accused me of fueling House rivalry in the middle of the Great Hall during breakfast, Severus. You are not the only one he has stood up to. He is not a child in the sense that we know of, and our usual methods of dealing with children will not work with him.”

Snape’s eyes went wide once more. “He accused you?”

“Yes, and he wasn’t shy about it. I dare say he would have continued the debate had I allowed it, but I rather thought we were gathering quite the audience already and it wasn’t worth the attention when all he wanted was to wear his jacket rather than the school robes.” Dumbledore shook his head. “And he could care less about the crowd that was starting to gather. In fact, I dare say he didn’t even see them.”

Snape took this in, his frustration about the boy not attending his detention fading as the enormity of what Dumbledore was saying hit him. “What...what have you let into Hogwarts?” Snape breathed.

“I’m sure we’ll be finding out, sooner than we might like.”
“I have a feeling that we might not survive finding out, Dumbledore,” Snape replied, face twisted in a grimace.

“We shall see, we shall see.”

~~~~~This is a Scene Break~~~~~

Kifern Lovegood stood in front of the bland building that hid the world of UNIT from those unaware of its presence. She was trying to contain her excitement. To be back here, and being paid to be back here, was enough to have her vibrating in place.

The source of the minister’s frustration walked through the double doors, a smile on his face. “Ms. Kifern, it is good to see you back. I trust this isn’t a pleasure visit. You rarely come see us otherwise.”

Kifern shook her head. “Indeed it isn’t. The Minister learned of someone within my world having a connection to you, a close one, and he was...displeased. He told me to come learn more about this doctor that is in charge of Harry Potter.”

The General’s eyes sharpened. “Doctor?” he queried. “Any other name?”

“No, just the Doctor,” Kifern said. “Is that important somehow? I didn’t have very much information on him, so I didn’t think he was all that important.”

“Oh, Ms. Kifern, how wrong you are. The Doctor is probably the most important being in the Universe.” He looked around. “But I’m afraid I don’t have the clearance to give you more information about him. I’ll have to get in touch with him.”

“I can have a letter delivered. He’s at Hogwarts, so there’s not any other way to get a hold of him,” Kifern offered.

The General shook his head. “I have other means of getting in contact with the Doctor. But that’s enough of him for now. We’ve had a few new things pop up that I think you would enjoy. Would you like to see?”

Kifern grinned. “Would I ever! The Minister would never believe me if I ever told him about this stuff,” she admitted with a roll of her eyes.

“Don’t forget, you didn’t believe it either,” the General pointed out. Kifern flushed a tiny bit. “Now, let’s get going. I’m sure you have some time you must be back by.”

Kifern shrugged. “Not really. The magical world doesn’t work on that kind of scale. And I’m seen as not very important, so…” she shrugged.

The General nodded. “Then I’m sure you’ll have plenty of time to explore the laboratories. And I’ll see if I can get a hold of the Doctor before you leave.”

Kifern wasn’t certain how he planned on doing that when Hogwarts was a no technology zone, but didn’t bother worrying about it. She was more interested in seeing what the labs had to offer.

She descended into the building’s basement with glee, ignoring the General pulling a strange device out of his pocket and dialing a number into it.

~~~~~In Which This is a Scene Change~~~~~
The Doctor paused from his salmon eating at the sound of an odd ringing noise.

“Hmm, Pashti, what do you think that could be?” Pashti made a loud, unconcerned meow. “Fine, don’t help me.” The Doctor sighed. “I’ll go get it. I think it’s a phone. Or something.”

He stood up, wandering out into the console room, to find something that resembled an early Earth tech phone ringing.

“Hello?” he asked, pressing the answer button. “Who is this? How do you even have this number? What is this thing?”

There was a chuckle on the other end. “Ah, Doctor, glad to see you still got my gift. Even if you’ve long forgotten what it was.”

“Alistair? Is that you?” the Doctor exclaimed. “General! It is you! How have you been, my good man?”

The General’s smile was tangible in his words. “I’ve been well. But it seems that you’re the one who’s been causing some trouble. My liaison with the magical world just informed me that you’re ruffling feathers over there.”

“Ah, well, I mean, I didn’t mean to, not this time at least. But that Minister looked like he might have been considering trying to take Harry from me, and I decided to route him before he could give it a good attempt.” The Doctor sighed. “I didn’t know he knew you.”

The General snorted. “He’s not exactly the most competent of Ministers, but he does the job for now. Needs to be replaced, but there also needs to be a huge shift in the magical world for that to even be an effective change. I assume you’re there to do that job? I mean, you are the father of the savior of the wizarding world.” This last bit was said with humor. “Just can’t keep your nose out of anything, can we.”

The Doctor sniffed. “I’m sure Harry’ll do all the work for me when it comes to changing the wizarding world. I’ll just be here for moral support.”

The general snorted. “Whatever you say, Doctor. But what do you want me to tell the liaison? I mean, she doesn’t know anything about you, nothing significant. But…”

“Tell her the standard story, I suppose. Until needs must, I would rather keep anything important a secret. We have to stay here for a little while at least, we don’t need that kind of attention until it’s absolutely important.”

“Alright, can do. And keep this phone, I know it’s not a phone phone but that’s the best word for it, keep it close. I’d rather be able to get a hold of you now that you’ll be here more often if something comes up that I think would benefit from your expertise.”

“You can’t use me as a Get out of Jail free card, Alistair,” the Doctor protested.

“Oh, don’t even start Doctor. You know you’d come running the moment something interesting popped up. This way you’ll just know faster than you normally would.”

The Doctor sighed. “Fine, fine. I’ll keep the not phone on me. Later General.”

“Goodbye Doctor. We’ll talk soon, I’m sure.”

The Doctor sighed, looking down at the little alien communication device. “Well, I suppose I can’t
really complain. Alistair’s not the worst person who could have my number.” He looked back to the kitchen. “Alright, back to salmon. If you’ve eaten my salmon, Pashti, you’ll be getting none for a whole week!”

~~~~~In Which This is an Ending~~~~~

Kuroi

Chapter End Notes

So, here we are, at the end once more.

I feel like I work well with self-imposed deadlines, so I should put another one on, so I don’t languish away and not post for another five months. It’s not going to be as quick as this one, cause that chapter hasn’t been written as much as this one was, but let’s see…*opens up calander* How about one month from now, on October 2nd. Exactly four weeks. I can do that.

As always, thank you so much for all your kind words and reviews and everything! I really appreciate them!!! If you had a question in your review and I haven’t replied yet, I shall. I got backed up by life.

Thanks!
In Which Meetings and Chaos Occur

Chapter Notes

Hello! See, I’m back! When I said I would be (or only a few hours after). I’m getting better at this! It’s a tad bit shorter than my 20,000 word chapters but I sort of like it. More time skips (not dramatic ones. I can’t do dramatic ones at the moment), but as much as I would like to write every single class Harry attends and the chaos he causes in them, it’s not really practical for story purposes and I have a point to reach at some point.

To my Beta, Mischief Managed33, THANK YOU FOR THE REMINDER!!! *round of applause*

And let’s get started!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

~~~In Which This is a Beginning~~~~

Dumbledore and the four Heads of House were sitting in his office on a Friday evening, all in various states of exhaustion or frustration. This was not one of the bi-monthly staff meetings they were holding, but rather a more specialized event.

The reason?

Harry “I’m not a potter”, who was determined to turn every single Hogwarts tradition on its head, and his eccentric family.

“Have we come to a decision?” The headmaster started off the dreaded conversation.

“I refuse.”

“I second.”

“Third.”

“Never in all my years,” Pomona finished, stubborn resolve on her face.

Dumbledore sighed. “He must have a House,” he cajoled. “We cannot leave a student Unsorted. It’s never been done!”

McGonagall firmed her lips. “I categorically refuse that walking disaster disguised as a child into Gryffindor House any more than he is already there. As is I spend half my designated class time with him fielding the most ridiculous questions and trying to keep some semblance of order. This past
week alone, his little group of friends has consistently turned in results that not only differed wildly from the set transfiguration, but they’ve all become semi-proficient in silent transfiguration. In a WEEK Albus. A WEEK.” She gave him her best glare. “I don’t know what you’ve let into this castle, but I refuse to allow him to corrupt the rest of my House. Neville Longbottom and Hermione Granger are quite enough, and the Twins seem to be set on following, heavens help us all.”

Snape snorted. “I am, for once, in agreement. He’s not only humiliated half my Slytherins, but he consistently refuses to follow a recipe, uses some strange, unexplainable storage box with who knows how many ingredients in it, and turned in potions that, while not the color or consistency they are supposed to be, always do what I’ve asked of them. Blaise Zabini is becoming more confrontational and distant from his housemates, spending more time in either the Gryffindor, Hufflepuff, or Ravenclaw common rooms with that odd little group, or in the Library where they’ve convinced Madam Pince to set up a permanent silencing ward over one of the tables and literally claimed it for themselves. I’ve heard the complaints of several of my older students who get glared at by Pince herself if they try to sit there despite not one of that group’s members being present. I cannot allow him to shake up the only place my Slytherins have any peace in.” He grimaced. “And Daphne Greengrass might be following. She has been the only one who can broach any topic of conversation with Zabini without being immediately repulsed. I can handle the Spider if I must, but I do not want the ire of Lord Greengrass to descend if, or rather when, his daughter starts becoming an outcast from her House.”

“I must put my refusal forth as well,” Flitwick admitted. “He is the most gifted student I have ever taught, and I am by no means exaggerating. He excels with every spell we try, often to a degree seventh years struggle to master, and he does it easily, casually. As if he put forth no effort at all. He will assist those around him without needing to be asked, and they too are usually quick to at least get the spell correct soon after. But it is this very level of competence that has me hesitating to accept him. My ravens always appreciate the help, but I can see them confused, jealous, and even spiteful sometimes. Padma Patil is starting to become distant from the few connections she had made in Ravenclaw, and her fellow housemates don’t seem concerned about making sure she’s included in things. She also isn’t concerned about the lack of inclusion. She spends only as much time as she needs to in the Tower, preferring to be wherever her new-found friends are. As much as I am enjoying this inter-House friendship, it also seems worrying.”

They all looked at Pomona Sprout, who hadn’t spoken up about her refusal just yet.

“Is there a particular reason you have also refused to let Harry into your House?” Dumbledore asked.

Pomona huffed. “You weren’t the one who had to deal with the Carnivorous Rose, or spend the next two lessons trying to keep him from de-rooting every single plant we worked with, or from touching the poisonous, toxic, or generally dangerous plants that I use to teach the first years about handling deadly plants. You weren’t there as he ran Mr. Longbottom ragged, though he didn’t experiment on anything again. You haven’t watched as your Common Room was turned into the central meeting hub for that strange little group because my Hufflepuffs are too accommodating to kick them out. Susan Bones was a good, happy, bright little girl with a number of friends in her House. Just a week later she’s odd, out of sorts, and not connecting with her housemates at all. And this is just a week, Dumbledore. A week. I shudder to think about what more constant exposure would do to my House. At least they are forced to disband when curfew or class or dinner time arrives.”

There was silence as they digested this piece of news. The chaos that was Harry reaching into even the Hufflepuff Common Rooms unsettled them.

“We shall revisit this later. I see we must put more thought into Harry’s placement…” Dumbledore started.
“No, Albus. I don’t see us changing our minds any time in the near future. In fact, I would think we would only become firmer. Why not just keep him as is? His schedule now is fine, and it means he can’t corrupt one class completely. I still get some of them without Harry present, and with, so there is equal exposure to the instability.”

Dumbledore looked pensively. “But he is not in assigned dorms. This is unprecedented. Keeping him as is would mean he remains with the Doctor and his family.”

“What removes him from the general student population at least for the night hours,” Snape pointed out. “Most of them need the break, Dumbledore. They aren’t sure how to handle him. He cares little for authority inasmuch as rules and structure, will not hesitate to confront anyone if they so much as hint at ignorance or bullying, student or teacher.” His drawn and pinched expression indicated he’d been on the receiving end of the boy’s temper. “Professor Sinistra was distraught after the first year class this week. Distraught.” He looked at McGonagall.

“It’s true. After the first year Astronomy class was dismissed, she showed up in my offices where I was discussing several of the Slytherin students’ work with Severus, almost to tears. It seems Harry had practically taken over the lesson, which was apparently about the moons of Jupiter, after informing Sinistra that she had the geography of...what, Europa? Ganymede? one of those moons, completely wrong, and that there was life on it, or something to the effect. Then he spent the next forty-five minutes lecturing the entire class on what the moons actually were, where they came from, their composition, and literally things that Sinistra had never heard of before. And the students listened to him, Albus. All of the students. Slytherins, Hufflepuffs, Ravenclaws, Gryffindors, all of them, they listened.”

Snape rubbed his temples. “And she was nearly inconsolable. She has no idea how to teach a class when one of the students knows more about the subject than her. She said the boy apologized to her after the class, looking remarkably sheepish and embarrassed, said he hadn’t meant to take over the entire class, but he had learned about moons, stars, planets, and galaxies since he could speak, and they were a specialty of his. Said he would try not to do it again in the future. Then he smiled and joined that group of his and left.”

Dumbledore couldn’t properly imagine a world where an eleven-year-old not only took over a class, but took over it well enough that the rest of his fellow age mates paid closer attention to him than they had to the teacher.

Or, he hadn’t been able to imagine it before Harry “not potter” had showed up.

He resisted the urge to take his glasses off and rub the stress out of his forehead. “I...concede that Harry is not what any of us were expecting,” he said. “But he is still a student here, and eleven years old.”

Snape snorted. “I would love to see you try to enforce that ‘you’re the child, I’m the adult’ with him, Dumbledore. Please let me know when you intend to do so. I will be sure to set up arena seating nearby for the fellow staff members who have been belittled, insulted, and schooled by him.”

“I’ll help,” McGonagall said.

“I’ll get the popcorn,” Sprout volunteered.

Dumbledore felt a moment of betrayal from his staff members, then remembered his brief confrontation with the boy about his jacket.

“We’re not getting that confrontation, are we?” Flitwick sighed, having watched the minute
widening of the headmaster's eyes.

“I...failed to recall my confrontation with him this past week. He was out of uniform and I asked him to put school robes on. He proceeded to lecture me on the divisive House system and the absurdity of assigning colors to students as it only made it easier to single out those who didn’t fit in. I let him wear his jacket rather than attract more attention from the students.” Dumbledore looked pensive. “And his points had merit. New students, often Gryffindors and Slytherins, are often targets for bullying from older students simply because of their House colors. And Hufflepuffs are often ignored for the same reason.”

“He’s been here a week, Albus, and he’s already having you rethink and ages old Hogwarts tradition,” Minerva pointed out. “Let’s keep his chaos contained to the rooms we’ve given his family. Speaking of which, was it wise, hiring those three?”

Dumbledore’s grimace explained a lot. “I would rather have not, but I couldn’t find a way to keep them out of Hogwarts. I don’t...exactly...understand how the Doctor’s magic works, and I know even less about Mr. Harkness and Ms. Rose.”

“You could start by trying to explain why Jack Harkness’s name seems to be carved into the walls of the Slytherin dungeons. Carvings that have been there long before we were around. And inside hearts. Alongside Salazar Slytherin’s name,” Snape said dryly.

There were double takes all around the room. “Come again?” Flitwick asked.

“It’s been a kind of Slytherin House mystery. Every single first year spots them, they aren’t exactly hidden, and they all ask the same question. ‘Who is Jack Harkness and why is his name inside a heart with our House Founder’s name?’ And they get the same answer. ‘We have no clue. Maybe you will be the one to figure it out.’” Snape looked as close to genuinely smiling as Minerva had seen him in years. “The first years this year are particularly excited since there is a Jack Harkness now teaching here. But not a single reasonable explanation has arisen. Plenty of illogical ones have, the least of which involves vampires or magical creatures and some of the more absurd say time travel or immortality.” Snape looked amused at it all, though he was clearly puzzled. “I spent some time in my youth trying to figure it out, to no avail. There is little on the Founders that isn’t second hand or even further removed. None of their personal documents survived the years.”

“Hearts, Severus?” McGonagall confirmed.

Snape took out his wand and drew a heart in the air, complete with “Jack Harkness + Salazar Slytherin” written in the middle. “This is the most intact one. Others are present.” He erased the words, replacing them with ‘Jack+Sal forever’ ‘Enigma+Sal’ ‘Jack Loves Sal’ ‘Sal+Jack=Morwin?’.

“No one is sure what that last one is supposed to imply. But they’re everywhere in the Slytherin dungeons and even in my personal quarters.”

The faculty stared at the hearts. “That...there must have been a Jack Harkness alive at the time of the Founders who had a crush on Slytherin,” Flitwick said. “Slytherin did have at least one child that we know of and Jack has been a mostly male name.”

“Except Jack wasn’t a name until nearly 400 years after the Founders died,” McGonagall pointed out. “What, McGonagall is an old family and I was interested in the origins of our name when I was young,” she said defensively when they all looked at her in surprise. “I learned quite a lot about names in the process.”

“Be that as it may, that makes it even harder to reconcile those hearts,” Sprout said.
The five of them stared at the hearts. “Are you sure this dates back to the Founders?” Dumbledore asked.

Snape nodded. “It’s a common spell among Slytherin House. Most first years learn how to date objects before the end of the first month because no one can believe that the hearts are really that old. Not a common spell among the masses, but I challenge you to find a Slytherin student who doesn’t know it.”

Flitwick blinked. “Really? But we don’t cover that spell until fifth year!” He paused. “I wondered why Slytherin always seemed to excel at it...it’s a spell with limited uses, but every single Slytherin has always done well with it.”

“Did you start that tradition?” Sprout asked.

“No. It was already a spell first years learned when I was a student here. I wouldn’t be surprised to find out a Slytherin invented the spell just to check the carvings.”

Dumbledore stroked his beard. “That is a strange occurrence. If you can, Severus, ask the Bloody Baron if he knows anything about them. I have it on good authority that he was around during the time of the Founders.”

Snape tried to hide his grimace. “I’ll see what I can do.”

“Something the matter?” Flitwick asked.

“First years also go ask the Baron about the carvings. If they’re lucky, a harsh glare is all they get in return. If they’re unlucky, Peeves gets free reign in the hallways around the common room for up to a week.”

The four other staff members sat back in mild shock. There was apparently a lot going on in Slytherin House that never made it beyond the portrait hole.

“That...aside for now, any comments on the Doctor’s class?” Dumbledore said, opting to think about this strange revelation concerning Jack Harkness later.

“You mean aside from every single Ravenclaw and a decent number of Hufflepuffs and Gryffindors, and even some Slytherins, nearly worshiping the ground he walks on?” McGonagall drawled wryly.

Dumbledore restrained a chuckle. “I would rather like to know why he’s the center of so much attention. He’s barely had a class with every year yet.”

Flitwick grinned. “From the way the older years talk, Harry got his intelligence from his father. The man is beyond genius, Dumbledore. I got a hold of one of the books he assigned...”


“Well, I would rather say that the previously assigned books weren’t very useful for his class, based off of what I was given,” Flitwick replied. “And they’re fascinating, Dumbledore. Simply fascinating.”

“How so, Filius?” McGonagall asked.

“For a start, they talk heavily about the Origin of Magic. And I’m not being facetious here. There is ample evidence he’s provided and several reliable sources that support it. Big names in magical research and theory, though none in Britain.” Flitwick grinned. “I nearly confiscated Ms. Harper’s
Dumbledore furrowed his brows sharply. “I have done some research into such a theory, but it was shaky and unprovable at best. How is it that there is now enough solid evidence for an entire book?”

Snape cleared his throat. “According to some of my students, the Doctor put together the book himself, gathering the most appropriate essays he had and binding them together.”

“And this has garnered the admiration of half the school how?” McGonagall asked. “This is a History class! There’s not even proper spellwork. How is he keeping students so involved in a History class?”

“He completely ignores Houses, never belittles a student for any question no matter how simple, and has the enthusiasm of a puppy,” was the interjection from a portrait.

Dumbledore glanced up. “Professor Basil, you have seen his class?” Basil Fronsac, a former Headmaster of Hogwarts, had put down his book.

“I like to take a peek at all the new professors, Dumbledore, see how they’re doing. I must say, you outdid yourself with this one. I never knew that much knowledge could be bound up in one person, along with that kind of enthusiasm. The students may have walked in hesitant and unsure, but they walked out wide-eyed and fascinated. It was the most thorough take-over I have ever seen and brilliantly played too. A master at his craft, the Doctor.” Basil looked appreciative. “Rarely have I seen someone so suited to teaching.”

“And any other insights you can give?” McGonagall asked.

Basil couldn’t contain his grin. “He’s probably the smartest person to walk the halls of this school. And his son is a close second. And they both know it. His classes are informal, very much in the hands of the students as well as the teacher. He asks questions, gets a variety of answers, and also elicits questions from the students. No matter the question, he answers it with aplomb. From questions I would have rejected for sheer stupidity to ones I would have been hardpressed to answer, he didn’t hesitate, and he praised the student who asked the question. For him, the curiosity is more important than the intellect. It seems that he believes that those with the instinct to ask questions outweigh those with a brain but no questions, and I must say, I believe he is correct in this case.”

There was silence for a few moments. “Can you tell us anything about his own magic?” Dumbledore finally asked.

Basil looked thoughtful. “From what I could tell, he used no wand or any other focusing device, merely gesturing and letting the magic take shape. I wasn’t sure how he created whatever he did, but it was impressive. I found myself fascinated by him. Most students agreed it was some combination of runes and enchantments, made voice and gesture activated, though none could agree on how he managed to get it to work.”

“Runes and enchantments activated by voice and gesture?” Flitwick pressed. “Are you sure?”

“I’m afraid I can’t be any more specific. I’m contained to the frame of the portrait and can’t investigate directly, Filius,” Basil said, humor in his voice.

“Ah, yes. I’m sorry. It’s just, such a level of accomplishment...it’s nearly unheard of. Perhaps Bathsheda could be of some assistance there.” Flitwick looked pensive, already making plans to corner the runes teacher for a thorough interrogation. He was sure she would be just as interested as he was.
“If I have time this week, I would like to sit in on one of his classes, get a feeling for him,” McGonagall said.

“I think we would all like to do just that,” Sprout added, to the nods of the other heads of House.

“Then we can take turns. I’m sure we all have a free period while he has a class,” McGonagall pointed out.

Dumbledore gave them a nod of assent. “If you can manage it, I would appreciate the insight you all can provide. I fear my presence would be less than welcome, after our talk last weekend.” He looked perturbed. “I struck a nerve and I fear the Doctor is rather suspicious of my intentions.”

Snape raised an eyebrow. “More perceptive than I would have given him credit for,” he murmured.

Dumbledore shot him a pointed look. “That aside, what of the fitness class?”

McGonagall snorted. “I say keep it. At least the kids are so worn out for the rest of the day that they can hardly cause any trouble.”

“There has been a noticeable drop in intentional mischief this week,” Flitwick pointed out. “Though accidental mistakes due to tiredness are common at least for the morning classes. I’m sure that will fade with familiarity to the class. Though I have also been told that the two are demanding. Even the Quidditch players have had a tough time in the class.”

“Are you really going to enforce the running they’ve planned? I have heard an endless stream of complaints from all years about it,” Snape said, frustration clear in his voice.

Dumbledore nodded sagely. “It was pointed out to me that a generation of magicals lacking in physical exercise become reliant on their magic to keep them healthy, which is ultimately detrimental to their well being later. Their magical core is pulled between keeping their body healthy and providing magic for spellwork, and thus they are never as strong as they could be. I feel that seeing how the class works for those who come of age this year will be a clue to how effective it is, and a bit of running never hurt anyone.”

There were sighs all around as the Heads of House realized they would have to deliver the news to their students. They would be running the lake come Monday morning and there was no getting out of it, at least not through legitimate means. They fully expected as many students as possible to be “sick” come Monday.

“Well, we’ve resolved the Harry problem for the time being, inasmuch as it can be solved. And this next week we can keep an eye on the Doctor. Anything else Albus?” McGonagall asked.

“For now, we shall just watch. Severus, if you have any more information about Jack Harkness by next Friday, I would be delighted to hear it. Until then, let’s try to keep the chaos to a minimum.”

They all assented, and the evening meeting broke up, the Heads of Houses starting on their rounds of their students.

Dumbledore remained, contemplating how odd his life had suddenly become.

~~~~In Which This is a Scene Break~~~~~

Saturday morning breakfast in the Great Hall was more subdued than usual. There were the same number of students you would normally find there on a Saturday morning; Ravenclaw was about half present, with Slytherin close behind and Hufflepuff and Gryffindor having maybe two dozen
students each. The noise level, on the other hand, was barely a fraction of what it normally was.

Some of this silence was due to the unusual presence of the two fitness teachers and the new History teacher.

Most of it was due to the unusual group sitting at the Hufflepuff table and the argument occurring between their newest teacher and newest student.

An argument that none of those present could really quite understand.

“Come on, just let me have the keyframe matrix, dad! Haven’t I proven that I’m quite capable of handling it?”

“Last time I gave you access to a keyframe matrix, you spent half the cycle scattered between the fourth dimension and the fifth. I spent the better part of the cycle just trying to acclimatize your atoms to their proper alignment!”

“I was six!” Harry burst out. “I hadn’t even started multi-dimensional physics yet! Haven’t i proven that I have a handle on them by now?”

“Your experiments with the rollercoaster say otherwise,” the Doctor replied, calmly biting into a banana.

Harry threw his hands up in the air. “That is far more complicated than a keyframe matrix dad! There are three interlocking keyframes in that coaster, which is why I need another one! You said I needed to fix it, and I have concluded that I need a fourth keyframe matrix to help balance out the dimensional instability, unless Uncle Jack likes being a half-fourth dimensional being while we try to work out the issues again!”

Jack shook his head. “Nah, I rather like not knowing how time flows, if it’s all the same. Too much to keep track of, not enough brain power to do it.”

Harry gestured. “See, I need another matrix!”

The Doctor sighed. “Alright, show me the equations you’ve worked out. If I judge you’ve made no fundamental errors, I’ll let you have a fourth one. Though really, you should be able to do this with two at the most. How you’ve even worked three, and now how you think you’re going to work four in, I haven’t the slightest clue.”

Harry grinned in triumph, pulling out a sheaf of papers bound in a simple folder, though one that was at least two centimeters thick, and levitated it over to his dad. “These are all my equations. You had me redo them after the last incident, so I started from scratch.”

“I’m starting to regret that,” the Time Lord muttered, grabbing the folder out of the air, and flipping it open.

Several curious teachers leaned over to get a look at the file, then looked at Harry with raised eyebrows.

“What is this?” McGonagall said, gesturing at the folder.

Harry tilted his head. “What do you mean? It’s my equations.”

“I mean, what is it? It’s….all sorts of weird letters and lines and it sort of looks like Arithmancy but…not.”
“You….but…it’s math!” Harry exclaimed. “I mean, it’s fairly advanced math, but math all the same!” He looked around at the other confused teachers. “Don’t you all teach math here?”

“Arithmancy is an optional subject for third years and up,” a Ravenclaw offered. “It’s an equivalent of math, though for magic.”

Harry threw his hands up in frustration. “You lot are weird. Math is a fundamental part of...of everything! How can you not teach math?”

The Doctor looked up at Harry. “What’s this three-dimensional loop bypass sequence you’ve got setup on page four? It doesn’t seem to actually do anything.”

“It’s to balance the equation. Page six.”

The Doctor rifled through the pages. “Ah, I see.” He went back to munching his banana and flipping through Harry’s work.

“Did you understand any of that?” Blaise whispered to Hermione and Padma. Him, Susan, and Neville had been rather clueless the entire argument.

Padma shook her head, but Hermione hesitated. “I...I’ve heard of physics. It’s a class I would have started in a couple years, but it’s supposed to be really hard. It helps define the world and its motions,” she said.

Blaise sighed. “And Harry here is an expert in it?” he said.

Harry, it seems, was listening. “I’m not an expert, but I’m not half bad. I’m allowed to play with multi-dimensional spaces and matrices with adequate preparation.”

“Harry, I don’t know what half those words mean,” Blaise said bluntly.

“I’ll explain it all to you at some point. For now, I need to convince my dad to let me have another keyframe.”

Blaise sent another confused look at Harry, but it went unacknowledged.

The five friends, united in silent incomprehension, all looked at each other with a hint of helpless.

“It’s not like we’ve understood half the other things he’s said this week,” Susan pointed out. “And this sounds like non-magical stuff. Only Hermione’s got any real experience there.”

Hermione shook her head. “It’s way too advanced for me. I barely started on basic physics in science.”

“Well, we’re gonna have to wait until Harry he-” Susan was cut off by a gasp from the Ravenclaw table, one audible above the slowly rising noise level of the hall.

Everyone turned to see the Grey Lady, notoriously silent except to Ravenclaw students, staring in open-mouthed shock at the staff table, one hand to her mouth.

“Uncle…” she whispered, voice trembling, eyes watering as they stared directly at Jack. “Uncle...is that you?”

Jack rose to his feet, bagel forgotten on his plate as he looked at the ghost with a level of fondness that went beyond just friendship. “It’s been too long, my child. You’ve gotten yourself into quite the predicament.” He looked at her ghostly form. “Come on, we should go have a chat.”
“Uncle! You...your promise...you kept it.”

“Of course, ‘lena, when have I ever not?” Jack had walked around the staff table and towards the Grey Lady, entirely ready for the intangible hug that she attacked him with.

“When I came back...you were gone, and no one knew where you went, and mum was gone and only Auntie H and Uncle G were here and then I was all alone and no one else came back except the Baron and I was alone Uncle!” She hiccuped. “I was alone and no one knew who I was for a long time, and then when they did figure out who I was, all they wanted to talk about was mum, but now you’re back!”

Jack soothed her with soft noises. “Come on ‘lena, here isn’t the best place to tell you what happened.” He ushered her towards the giant doors. “We can go somewhere private to talk, okay?”

The Grey Lady shivered, but nodded her head, tears falling down her cheeks. “Okay, Uncle.” She floated out, half wrapped around Jack, uncaring that the entire hall was staring at the two of them in various states of shock.

Harry stared after his Uncle with a look of amusement. “Well, somehow I’m not that surprised,” he murmured.

“Except now the entire hall is staring at us like we’re all crazy,” Rose said, a hint of worry in her voice.

“And that’s different from any other time how?” Harry asked.

“Cause this time we can’t just leave,” Rose replied.

“Ah, yes, um, well, Dad?”

The Doctor raised an eyebrow. “Your uncle’s gonna have to work this one out on his own. His fault, you know. He should have known better.”

Harry glared. “That doesn’t exactly solve the problem of everyone staring at us right now!” he hissed.

“Ah, so they are. Hmm, that is quite a problem.”

Dumbledore rose to his feet. “If you have anything that could help clear the air,” he asked, looking at the three remaining chaos bringers.

Rose grimaced. “Family matters?” she ventured.

Dumbledore raised an unimpressed eyebrow. “I am well aware of who the Grey Lady is, Ms. Rose, and Mr. Harkness could not possibly know her as well as she is implying.”

Rose winced. “Doctor, some help please?”

The Doctor snorted. “Jack’s gonna have to dig himself out of this one. He went and caused the problem.”

“If I may,” a deep, gravelly voice interrupted. “I can vouch for the close relationship between the Grey Lady and Jack Harkness.”

Everyone turned to look at the unusually taciturn Bloody Baron, who floated over towards the group at the staff table.
“Baron?” Dumbledore questioned. “You can vouch? I don’t understand.”

The Bloody Baron frowned. “The Enigma has, as he promised, returned. The Lady was unaware of it until this moment and has become overwhelmed. There are none who remember her as she was, aside from myself, and I am a less than welcome presence.”

Rose scowled at him. “As you probably should be, if I’ve heard right.”

The Baron tipped his head in acknowledgement. “You have, Lady Wolf. As I have heard of you. You were popular as a tale told to unsettled youngsters. I am honored to meet you.”

Rose’s scowl faded into a grin of amusement. “I was a tale for young kids, huh?” she said.

“You all were, at one point. The Enigma was always the best at tales and stories. I’m sure it was due to us being unable to tell how much of them was true or not.” The Baron smiled at the memory. “I hope I have cleared some of the air here, Headmaster.”

“I’m rather afraid you just clogged it up even more, Baron,” the Headmaster confessed, true confusion in his eyes.

The Baron’s grin was entirely too reminiscent of Jack’s to not be a copy. “Well, the Enigma was always good at that.”

“Enigma?” Dumbledore said.

The Baron just smiled, all teeth, and floated off.

Dumbledore turned to the Doctor, Rose, and Harry. “Don’t look at us,” Rose said.

“I’m concerned. The four of you have no discernable background, no one seems to know who you are or what you do, and yet you are teaching and interacting with my students on a daily basis.”

The Doctor gave Dumbledore a cool look. “I’m fairly certain those are the exact reasons you gave me Harry ten years ago, Albus,” he said, voice firm. “Unless I misunderstood your reasons when I asked you why you were handing me a one-year-old baby.”

Harry snorted, having heard this exact conversation from his dad before. Really, he thought, who considered his dad an ideal parent figure? Harry was certain that, had he been anything but magical, he might have ended up far worse off than he was. He loved his dad, and he knew his dad loved him, but the Doctor wasn’t exactly the ideal parental figure in terms of safety.

The Headmaster gave the Doctor a considered look, unable to figure out how to reply to that. It was the reason he had called upon the Doctor all those years ago, but he had underestimated just how buried the Doctor’s history was. He had been certain he would be able to get some information on the man after ten years, but he was still just as clueless now as he was then, with only some knowledge that the Queen, of all people, knew him, and a General in the Muggle military. That wasn’t exactly knowledge that comforted him or even gave him something to grasp onto.

“I’m sure you’ll find the answers you want in time, Headmaster,” Rose said, a mysterious smile on her face.

Harry cut her a look but didn’t say anything. Rose was, in her own way, one of the most powerful forces in the Universe. There was very little that could stop her, if she chose to obliterate it.

“Rose,” the Doctor said, a note of warning in his voice.
Rose settled back in her chair, picking up a pear and deliberately biting into it, ignoring the wince from the Doctor. “If that’s all, Headmaster?”

Dumbledore frowned, but realized he probably wasn’t getting any answers at the moment anyway. He nodded to the trio and headed back to his chair.

~~~~In Which This is a Scene Change~~~~

Jack led Helena to their assigned rooms, waiting until they were inside before sitting down on the lone couch.

“So, ‘lena, after all these years, you’re still at Hogwarts. I never figured you for the ghost type,” Jack said, a small smile on his face.

Helena rolled her eyes. “I was murdered, vengefully, and my guilt and trauma had me cling to ghostly form. But I never made it back to Hogwarts while you were still here. In fact, I made it back only a year or so before Aunt Helga and Uncle Godric died...and they refused to tell me what happened. I never knew what came of my mother or Uncle Sal. I went into hiding for a while, then came back, and became a mentor for new Ravenclaws. They call me the House Ghost now.” She looked down at her lap.

Jack sighed. “Your mother mourned your actions. She was trying to find you when an experiment backfired on her. Something dealing with blood enchantments or something. In any case, it wasn’t pretty. She was cursed, losing bits of her mind day by day, and her body wasting away with it. It was then she sent Thad after you, having forgotten how...unstable a character he was. She died before we learned of your fate.”

Helena let out a shuddering sob. “Oh mum,” she whispered. “I wish it were that I had never tried to steal her diadem. For her to lose her mind...I can’t even imagine…”

“It wasn’t pretty, and she fought it every step until she couldn’t remember what she was fighting against. Mercifully it was fast, barely a month before her body couldn’t sustain her. But it was an ugly month. We mourned her passing, but were, in the end, glad for it, because she could be beyond the pain and frustration.” Jack’s expression was distant and pain-filled. “Sal died not ten years after Wen. There was an upstart Dark Lord from the continent, and Sal wasn’t as young as he used to be. More powerful, but lacking the stamina, and Godric and Helga were out recruiting students. They came back the day after Sal was killed.”

Helena gasped, eyes wide. “Oh, Uncle Jack...I’m so sorry…”

Jack’s smile was full of teeth. “The little bastard didn’t have a chance to brag, he was dead before Sal hit the ground.”

“Of that...of that, I am glad. Did...did the Doctor come back for you after Uncle Sal died?”

“No. I was given a way of returning when I so chose. It was a one-way trip, so I could only leave when I was sure I was ready to. After Sal died, there wasn’t anything tying me down. Morwen...we never found her. She might have had children, they’re quite certain Sal had descendants, but she would have to have been behind some heavy warding. We couldn’t find any trace of her, though we searched until Sal died.” The Immortal looked at his hands. “I spent so much time here in Hogwarts it’s like my second home. I’ve never stayed in one spot for so long, not continuously. But without Sal and Morwen, I couldn’t find a reason to stay behind. Hogwarts was on it’s way to being a successful school, educating the youth of its time in a broader scope than home educations could provide. And I had another child to get back to, to help raise.”
Helena grinned. “Your little Magic Harry. I remember hearing about him. I take it he’s the one who’s been causing trouble all week?”

“He wouldn’t be Harry if he wasn’t causing some sort of mischief,” Jack agreed.

“I have enjoyed the stories of his chaos. The Baron and I are the only ghosts old enough to remember your stories. It’s wonderful to see the inspiration for them. Your Rose is beautiful, and the Doctor is inspiring.”

“They are rather amazing. I wouldn’t be here if it weren’t for them. Literally.”

Helena raised a translucent brow. “How so?”

“They’re the reason I’m immortal, ‘lena,” he said. “I’m certain I told you lot that story at one point or another.”

“Then you must also know that it was a game amongst the other students to try and guess how much of your stories was truth and how much was fiction.”

Jack looked offended. “I’ll have you know that all my stories were 100% truth!” he said, hand to his heart.

Helena gave him a look. “That story about you staging a daring rescue of an entire troupe of gorgeous sacrifices in nothing more than your underclothes and with only a screwdriver?” she said, doubt clear in her tone.

“Well, alright, it was one gorgeous sacrifice, and I had trousers, but the screwdriver part was true! You should see the Doctor’s screwdriver. It’s a miracle worker, I tell you.” He winked.

Helena couldn’t help the laugh that bubbled up. “Oh, Uncle Jack, I missed you.”

“And I you, Helena.” His eyes went wide. “Wait a moment. Don’t go floating off, I have something you should see.”

Helena frowned but nodded. “Alright. I’ll be here. What is it?”

“Just wait.”

He dashed into the Tardis and made record time finding the proper room. “Rowena! There you are! I see you’ve got the hang of the voice controls for the holographic projector. I’m sorry to interrupt your quality time with the library, but I have someone I’d like you to meet, and that meeting can’t happen here. You up for it?”

Rowena sighed but cancelled the holo-projection. “You and your adventures Jack. Why can’t you ever just give me an explanation? What’s up with the secrecy?”

Jack grinned. “I like surprises. And this one’s worth it. Come on, Wen, it’ll be fun!”

“Fine, fine, but I better be put right back in this room when you’re finished with your surprise.”

“Can do! Alright, come on!” Jack took Rowena off the voice-activated hanger and started back out of the Tardis, glad the old girl was being cooperative and not stretching distances again.

He made it back out to the room, Helena sitting right where he left her (well, floating to be technical) grinning like a cat with a canary.
“Can you stop banging me around, Jack? I find hitting the edges of my frame more than a bit disconcerting.”

Jack watched as Helena’s eyes went wide, her hands coming up to her mouth and tears starting to slip down her pale cheeks.

“Just a moment Wen, calm down.”

“Hurry it up, Jack. I have books to read and theories to write!”

Helena trembled where she sat, but was silent, waiting. Hoping.

When Jack finally propped Rowena up on a stray table, leaning her back against the Tardis, the Founder was annoyed enough that it took her a moment to realize the second presence in the room.

“Alright, what am I doing out here? I thought I wouldn’t have to see the walls of Hogwarts again, Jack. I spent nine centuries staring at the walls of Hogwarts, I would be glad to never see them again if I cou-” she stopped mid-word, eyes finally landing on Helena as Jack moved back out of the way. “Helena? Is that...Jack, please tell me you’re not playing a prank on me, because so help me if you’ve found some weird future thing that can create a ghost of my daughter I will find a way to kill you from within this frame.”

Jack shook his head. “No, Wen, no trick. Helena is the ghost of House Ravenclaw, it seems.” He smiled. “Helena, you want to talk with your mom?”

Helena trembled, then floated over to the painting. “Mum? Is that really you?”

Rowena looked startled at her daughter’s voice. “Helena...what happened to you? Why did you never come back?”

Helena’s tears came faster. “I’m so sorry mum, I’m so sorry. I never meant to not come back. I was so stupid, I thought I could get your attention if I was as smart as you, so I took your diadem. I was so stupid.” She reached out a pale hand, brushing it against the canvas. “Oh mum, I’m so sorry.”

Rowena mustered a tremulous smile. “Helena, you were always my little girl. I may not have shown it as much as I should have, but you were always precious. I loved you to the stars and back.” A slender hand touched the canvas she was bound within. “What happened to you?”

Jack edged out of the room, leaving the two to their reunion. After so long, ghost and portrait deserved the privacy.

~~~~~~~In Which This is a Scene Break~~~~~~~

Monday morning rolled around, and for nearly all the students, this was the day that they dreaded. They had all contemplated not showing up, but the two strict fitness teachers had made an announcement at dinner Sunday.

"So, tomorrow is the day that all of you are eagerly anticipating. Yes, I know, running the lake is an awesome experience. The fresh air, the wind in your face, the burn of your muscles. I'm sure all of you will be bright eyed and bushy tailed come tomorrow morning, but in case there are a few of you who might think about keeping your pillow company for an hour more, or coming down with a mysterious cold, let it be known that all illnesses will be checked by Madam Pomfrey, who has agreed to make sure that all of you are in tip-top condition, and anyone who decides that bed is a better decision, your face will be remembered and next fitness class, you will be our new volunteer for all activities for the rest of the month. We have very good memories, and a spell to tell who is
missing, just in case our memory fails." Jack grinned.

Students shifted in their seats, the memories of their fitness class at the forefront of their minds. Murmurs circled the hall. General opinions seemed to be that maybe it wouldn't be that bad to just...sleep.

"I will tell you now that the fitness class will be focusing on dodging for the next few weeks. Volunteers will be the first dodgers, and we will be using paint-filled balls to mark who has failed to dodge. Those who have missed the running portion without a reasonable excuse will be our first test subjects for our long lasting paint. It should last for a couple days, though we were hoping you would test it out for us." Rose grinned at the students, who suddenly seemed much less interested in sleeping in tomorrow.

"Also, wear comfortable clothes tomorrow. Don't bother with robes, they're impractical for running," Jack added.

So Monday morning dawned bright and early and the Great Hall was filled with half-awake students not looking forward to their new morning regime. In fact, the early time meant they had to be down for breakfast half an hour earlier than normal.

But when Jack and Rose had them all file out to the grounds, every student in the hall went, keeping their grumbling to a minimum.

"Ravenclaw 1st years Michael Corner and Stephen Comfoot, 2nd years Cho Chang and Marietta Edgecomb, 4th year Larson Fernleaf, 6th year Kelsey Markson, Hufflepuff 2nd year Eloise Midgen, 3rd years Karl Mason, Helena Garfil, 6th years Greg Hurley and Meaghan Bakers, Gryffindor 2nd year Cormac McLaggen, 3rd years Fred Weasley and George Weasley, 7th years Jeremy Hines and Brian Waters, Slytherin 1st year Draco Malfoy, 2nd years Morphius Vaisey, Morgan Hilesor, 6th year Marcus Flint, 7th year Madeline Harper. Those are the missing students," Rose said. "21 missing. Madam Pomfrey has another five with legitimate medical concerns, but those are the ones that didn't show up. I'm sure the first and second years will be a discouragement from missing these lessons after today," she finished.

"Alright, now that you all are all here, we're going to stretch. Remember, running without stretching leads to injury. Spread out, keep some space between you and the people around you, and follow our lead." Jack gave them a ten-second countdown to spread out before moving through the stretches.

Before long, he directed everyone to a clear path around the lake that Rose and he had set up the day before, marked with lights and little tables with water around the edges.

"Slow jog for all of you. We'll keep the first couple weeks pace controlled for you, but after that, it'll be up to you to figure it out. I'll be at the front, and Professor Jack will be at the back with the stragglers. If you're having difficulties, find him and let him know. If you can't keep up, that's fine. Jack will be handling those who are having trouble. It's okay to have trouble, I'm sure there will be plenty of sore muscles and complaints, but give it a month or two and this will turn out much better for you than you expect." Rose started out on the path. "Everyone, keep pace. We'll do alternating run/walk cycles."

And so the half hour jogging session began. Half the students had few issues, having dealt with a castle full of stairs and long passageways, but there were still many who were struggling. They flocked around Jack, who kept a much slower pace for them to work at. Harry bounced between his friends, pushing them to keep up, or directing them back to Jack if they were having serious trouble.
Still, when the half hour finished, marked by a loud bell, the students all felt the results of their morning run.

They staggered back towards the castle, only to be stopped by Jack. "Cool down stretches, unless you like tight and sore muscles all day," he said.

Still, when they were let into the castle, the older years all stumbled off to their dorms to change. The 1st and 2nd years were ushered into the Entrance way, a smug Draco Malfoy standing there. The other missing first and second years were also hanging out in the Great Hall, uncertain.

"Ah, Mr. Malfoy, so kind of you to join us. And the rest of you well. I see you missed our morning run. I'm sure you won't mind being the volunteer for today's lesson," Rose said brightly.

The smirk on his face faltered and the other students shuffled around. All in all, there were seven students who had missed the run from the first and second years.

Rose put a hand on Malfoy’s shoulder and steered him towards the room assigned for the fitness class.

“Harry, are they really going to do what they said?” Hermione whispered.

Harry nodded. “Of course. If they didn’t, more students would think it’s okay to miss the class. Besides, dodging is important. It helps improve your coordination, speed, and stamina. It’ll be fun!”

“Only you think balls of pain flying at you would be fun,” Blaise pointed out.

“Paint, Blaise, paint,” Harry corrected.

“No, I was right the first time,” Blaise insisted.

Harry rolled his eyes.

The group of tired, but not exhausted, first and second years arrived at the large classroom. There were rows of some kind of throwing machine lined up on half the room, pointed towards the far wall.

“No need to go change today, you all are dressed just fine. If you’ve brought clothes in your bags, you can use the changing rooms afterwards. Showers are available. If you didn’t bring clothes, you can borrow some of the training clothes and return them tomorrow. You’re gonna need the change of clothes, I can assure you,” Jack said.

“What are we doing?” a Hufflepuff boy piped up.

“Dodging!” Jack replied, sounding far too eager. “Best way to avoid a spell you don’t want to hit you is to dodge it. So today, and the next few weeks, we’ll be focusing on dodging. To which end, we have these lovely machines!” Jack patted one of the throwing devices. “This can throw paintballs at whatever speed I think you lot can handle. We’ll increase it bit by bit until you can get out of the way of the average spell more often than not.”

“Umm...is that all?” a girl from Slytherin asked.

“Did you want more?” Rose questioned. “I would think dodging paintballs would be hard enough as it is.”
“No, no, I’m good,” the girl hastily corrected.

“Good. Now, since several of you decided to miss out on our running exercise this morning, they have volunteered to be the first one to show you how this works. Mr. Malfoy, Mr. Corner, Mr. Vaisey, Mr. Cornfoot, if you would go first,” Rose said, pushing the boys lightly towards the machines.

“You can’t do this!” Malfoy said.

“I can and will. Everyone is going to do this exercise multiple times, Mr. Malfoy, but since you decided to sleep in instead of joining your classmates this morning, you four are our first volunteers, and the girls will be next. We have a special addition for those that skipped out on the morning run. I’m sure it won’t take you long to figure it out.” Rose gestured towards. Jack and the machines.

“Now, boys, if you would.”

The four boys hesitantly walked towards the machines.

“Alright, now, in front over there. I’ll set the machines on low, and increase the speed until you’re having difficulty. We’ll use that as a baseline for the class.”

The boys all took spots, staring at the machines with more hesitance than they would admit to.

It was just a few moments later that the machines whirred to life, and their auto-target function found the first and second-year boys. The first paintball hit Malfoy directly in the chest, and his eyes went wide.

“You’re...you’re actually serious!” he said, shock in his voice.

“Did you think we weren’t?” Rose asked.

“Do you know who my father is?” he blustered, spinning away from another paintball.

“Lucius Malfoy, head of the Malfoy family, influential with the Ministry and the school board. But your father isn’t going to help you dodge paintballs, Mr. Malfoy,” Rose replied, a smile on her face. “I would move a bit faster, if I were you.”

They spent the next couple minutes getting hit by paint, running back and forth across the room, twisting out of the way of as many as they could.

By the time Jack turned the machines off, they were more paint than person.

“Nicely done. Good show. You can go grab a towel, wipe your face off. You’re gonna have another chance to try again though, so you can’t change out of those clothes just yet. Next, Ms. Chang, Ms. Edgecomb, Ms. Hilser, you’re up.”

The girls edged out in front of the machines, nerves jangling, and moved the moment they whirred to life.

After having watched the boys struggle with it, the three girls ended up much less paint covered than the boys, though they weren’t unscathed and were still fairly colorful.

“Very nice, good job paying attention to the previous group and learning from them. You can go grab towels and wipe your faces off. Alright, groups of four, and no you can’t choose your group. Alright, let’s see, Mr. Crabbe, Ms. Bones, Ms. Parvati Patil, Mr. Goldstein. Let’s get you all setup.”
The four students called stood, nervous, and took up spots in front of the machine.

For the rest of the class, it was a chorus of shrieks and giggles and pants as students raced around, trying to dodge paintballs and avoid running into each other.

And the resentment when Harry came out of the ordeal with just one paint splotch was palpable.

Harry’s frustration at being hit at all was also palpable.

“Everyone, nice job. Now, I’ve called class a bit early, so you all can either go back to your dorms and wash up or chance getting a shower in the changing rooms to do the same. And our first seven volunteers, that’s not going to be coming off. As we said yesterday, those that missed the morning run would be our test subjects for our long lasting paint. As a reminder to not miss morning runs.”

Malfoy, who had been teasing several of the other students covered in paint, blanched. “What do you mean, it won’t come out?” he shouted.

“It’s part of the punishment for missing the morning run. I’m sure you will be an effective deterrent to others thinking of doing the same,” she replied.

Malfoy’s eyes went wide in horror and he dashed to the changing rooms, followed closely by the other six.

The others hovered around, uncertain, until they heard the scream of rage as Draco Malfoy discovered that the paint wasn’t coming off with water, the shouts of despair from the girls as they realized it wasn’t washing off their faces.

“Everyone else, don’t worry. We changed out the paintballs, so it’ll wash off quite easily. We aren’t planning on ruining your clothes either, so a quick wash will work for them as well. Our volunteers are discovering that the paint has stained their skin, and they will be multi-colored for the next few days. As will you all, should you decide to miss Wednesday’s lesson.”

Students muttered to each other in hushed whispers.

When the 1st and 2nd years left the fitness lesson, word quickly spread. Don’t miss the running, it was said. Not unless you wanted to look like a poorly planned prank gone wrong.

The seven first and second years the next two days, until the paint faded, covered head to toe.

And after the Weasley twins, Karl Mason, Helena Garfil, and Larson Fernleaf also come out of their Tuesday fitness class covered in paint splotches and befuddled expressions, the turn out for Wednesday’s class was nearly 100%.

Harry, meanwhile, thoroughly enjoyed it.

The teachers facilitated between utter confusion and helpless amusement. Any parental letters about the class were directed to the headmaster, who answered them all with the extensive health benefits that running gave, how it improved a young magical’s core, and hopeful wishes that the parents understand that this was for the benefit of their children.

After those replies, most students were informed by their parents that they would hear nothing more about the class, and students resigned themselves to attending it.

~~~~~This is a Scene Break~~~~~
McGonagall sighed deeply. It was Friday, just after lunch, and the next class was her Ravenclaw/Slytherin first years, with Harry.

She actively tried to avoid thinking about the Wednesday Gryffindor/Hufflepuff class. The less time she dwelled on the trouble Harry caused, the less anxious she felt in general. But it was hard to ignore the impact Harry had on Hogwarts. It was the end of his second week here and already he was actively defying several ideas that had been seen as absolute in the magical world.

Silent casting was something done by only the most experienced and gifted magicals. It was a specialty of hers, but it took years of practice and dedication. Yet Harry had not only demonstrated his affinity for it, he had shown his four friends how to as well. First years doing silent casting, Merlin help her. They weren’t experts, but to even get spells to work at all with silent casting had taken her many months. In two weeks, even Neville Longbottom, magically gifted but nervous and lacking confidence, managed to get the hang of the principle.

Today they were covering transfigurations from objects of one size to a drastically different size. Many first years had difficulties with it, the concept hard to grasp magically. She was half anticipating, half dreading what Harry would produce.

So when the students filed in, Harry, Blaise Zabini, and Padma Patil all taking a table off to the side Harry seemed to have claimed, she gathered her patience and started the lesson.

Everything was going well, students had parchment and quills out, notes diligently taken (Harry had a bound notebook and a pen, as did Blaise, she noted with a mental sigh). Everything would have continued going well when Draco Malfoy, so help her, she was giving him detention for a month for ruining her nice, calm class, decided to cause trouble.

It was something simple, something seemingly innocuous and, while annoying and frustrating not harmful. It really shouldn’t have caused as much trouble as it seemed to.

The blonde haired boy had cast a small charm meant to open small clasps, locks, and the like, right at Harry. It was a charm popular amongst girls as it made removing jewelry much easier, and the upper classes made frequent use of it, which is where McGonagall suspected Malfoy learned it. She briefly wondered why Malfoy would bother casting it at Harry, boys rarely wore jewelry and even if he did, what would be the point? It wasn’t like Malfoy could steal anything in her classroom, a common use for this spell in public places.

Just as she was about to reprimand Malfoy for his ill-advised spellcasting during her lesson and dock him points, she felt what she could only describe as a wave of magic sweep over her.

It was intense, baffling, and strong.

She wasn’t the only one to feel it. Every single student shuddered, looking around for the source.

Except for Harry.

She should have known. How could she forget that strange gold necklace Harry was never without? What kind of magic must it have, for the effect to reach so far? And why would a child have such a powerful magical object?

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Blaise shifted in his seat as he felt Harry’s magic brush through his core. What was going on?

“Harry? What’s going on? Why’s your magic all over the place?” he whispered, leaning in and
brushing against Harry’s hand.

He jolted, struck by a sudden rush of...of something.

Something Harry obviously felt too, as his eyes went wide. “What? How? Why?” Harry groped around his neck, feeling for his necklace, and panicking as he couldn’t locate it. “No, no, this can’t be happening. No...” He stood up, green eyes wide in fear.

“Mr. Harry, what is going on?” Professor McGonagall demanded. “What was that just now?”

Harry frantically looked around himself. “Where is it? Where is it? Oh crap, I’ve never lost it before, where is it?”

“Harry? What’s wrong?” Padma asked, concerned.

“My necklace, it’s gone. I can’t find it.”

There was a chuckle from the desk behind him. “You looking for this?” Malfoy said, holding up the gold chain. “I mean, I knew you were strange, but a gold necklace? Flaunting your wealth?”

Professor McGonagall bristled at the front of the room, her face a mask of fury. “How dare you, Mr. Malfoy. This is a classroom, not a playground. What were you thinking? How old are you? 20 points from Slytherin and detention tomorrow evening. I refuse to allow this childish bullyi-” McGonagall was cut off mid-sentence by Harry’s threat-laden statement.

“Give me my necklace now, Draco Malfoy. You will not like the consequences should you refuse.”

Malfoy gave a disbelieving snort. “What could you possibly do to me?” He had, McGonagall thought, completely forgotten that he had been a multi-colored paint splotch not two days before because of his smugness.

The air grew heavy, almost physically so, pressing down on them. But if Blaise and Padma thought that it was oppressive, Malfoy must think it unbearable. His eyes had shrunk to pinpoints, the grey-blue of his iris huge. “My necklace, Draco Malfoy, now.” Harry seemed to grow in height, his face dark and serious. The air around him sparked with energy, dancing on his jacket, his hands, twisting through the air.

The twisting gold chain fell from Malfoy’s nerveless fingers. “I...can’t...breath...” the blonde boy gasped out.

“Yes you can, Draco Malfoy. Concentrate on your lungs, they still work. It’s only your brain telling you that,” Harry said, picking up the chain.

The moment he clasped it back around his neck, it seemed all the magic had been sucked out of the air, and several people flopped, boneless, to the ground. Even McGonagall stumbled as the oppressive feeling dropped like a stone from the air.

Draco Malfoy was the worst affected, sliding out of his chair and to the ground in a slump, gasping on the floor.

Harry, meanwhile, face now calm, turned around and sat back down, looking for all the world like nothing had happened.

“Why was today the day Pashti decided to sleep in?” Blaise muttered, trying to calm his racing heart.
Padma swallowed heavily. “What would she have done if she were here?” she asked.

“Clawed the shit out of Malfoy before he took that damn necklace,” Blaise replied.

“Ah, yeah, she probably would have,” Padma conceded. “I think I can feel my heart in my fingertips.”

“You’re not alone.”

Harry looked at his two friends, concern clear on his face. “Um, you two okay?” he asked.

Blaise and Padma looked incredulous. “What do you mean ‘Are you ok?’? Did you not just...just... subjugate Malfoy with your magical aura alone?” Padma exclaimed, incredulous. “And drown out our magical aura so much that the air grew heavy?”

Harry looked startled. “I did what?” he asked, bewilderment coloring his tone.

“Your magic, Harry. It was...like a physical weight. I could feel it.”

“Indeed, Mr. Zabini. Your magic, Mr. Harry, projected so much that it became a physical thing. What is that necklace and why do you have it? That is too much power in the hands of an eleven-year-old.”

Harry tucked his necklace under his shirt, vowing to find some way, magical or otherwise, to keep someone from magically removing it again, then looked up at the transfiguration teacher. “It’s mine. I’ve had it since I was two years old and I’ve never been without it. And if you think you can confiscate it because you think it’s too powerful, you’re going to have to get past me first.”

McGonagall scowled. “I never said I was taking it from you, Mr. Harry. Rather, I think I would be far more comfortable with you keeping it on. I would like for you to speak with the headmaster this afternoon about it, with me present.”

It was Harry’s turn to scowl. “It’s personal. Why must I justify it’s existence to you?”

“Because, Harry, you knocked out a fellow student with your magical aura alone, an aura you suppress or dampen with that necklace! Leaving aside the fact that your aura alone is unheard of, there has never existed an item used to suppress a magical aura!” McGonagall said, sounding like she would very much like to yell half of that at the top of her lungs.

Harry grimaced. “On the condition that my dad come, I’ll go talk to the headmaster,” he conceded, glancing back at Malfoy, who was still passed out under the desk. “He should know better than to steal things.”

McGonagall believed that Malfoy would probably avoid Harry like the plague after he woke up. “I need to get Mr. Malfoy to the Hospital Wing. I think...” she looked around the room, saw several students still struggling to regain their composure, looked at the time, sighed. “I believe today’s class is over. We’ll make it up next week. For homework, read chapter 4 in your textbook and theorize why you think transfigurations where size is significantly different is difficult. One sheet of parchment, please, no more.”

Students scribbled down the homework assignment, some of them writing it down for their friends, before packing away their things, no one saying a word about the class being cut short. When they left, they all left a large space around Harry and his friends, sending him wide-eyed looks as they filed out.
Soon, only Harry, Blaise, Padma, Malfoy, Crabbe, and Goyle were left in the classroom with McGonagall.

“I’m going to escort Mr. Malfoy to the Hospital Wing, then I will return. We will go get your father, if he is free, and go talk to the headmaster.” She looked at Blaise and Padma, sighed. “I would say you two should go back to your common room or the library or anywhere else, but I feel like that will be futile, so if your friend is alright with it, you may come as well.”

Blaise and Padma contained their smiles. “I don’t have a problem with them coming. Then they can tell Hermione, Neville, and Susan. Saves me repeating it twice.” Harry shrugged.

McGonagall just levitated Malfoy and directed him out of the room, Crabbe and Goyle following in silence.

Blaise and Padma looked at each other, then at Harry. “Are you gonna tell us why we only feel your aura when you take your necklace off?” Blaise asked.

Harry looked at Blaise in confusion. “Aura? Why are all of you talking about auras and such?”

“You’ve got to be kidding me…you don’t know what an aura is?” Blaise said.

Harry waved a hand. “I know what the word means, and what it implies in a real world sense, but you talk about magical auras as if it’s a thing.”

“Because it is, Harry,” Padma said. “Auras are a very real thing in the magical world. It helps determine someone’s magical potential and ability. Often special abilities will be present in an aural check. St. Mungo’s takes an aural check when someone comes in for spell damage. It’s the quickest way to determine just how badly they are magically injured.”

“So…every magical has an aura?” Harry checked. “And they all can interact with others?”

“NO! And that’s the thing, Harry! Yours DID!” Blaise exploded.

“I don’t see what the problem is. Maybe they can, and no one’s ever tried,” the too-powerful-for-his-own-good boy reasoned.

Blaise threw his hands up in the air. “Padma, you reason with him. Auras interacting. Really, magical prodigy they all say, and he doesn’t know even the most basic thing!”

Padma covered a grin. “What he’s trying to say, Harry, is that most magicals know about auras, they’re something that is just…part of magical culture, and they are considered well studied and well known. What you just did defied all those beliefs.”

“You should know not to cling to what everyone else says is true without proper research,” Harry muttered.

“There was proper research! Lots of proper research! So much research that a whole section of the Library is devoted to it! You’re the odd one out!” Blaise said, spinning to point at Harry.

Harry held his hands in defense. "Hey, if I can do it, someone else can! It's not a unique thing."

"You say that, yet we have centuries of research papers to prove you otherwise. I don't get you, Harry. You're powerful, you're fricken genius at magic. Why do you always insist that it's not just you?"
"Because it can't just be me! You all figured out things Professor McGonagall said were impossible, so I've shown you that it's not just me. You can do it, too, if you try hard enough."

Padma and Blaise rolled their eyes in synch. "Whatever Harry. Whatever. We'll see what the headmaster says about this talent of yours."

There was silence, neither comfortable or uncomfortable, just existing, while they waited for the transfiguration professor to return.

When McGonagall walked back into the room, she was pleasantly surprised to find it still intact. "Alright, I've seen Mr. Malfoy to the Hospital Wing, let's go get your father and we'll go to the Headmaster's Office. Do you know where he is?"

Harry shook his head. "I don't know his schedule. He won't tell me cause he doesn't want me showing up in his class whenever I have a free period."

"Why you would want to go to class when you don't have to..." McGonagall sighed but beckoned the group out the door. "We'll go check his class, then your rooms if he isn't there."

The History room was only a couple floors away in the same wing, so reaching it was easy enough. And lucky for them, the Doctor was still there, messing with bits of what Harry knew was the projector.

"Ah, McGonagall, good to see you! I trust you enjoyed yesterday's lesson?" he asked, a grin on his face.

"I found it most interesting. But that is not why I am here." She gestured behind her, and the Doctor's grin fell swiftly upon seeing Harry and his friends in the threshold.

"Is something wrong?"

"I have some questions, and I'm sure the headmaster will have them too, about Harry's necklace and how he's able to manifest his Aura. A student passed out after being exposed to it."

Harry scowled. "That's not the whole story, dad. Draco Malfoy used some sort of spell to unclasp my necklace, then when it fell off, he took it. And he refused to give it back. I don't know about this aura thing, but I was projecting. And I wasn't happy. It wasn't a pleasant mixture and he passed out. I don't regret it and I would do it again if someone took my necklace."

The Doctor frowned. "Draco Malfoy, the magical raised student who's having some trouble believing non-magical technology and abilities. He's not fond of bananas and he's struggling to figure out how non-magicals can do so much." He looked his son over. "Anything else happen?"

"Just a brief bit of accidental skin contact with Blaise, but it was minimal and didn't affect much of anything. It was what made me realize I didn't have my necklace on. I wasn't paying as much attention to my magic as I should have, otherwise I would have known immediately." Harry pointed at his friend. "No damage on either side."

"Ok. What did you want to know?" The Doctor turned to McGonagall.

"I would like to discuss this with the headmaster. I'm sure after I tell him about this, he will have plenty of questions, and I would rather have the source of information there when he asks them."
Harry sighed, rolling his eyes. "It's personal, I still don't see how this is such a big deal."

"If you hadn't nearly suffocated everyone in that room with your aura, I wouldn't be so concerned, Mr. Harry, but as it is, you did," McGonagall replied, tone sharp.

The Doctor looked at Harry, a question in his eyes, and Harry shrugged in response.

"Let's get going then. Allonsy!"

"I still don't understand your fascination with that word, dad," Harry commented, but took the lead up the the Headmaster's Office.

"Does the gargoyle still not like you, Harry?" Blaise asked. "Last time you came up this way, it spat smoke at you."

"It's not my biggest fan, but I'll survive. And I've got a professor with me, two of them. I'm sure I'll be okay." He stood in front of the gargoyle warily. "Cockroach Clusters," he said, and was relieved that the gargoyle just stood aside. "Thanks." He could have sworn he heard a chortle from the statue.

"Ah, Harry, what brings you here today? And Mr. Blaise Zabini, Ms. Padma Patil, Minerva, Doctor. Quite the audience. Did something happen?" Dumbledore was actually hoping nothing had happened, but with the crowd gathered in his office, something had undoubtedly happened.

"Dumbledore, you can do aural checks, right?" McGonagall asked, not beating around the bush.

"Yes, but why ever would you need one?" Concern was quick to enter his voice. Aural checks were quite serious things.

"I need you to check Mr. Harry's aura. Immediately."

Dumbledore looked at Harry, who seemed exasperated by the entire thing, and then back to his transfiguration teacher. "Why would you demand an aural check on a student? They haven't reached majority, it wouldn't show much if there has been no damage."

"But they show the potential of a magical child, and Mr. Harry here just knocked out Mr. Malfoy with his aura alone."

"He did what?" Dumbledore refrained from leaping around the desk to demand answers in a more immediate way.

"So, I am here and I can speak for myself, you know," Harry interrupted. "As for what happened, Draco Malfoy took my necklace, and I retrieved it. I projected my anger at him, but I don't get all this aura talk you all are going on about. I might have been a bit angrier than I appeared and Draco Malfoy felt the brunt of it. His mind had a hard time trying to balance what his body demanded and my projection, and he passed out." The boy looked not a bit remorseful at his actions.

Dumbledore paused to consider his words. "You...projected?" he queried.

"Yes. My emotions."

"I am afraid I don't understand how such a thing can be possible," Dumbledore admitted.
Harry looked back at his dad. "Dad, what should I do?"

"It's your secret Harry, you can tell them what you want. It's not something that I can help you with. I was worried at first about telling them, but it's not something that will ever change, and it will come up at some point. Better sooner so they know what could happen rather than later when your majority hits and no one knows what's going on. Your ability isn't something that is dangerous inherently, but it can be if it's not handled properly. So whatever you feel comfortable telling them."

"You mean I don't have to keep it a secret?" he said, incredulous.

"I wouldn't advise telling them WHY you have the ability you have, but it's not something that you need to hide like I previously thought."

Harry grinned. "That makes this much easier. I thought I had to keep it a secret or something."

The Doctor sighed but smiled. "Whatever you want to tell them, I'll support you."

Harry turned back to the room. "Alright, so, well, it's a bit of a story, but I'm what you would call a touch empath."

He received blank stares all around. "A what?" Blaise asked.

"A touch empath. I can touch someone and feel all of their emotions, and I can force my emotions through someone by touch alone." He motioned at Blaise. "Earlier, when you brushed against my hand after Draco Malfoy took my necklace, you felt it, yeah?"

Blaise frowned. "I felt something. I'm not sure what it was, though. It was all...jumbled and disconnected. And it was only for an instant."

"Well, emotions aren't straightforward. You aren't just angry. You're all sorts of other emotions at the same time."

Dumbledore and McGonagall looked confused. "But I have shaken your hand and felt nothing," Dumbledore said.

"My necklace," Harry said. "It's a limiter. Touch empaths are notorious for being outcasts. No one likes someone reading them, or forcing them to feel a certain way. Touch empaths are often forced out of a community because they can't control their abilities. Without my necklace, I am just as vulnerable. And because my abilities are tied to my magic, I can project my emotions. Enough so that I can influence those around me to feel the same way."

Blaise's eyes went wide. "That's what I was feeling in the charms room that day!" he said, realization in his eyes. "You were pissed at Malfoy and Snape, and then you got frustrated after we confronted you about it. The air felt so heavy and unhappy when I walked into Charms. I figured it was you, but I didn't know how it could have been you. Everything felt like it was dripping with magic."

Harry nodded. "Yeah, I was meditating. Usually I do that on my own in a silent room, but I needed to center myself. I didn't realize until that moment that I could project, so dad and I worked on it the next few times I meditated."

"Would you be willing to show us what you mean?" Dumbledore asked.
Harry shrugged. "So long as no one touches me, I don't mind."

"We will be sure to stay back," Dumbledore assured him.

Harry reached back and unclasped the golden chain, letting it fall into his palm in a swirl pattern. He closed his eyes as he felt his magic surge forth from the bonds and swirl happily through the air, reveling in the freedom.

He so rarely got to take his necklace off that these moments were always special. He let his hands run through the swirls of his magic, feeling it frolic around him, eager and excited to be out. It brushed against the magic in the office, telling Harry all about the weird spells and enchantments in a tumble of information. Magic, Harry had discovered, was much like an overactive child, moody and bubbling and prone to just throwing everything at the wall and seeing what sticks.

He was unaware, however, that his hair was floating around his body, and magic sparked down his arms to his fingers, his skin glowing softly, pulsing in time to his breaths.

Everyone in the office felt the rush of wind, of magic, but this time, instead of being heavy and oppressive, it was light, cheerful, bubbly and bouncy.

Padma was giggling, Blaise had a sloppy smile on his face, and even McGonagall and Dumbledore were hardpressed to not beam in happiness.

"Harry, is this your magic?" Dumbledore asked, unable to keep the awe out of his voice.

Harry opened his eyes, also unaware of them glowing a brilliant green. "It is. I don't get to release it all too often, so it's fairly excited to be out." He grinned.

McGonagall let a smile take over her features. "Your magic reflects your emotions?" she asked.

"Mmm-hm."

"Then it is safe to assume that you are, right now, very happy?"

"It would," Harry confirmed.

"Would you mind if I cast an aura check on you, Harry?" Dumbledore asked.

"What does that do?" Harry asked, eyes narrowing.

"It merely makes your aura visible, so that those observing can diagnose any abnormalities within it."

"Alright then," Harry waved a hand. "Go ahead. I'm curious, what does an aura usually look like?"

Dumbledore smiled. "Children often have slightly amorphous shapes to theirs. Colors start to seep in when they first perform accidental magic, and it starts solidifying after a wand is bonded to them. But until they reach their majority, an aura doesn't have a defined shape, unless the child in question is very powerful, or has had a traumatic or life-changing experience."

Harry frowned. He fit both of those categories. "Ok. Cast away then." He wondered if it would be anything like the time he was fit for his focus.
Dumbledore waved his wand, focusing, then he twirled it around tightly, muttered a few words. Harry missed and pointed the wand directly at Harry.

All around the office, Harry's magic sparked into being, turned bright shades of red, gold, black, blue, green, purple, whatever color you cared to name, it was there. Small spheres flew through the air, twirled around Harry, then darted off again.

Everyone stared at the magic in fascination. "Wow..." Padma said, voice awed. "This is your magic...it's beautiful!"

"Thanks!" Harry grinned. "So, what, anything wrong with my magic?" he asked the headmaster.

"I...I am afraid I can't tell for sure. Can you put on your necklace, it's hard to keep track of your magic when it's so scattered," the headmaster said, overwhelmed.

Harry sighed but took out his limiter and clasped it back around his neck.

As he suspected, the moment the loop closed, his magic vanished, pulled back inside his body.

Dumbledore's eyes went wide in surprise. "What happened?"

"I said this was my limiter. It keeps my magic inside my body and stops my empathy from influencing anyone. Since my magic and my empathy are linked, it does this by not letting anyone else come into contact with my magic so my empathy isn't triggered."

"It can't be healthy, though," McGonagall said. "Magic's not supposed to build up inside the body like that."

Harry shrugged. "Well, I like being social too much to let my magic free all the time, and I would rather not cover myself head to toe in clothes to prevent accidental skin contact, so I'll deal with my limiter until we can figure out a different solution."

Dumbledore looked at the Doctor. "What caused this?"

The Doctor shook his head. "It's a feature of his magic. He had a scare once and it manifested, so we dealt with it using the limiter. It's a powerful piece of magic and technology that helps restrict his magic."

"What kind of scare could cause such a dramatic transformation?" Dumbledore pressed.

Harry bristled. "You sound awfully close to accusing dad of something, which I don’t appreciate. I was young and every kid gets a few scares in their life. I just happened to have a dramatic reaction to it."

The Doctor laid a placating hand on his shoulder. "You said it knocked Draco Malfoy out. How is he?"

McGonagall pursed her lips. "Madam Pomfrey wasn’t able to find any concrete cause to his reaction, but she’ll keep him until he’s awake." She looked at Harry. "You best keep that necklace on if that’s what happens when you’re upset with someone."

"I wouldn’t have been upset if he hadn’t taken it in the first place. I always keep my necklace on,
“unless I’m alone and need to meditate. And I do that in a privacy room.” Harry looked affronted.
“You all wouldn’t have even known about this if he hadn’t decided to take my necklace.”

Dumbledore sighed. “Okay. Thank you, Harry, Doctor, for coming up to explain what happened. Minerva, I expect Mr. Malfoy will be serving detention with you for his actions?”

“He will. Tomorrow, and if I believe he hasn’t seen the error of his ways, Sunday as well.”

“Then that is settled. You can go back to classes, or study, or wherever you scamper off to on Friday afternoons. Doctor, I believe you have a class in a little bit, so I’ll let you go get ready for that, and you don’t need to attend the meeting this evening, though I will request your presence at the next one. Minerva, if you could alert the rest of the staff as to the meeting tonight, I would be most obliged. Thank you.”

Minerva nodded.

They filed out of the office, Blaise and Padma vibrating. “We can tell Hermione and Neville and Susan, right?” Blaise asked.

“Of course. Half the reason I let you come was so I didn’t have to repeat the same story again,” Harry said.

The Doctor chuckled. “Well, if you don’t mind, I’ll be seeing you later. Remember, you need to turn in your essay to Professor Sprout. It’s sitting in the console room.”

Harry froze, face blank, then he abruptly changed directions, heading for the Tardis and his essay.

“What?” Padma and Blaise said.

“His essay. It took him an extra week to get it all done, and it ended up being near 20 pages instead of 10, but he finished it. And now he’s got to go turn it into Professor Sprout. After that, he’s free in the evenings for whatever hijinks and mischief you lot get into.” The Doctor grinned. “See you later, Padma, Blaise. Have a good afternoon. I have a class this afternoon, so I’ll be off.”

Padma and Blaise were left alone in the hall.

“So...to the greenhouses?” Blaise asked.

Padma nodded. “Best place to catch up to Harry, and we can check and see if Professor Sprout has a class.”

~~~~In Which This is a Scene Break~~~~

Hogwarts Staff filed into the meeting for their bi-monthly meetings, all in various states of exhaustion.

Dumbledore sat at the head of the table and summoned coffee and snacks as more teachers filed in.

Ten minutes later, the last of the teachers took their seats and Dumbledore started the meeting. “Good evening, thank you as always for making time for this. I really do appreciate it. Now, just some housekeeping things. The grounds around the lake where the students have their morning runs, if someone could start on long lasting heating charms that we can put around the field, I would be much obliged. Yes, Severus?”

“Are we going to address the students who are now multi-colored splodges of paint?” he said
There were chuckles all around the room. “I rather liked that punishment,” Flitwick said. “And it wasn’t hidden, they did warn the students what would happen if they didn’t show up. And you have to admit that morning classes are much easier to manage on those days.”

“I too find it acceptable. There have been fewer incidents in the hallways and students are much more manageable when they aren’t vibrating with energy,” McGonagall said.

“Isn’t it just a tad too humiliating?” Professor Babbling said. “I mean, I understand the importance of this exercise regime, but to punish those who didn’t show up in such an obvious way?”

“It makes more of an impact than detentions or points,” Sprout pointed out. “Wednesday was nearly 100 percent attendance. And today’s class was a hundred percent attendance. No one wants to be their guinea pig in class next week.”

Snape sighed. “I had to listen to Draco Malfoy complain for days about it, and Vaisey wasn’t any better.”

“They showed up on Wednesday though,” McGonagall pointed out.

“We’ve strayed from the point. Bathsheda, if you and someone of your choosing would make some long lasting runic heating charms for the track I would be much appreciative.”

Babbling waved an absent hand. “I’ll get it done this weekend. Those are easy, I don’t need the help.”

“As you wish. Now, does anyone have anything to bring up? Yes, Pomona?”

Sprout stood up. “I received an essay from Harry in regards to the Carnivorous Rose Incident. And I believe that it’s well worth a look over. It brings up several valid points and theories that I would like to try. I believe you, Severus, would get quite a bit out of this essay.”

“An essay? What is this?” Hooch asked.

“His punishment for experimenting without permission or foresight was an extensive research project and essay,” Sprout said. “I agreed on the terms that I get a copy of the essay to determine if it was an adequate punishment. And it was more than. If I could get essays of this quality from my seventh years I would be a happy herbologist, much less a first year.” She took out a sheaf of bound papers.

“How...how long is that?” Snape asked.

“20 pages with diagrams and charts,” Pomona replied. “It’s quite detailed and even I learned a lot about something as simple as an aromatic rose.”

Snape reached for the papers, thought for a moment, then duplicated them before sliding his wand away and taking a copy. “I’ll look over this in my spare time. That boy does have some interesting ideas on things.”

Dumbledore hid a smile. It seemed even Snape wasn’t immune to Harry. Though he still refused to use the boy’s name. “Anyone else?”

“Petition to get that table in the library released so all students can use it,” Flitwick spoke up. “I’ve had numerous Ravenclaws complain about it.”
Madam Pince frowned. “I granted them that table and they earned it, Filius. They’re respectful, polite, and they harm the books. They ask me for help when they can’t find something, and they work on their homework diligently. I was pleased to put up the privacy wards and silencing spells. And they keep within the spells. I’ve never heard a shouting match outside those spells, though they are quite animated within them.”

There were raised eyebrows all around. To earn the respect of the Librarian was not easily done, yet those six had done so in a week.

“Well, there are plenty of tables in the Library, I’m sure we can let this one go. Anyone else?”

“I want to request to see whatever magic the Doctor is using for his classes,” Babbling said. “I watched one of his classes and I was shocked. It was amazing, but he wouldn’t let me see what he used to do it.”

Dumbledore sighed, resisting the urge to knead his temples. “I will ask the Doctor about letting you see it. Anyone else?”

“I categorically refuse to teach that child,” Sinistra said. “You can’t make me. Either remove him from the class or make him the teacher, I don’t care which, but I am not teaching him.”

Everyone turned to stare at Sinistra. “Excuse me?” Dumbledore said.

Sinistra crossed her arms, her dark eyes flashing. “You heard me. I will not teach a child who interrupts me every five minutes to say I’m wrong, or to add some other bit of information I can’t even verify, or to just...just...take over the class! I refuse Dumbledore. I won’t teach him, he doesn’t need my class, he’s demonstrated that quite thoroughly.”

McGonagall looked perturbed. “Are you quite sure?” she said.

“I am, Minerva. He does not belong in first-year astronomy. I doubt he would belong in a masters class on it, if such a thing existed. I think he would do well at an astronomy lab, and probably take over it rather quickly. Or drive everyone else to quit in frustration.”

“I...I will take this into consideration,” Dumbledore conceded.

“If he’s in my class on Wednesday night, I am walking out and he can teach it. He has the past two classes.” Sinistra looked directly at the headmaster, making it very clear her stance on the matter.

“I see. I shall bring this up with Harry...” Sinistra harrumphed but didn’t protest. “Anyone else?” He hoped it wouldn’t be another comment on Harry and his strange group.

“Are there any rules regarding other houses in a different common room?” Pomona asked.

Dumbledore sighed. It was too much to hope for, it seemed. “No, there are no rules so long as a member of that House let them in. Are they causing undue problems?”

Pomona breathed heavily. “Not...in particular. But it’s more of what they talk about that disturbs my badgers. The nature of magic, experimenting with cores, accessing one’s magic directly without a wand, and even several outbursts of what would be accidental magic in a child but is very obviously intended. My badgers are close to just abandoning the Common Room to them when they come in. They need somewhere else to meet. As it is they are disturbing the peace my students should have in their own house.”

“Is this the same for the rest of you?” Dumbledore asked, looking around.
“When they are in the Gryffindor Common Room, they are doing much the same. My older years are confused as to how a group of first years seem to have better control of their magic, and the younger years are simply baffled.”

“They rarely are in the Slytherin Common Room, and after today’s incident, I doubt they would be back, but I won’t say that for sure,” Snape said.

“Ravenclaw is similar. Though it has instigated a very thorough and in-depth look into magical theory among my Ravens. The common room is often a flurry of activity when they aren’t there, and home to several weird feats of magic when they are.”

Dumbledore gave in and kneaded his temples. “I will do what I can to find a more neutral meeting ground. We can introduce it as an inter-house common room, and maybe they will be more amenable to convening there.”

Murmured thanks from the heads of house circled the table.

“Now, is there anything else not dealing with Harry and that group?”

The evening’s discussion turned to planning out the last half of the semester and the problem of Harry and his group of friends was left for a later time.

~~~~~This is a Scene Break~~~~~

Saturday found Harry, Padma, Blaise, Hermione, Neville, and Susan on the grounds around the lake, watching Professor Babbling install runic matrices around the running course.

“Harry, your family is really weird,” Susan said. “I know we’ve all said this before, but really. After this week, and forty students covered in paint splatters, and an entire lesson conducted by a magical replication of a Russian astronomer translated on the spot for us, I must reiterate, your family is very very weird.”

Harry laughed. “If I could have a pear for every person who’s said that to me, my father wouldn’t ever let me back into the Tardis,” he said, chuckling. “It’s the first thing out of someone’s mouth when they meet us.”

“It’s as true then as it is now,” Hermione confirmed. “Your dad’s brilliant but I can’t figure out how he does his magic. It’s insane. And Professor Rose and Professor Jack are just...insane.” She shuddered.

“Well, you get used to them. It makes everything more interesting.”

“I think your definition of interesting is fundamentally different from ours…” Neville said.

“You’re probably right,” Harry conceded.

A loud buzz interrupted the genial conversation. Harry started, digging through his pockets.

“Is that a...a phone?” Hermione exclaimed, shock in her eyes. “But...they aren’t supposed to be that small!” she said when Harry pulled out a small, round device and pressed a button.

“Hey dad, what’s up?” he asked.

“The General called, and it’s a problem that deals with your specialty more than mine. They don’t know how to handle it and he’s called me cause he knows I’m at Hogwarts. You up for an
adventure?”

Harry jumped to his feet, face alive and alight. “Oh please say you aren’t teasing me, because I would love nothing more than an adventure right now!”

“I’m not teasing, this is serious. Come one, you have five minutes to get up here...wait, where are you?”

“The grounds.”

“Six minutes then. Hurry up!” There was a click, and the phone-device went silent. Harry just shoved it in his pocket and, without a backward glance at his friends, took off for the castle.

“Anyone want to just sit here for the rest of the day?” Blaise asked, a note of hope in his voice.

Padma sent him a look. “You think we could just sit here?”

“I thought not. Alright, let’s put those running lessons to good use and catch up with our esteemed leader.”

Shockingly, the week’s running lessons seemed to have had an effect, as they weren’t more than a staircase behind Harry when they reached the Entrance Hall, and skidded into the room behind him when he opened the portrait.

And, in a moment of complete absent-mindedness, Harry left the Tardis door unlatched, and his group of friends following him didn’t think twice before heading in after him.

And then their whole world shook violently.

~~~~~In Which This is an Ending~~~~~

——— Chapter End Notes ———

So, Hello! See, I can get updates out more or less on time...ish. Hey, if it’s late it’s only a few hours late (on my end...)

Also, lesson to the wise, don’t get involved in Kpop. That’s a road that only leads to time vanishing like a wisp of cloud on a sunny day. Poof, it’s gone. Also sleep. That starts not existing when you’ve gotten into Kpop. UGH

Anyway, here it is, and a bit of a cliffhanger because I wanted to get something more Doctor Who into my Harry Potter story, and more than just Harry and crew rattling Hogwarts to her foundations. It was a given that that would happen. I wanted...more.

And I wanted Harry’s friends to be involved as well. So they were.

I shall endeavor to get an update out...*retrieves diary* on October 30th.

Hope you all enjoyed! Thanks for all the support!
In Which Magic is a Problem

Chapter Notes

Hello! Ack! *dodges thrown vegetables* I’m sorry, I’m sorry, I really am. This was meant to be up now four days ago, my time, and I just...didn’t have it finished. I had a hectic month of real world responsibilities and an utter blank on what exactly I wanted to happen here. And then….this happened.

To MischiefManaged33, who betas for me, THANK YOU FOR ALL OF THE WORK!! This ended up being far longer than I intended, and they reminded me several days ahead of my scheduled post date to update, and took time out of a busy schedule to edit this for me. Any remaining errors are completely my fault.

Thank you to all of you who read this, silent lurkers and reviewers alike. I love you all.

Now on with the show!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

~~~~In Which This is a Beginning~~~~

The door had barely shut behind them with a firm click before the entire room lurched. There was no other word for it, really. They felt their bodies tip forward and grabbed desperately onto strategically placed handrails in an effort to prevent their faces meeting the floor in a violent way.

“What is going on?” Hermione hissed at Blaise.

“Why are you asking me? You think I have any idea?” he hissed right back.

Hermione glowered but was prevented from saying anything further as it felt like the room spun.

“I think I’m going to be sick,” Padma whispered weakly.

Neville also looked a little green.

It was a relief when the odd groaning, wheezing sounds died down and the floor seemed to decide that it preferred being down. The five collapsed onto the metal grating, looking towards the pair at the central column who had, by some strange manner, stayed on their feet.

“How did they stay standing?” Susan wondered out loud.

“I would guess practice,” Blaise offered. “Harry said he does live here. Wherever….here is.”
The calm gave them a chance to take in their surroundings, get a good idea of where they actually were.

It was almost like something out of a movie, Hermione thought in awe. “It’s like a movie,” she breathed.

“A what?” Susan queried.

Hermione blinked at her, startled. “A...a movie,” she repeated. “Actors and actresses all telling a story that someone films and puts on tv?”

Blaise raised an eyebrow. “Not a clue. Must be a mug-nonmagical thing.”

Hermione breathed deeply. “Harry’s got to have something around here that will work in Hogwarts,” she muttered. “No movies. Really.”

“Doctor, we appear to have some stowaways,” Professor Rose’s voice cut through their group like a hot knife through butter.

The Doctor and Harry whirled around, staring at the door. The bewildered look on Harry’s face was somehow weirder than just about everything else that had happened.

“How...what...why...you five?” Harry spluttered, baffled. He took a breath. “How did you all get in here?”

“The door was open,” Neville said.

“No, it wasn’t, I shut it,” Harry replied.

“It wasn’t though. We were right behind you,” Hermione said, standing up. “Speaking of which, you just ran off! You didn’t say anything to us!”

Harry looked slightly guilty at that. “Erm...sorry about that. But why did you follow me?” This was said with blatant confusion.

Blaise just sighed. “You’re our leader. We weren’t gonna let you run off on an adventure without us.”

“Leader? Since when have we had a leader?”

“Since you became our friend,” Susan said. “I mean, you’re the smartest one of us, and you talk back to the teachers and stick up for us.” She gave Harry a significant look.

Harry made an aborted grabby motion. “Yes, but why did you think it was a good idea to follow me?”

“Cause you’re Harry,” Neville said. “And you always have something interesting going on.”

Harry groaned. “But...argh.” He turned to the Doctor. “Dad, help me!”

The Doctor had wrapped an arm around Rose’s waist, grinning. “Your friends, Harry,” he said. “Maybe you should explain what’s going on? They look a little lost.”

Harry took a look at his friends.

Aside from Hermione, they were all sort of sprawled on the flooring, sporting expressions of
bafflement and confusion. He sighed.

“Alright, so you’re on the Tardis, welcome. This is my home. I live here with dad, Uncle Jack, and Rose. You’re currently in the Control Room.”

“What was all that...that lurching?” Susan asked. “I felt like I was gonna throw up.”

“It’s a function of the Tardis. We-” he was interrupted by a knock on the door. “Well, that will explain some things.”

The five all looked behind them at the door warily. “Who knows the password into your rooms?” Blaise asked. “I mean, I’ve heard it, but I can’t exactly say it.”

Harry snorted. “That’s the Brigadier.”

“But there’s no brigadier at Hogwarts,” Hermione protested.

Harry walked around them. “And that’s the thing, we aren’t at Hogwarts anymore.” He opened the door. “Brigadier Alistair! It’s nice to see you!”

The Brigadier was unimpressed. “Any reason you lot are loitering around in here? I recall there being an emergency I called you about.”

“Sorry about that Brigadier, we’ve had some unexpected guests decide to join us,” the Doctor replied. “We were just figuring out what to do with them.”

“Unexpected guests, Doctor? I wasn’t aware such a thing happened on the Tardis,” the Brigadier said, eyebrow raised. Then his eyes caught on the group of students. “Did you start a school, Doctor? I would have thought Harry kept you on your toes enough without having to add to the underage population.”

“Our unexpected guests,” the Doctor clarified. “Harry’s friends decided to follow him into the Tardis, and she decided to let them on.”

The Brigadier sighed. “Well, unless they’re like Harry, they can’t come along. You best find something to do with them. I can’t have my people playing babysitter.” The Brigadier looked over the group. “Best not take too long either. I don’t know how long we can keep this under wraps. We don’t need the magical population to realize what’s going on.”

The door was shut and Harry turned to his friends, hand on his hips. “So, what are we going to do with you lot?” he asked.

“Who was that?” Padma asked.

“What did he mean by ‘like Harry’?” Susan added.

“Where are we?” Blaise was next.

“What is going on?” Hermione summed up.

Harry tried not to rub his temples. “The Brigadier called dad with a problem, and the problem just happens to be magical, which is my specialty. So we came to help out. And now that the five of you are here, we have to figure out something. I mean, we can’t take you with us, that’s asking for trouble, or for one of you to end up in a hospital. But leaving you here isn’t the best idea either.”

Hermione harrumphed. “Why can’t we go with you? What would you possibly be doing that’s so
dangerous?"

“No idea!” Harry said cheerfully. “Which is why it’s probably best you don’t go.”

The Doctor sighed. “I would say you stay with them, Harry, but the Brigadier asked for you specifically.” The Doctor looked over at Rose with a pleading look.

Rose rolled her eyes. “Fine, I’ll keep an eye on the little magicals. But you’re making this up to me.”

“We’ll take a trip to Barcelona,” the Doctor promised, grinning and kissing her. “Thanks!”

Rose shoved him toward the door playfully. “Go handle whatever it is the Brigadier called you here for. I’ll take care of Harry’s friends. And I’ll keep you to that promise, Doctor.”

The Doctor waved, grinning cheerfully. “Alright then, Harry, let’s go!”

Harry gave his bewildered friends a smile before he followed his dad out the door and left the five clueless children in the Tardis.

“Um...what?”

“Did we just get left behind?” Hermione grumbled.

“I believe we did, Hermione,” Padma said.

Alright you five, let’s set some ground rules. I’m not sure how long the Doctor and Harry are gonna be gone, and I can’t leave you five on your own here. So, first rule, Don’t Wander Off.”

The five could hear the capitalization in her voice.

“Why? I mean, this isn’t that big of a place, we couldn’t really go very far.” Susan said.

Rose grinned, but it wasn’t a nice grin. “You’ll find there’s more to the Tardis than what you can see.”

Blaise, Hermione, Neville, Susan, and Padma weren’t sure they liked that statement. “Um...why can’t we go with the Doctor and Harry?” Blaise pressed. “They weren’t really all that clear on the specifics.”

“Because they don’t know what they’re running into, and bringing five inexperienced kids with them is the definition of a bad idea.”

“But Harry’s the same age!” Hermione protested.

“Harry’s been doing this sort of stuff since he was a toddler,” Rose countered.

“What sort of stuff?” Neville asked, a bit hesitant.

Rose looked at the boy, considering the question. “Handling unusual situations,” she finally said.

“That helps,” Blaise drawled, look of disbelief on his face. “Everything is so much clearer now. Thank you.”

“Well, if you’re going to be sarcastic about it all, I won’t tell you anything,” Rose said, huffing. “I mean, I was going to show you the kitchen and the games room, hopefully nearby,” she raised her voice at this last part. “But if you wanna be all uppity about it, we can just sit in the console room for
however long it'll take them to get back.”

Blaise heard his stomach grumble and he quickly shook his head. “Um, no, sorry. I mean, it’s just, there’s so much going on and you aren’t telling us anything.”

Rose sighed. “I understand, I really do, but there’s not much I can tell you. I don’t know what they’re going to be dealing with either. But I can try and keep you all entertained until those two get back and they can tell you what’s going on.”

"So we're gonna be stuck here until they get back?" Hermione clarified. Rose nodded. "And we can't leave? At all?" A negative. "So what are we supposed to do then?"

Rose gestured grandly. "Well, you're in the Tardis! Might as well take advantage of the amenities while you're here! And remember the rules!"

"You only told us one rule!" Blaise protested.

"It's the most important rule. I'll tell you others when they're relevant. So, again, what was that first rule?"

"Don't wander off," Neville said, though he sounded like he was making it a question.

"Right! Now, let's get you all some food. It's around lunch time anyway, so you've got decent timing at least." Rose waved at them to follow.

The five all climbed to their feet and hesitantly followed her around the console. "Um, where exactly are we getting food?" Blaise asked.

"In the kitchen of course. Where else?"

"Er...where is the kitchen?"

Rose gestured. "This way. I'm sure it can't be too far today." There was a doorway on the far side of the console room, and the five followed her through it.

The long (long long) hallway on the other side was not what they were expecting.

"Er, how big is this place?" Susan asked, peering around in fascination. "I've never seen an expansion charm used so well."

Rose chuckled. "We don't really know how big the Tardis is. Part of her charm, I think. Alright, don't wander off, and new rule, don't touch anything unless I say it's okay. No doorknobs, paintings, anything. Got it?"

The five nodded. "I want to ask why, but I'm afraid of the answer," Padma whispered.

"Me too," Blaise commiserated with her.

The five were quick to follow Rose down the hallway, up a staircase, down another hallway, around a few bends, and become thoroughly lost.

"Ahah! See, she didn't put it too far today! The kitchen!" Rose gestured through an open archway into a room that seemed too grand to call a kitchen. It had a window, floor to ceiling, on the far wall, looking over a garden of all things, complete with what seemed to be a pond and a decent sized waterfall.
The fridge took up a whole corner and then some of the far wall, with a modest table tucked away off to the side. What was probably a stove (or something similar) was set into a bank of swirly black and blue counters. The floor looked like they had stepped onto the ocean.

"This is a kitchen?" Blaise asked. "Are you sure? I mean, how many people live here? This looked like it's made for a small army or something."

Rose laughed. "Well, it's mostly just the four of us, but there are a few beings wandering around who pop by for a snack or something occasionally. Best not get lost, though."

They exchanged looks, disbelief on their faces.

"So, food, let's get something started. I think Jack made pasta the other night, or something close enough that we can call it pasta and not be wrong. And Harry stocked up on his juice, so there will be plenty of that, though I'll have to make it up to him. Or maybe not. He's the one who forgot to latch the door properly. There's also the bananas, though the Doctor might be a tad upset if they're all gone. Hmmm."

They watched as Rose took various things out of the fridge, muttering to herself the entire time. Various bowls, jars, plates, and what might be food started to pile up on the counter next to the fridge, until Rose finally shut the fridge.

"Um...what is all that?" Susan asked.

Rose grinned. "Come eat you lot. Let's see how you enjoy the Tardis's fare."

~~~~In which this is a Scene Break~~~~

The Doctor and Harry nearly ran straight into Brigadier Alistair, who hadn't moved far from the Tardis.

"I see you've managed to leave the little kids behind. I take it the Lady Rose is watching them?"

"Yeah. She'll keep them out of most mischief they could get into there." The Doctor beamed. "Now, what did you call us out here for? I take it that something weird has turned up?"

"Weird is an understatement. There was a sighting of a small ship setting down in Yorkshire yesterday, looking unsteady and not at all space worthy. I believe the locals thought it was some sort of child's toy that crashed. The smoke certainly indicated a problem. So we headed out here to try and lend a hand. UNIT's collected quite the number of odd and ends over the years, so it wasn't too much of a stretch to think we might have something they could use."

The Doctor nodded, following the Brigadier out of the confines of the numerous military vehicles and various other sundry that they had landed amidst. "So I take it something more unusual than an emergency crash landing occurred?"

"Indeed. The aliens were...well, I suppose it would be easier to just show you. I'm not sure how to describe them exactly. I'm hoping between your knowledge and Harry's magic you all can figure out something."

"So are they magical?" Harry asked.

"That's the current theory. No one's been close enough to really get a proper assessment of what exactly they are, but magic has been tossed around quite a bit."
"So possibly magical, maybe hostile, definitely stuck," the Doctor reiterated.

"In full, yes." the Brigadier agreed.

"Alright, let's see what we can suss out here. Lead the way, Brigadier!"

The gathering of military paraphernalia was left behind for the surrounding woods and it wasn't long before they found the small set up that UNIT had deployed for the emergency. Several tables had been erected, along with a kind of communication device UNIT had designed based off specs from alien devices. About half a dozen members of UNIT milled around the clearing, all in uniform and all looking rather busy.

The moment the Brigadier stepped into the clearing, they all turned and snapped a salute. "Brigadier, there's been some minor changes. The beings are, starting to...emit sparks? Or something? We're worried about the plants catching fire, and no one's been able to get any closer than before," a young, bright eyed, fresh faced soldier said, voice jangling with nerves.

"Thank you, Private, we'll handle it from here. Doctor, Harry, let's get going. We don't need a forest fire getting started."

"How far away is the crash site? And how long ago exactly did they crash?" the Doctor pressed.

"The site is two hundred meters away, though no one has been able to get closer than a hundred. They crashed about 17 hundred yesterday afternoon, and UNIT arrived about two hours later. They've so far been non-hostile, evidenced by the fact that they've been here for nearly a day and done no harm. But we can't just leave them here either. There's a small town nearby, and Yorkshire proper isn't far away. This is a popular hiking area as well," the Brigadier said. "The site's right there, see?"

Indeed there was a kind of globular ship sitting in the middle of a clearing, looking worse for the wear. The shielding was cracked and green colored smoke drifted upward, dispersing before it breached the tree tops. Several oddly colored beings Harry wasn't able to quite distinguish at this distance were outside, and as the young Private said earlier, they were all sparking.

"So, magic or some kind of highly developed technology is definitely at work here," Harry said. He shuddered as he felt an electric current pass through his body. "Oh, that was unpleasant. Dad, did you feel that?" Harry paused, hearing no answer. He turned around. "Dad? What are you doing? Did you see something?" The Doctor and the Brigadier were stopped a few meters behind him, and the Doctor's face held something clearly resembling resignation.

"Well, I guess that answers that question," the Doctor said. "Magic it is."

Alistair sighed. "I was kind of hoping it wouldn't be magic," he grumbled. "Only the kid's gonna be able to get close enough to convince them to let down the shielding."

"Hey, said kid here, and I've talked to plenty of different beings before. I'm sure I can figure something out," Harry protested.

Brigadier Alistair sighed. "I know you're smart and you're not going to go barging in like a rookie, but still, it goes against everything I am to let you go talk to possibly hostile aliens alone." He rubbed his face. "But no one else has ever been able to get past the barrier, so I don't have much of a choice." He looked at the Doctor. "Anything you can add here, Doctor? I mean, he is your son. I would rather take him out, but then the only alternative would get the magical world involved in this and I would much prefer to avoid that at all costs."
The Doctor laughed. "Harry can handle it. If he can't he knows when to drop things and run. Right?"

Harry laughed a bit at the last statement. "I know better than you, dad," he pointed out.

"Well, so long as his sense of self preservation is higher than yours, Doctor, I don't feel as bad sending him in. Though if you feel even the slightest bit concerned, I want you out of there, understand?" The Brigadier stared Harry down, until the boy nodded. "Good. I'm going to ask you to come back in ten minutes, so please do so. We need more information on them."

Harry nodded. "Alright. I'll do my best, sir."

The Doctor covered his smile. It was good to see the Brigadier could intimidate his son. Harry got away with far too much because those around him only perceived him as a child and Harry always bristled when he was dismissed because of his age. The Brigadier, though, long since used to working with the Doctor, knew how to handle his son as well.

"Be careful Harry," the Doctor cautioned. "I can't tell where they're from here, or what species they are, so use your brain and take your time answering any questions. Okay?"

Harry nodded. "Alright. I'll be back soon." He turned, staring towards the beings that had magic enough to create a barrier that only let other magical beings through. He wondered what exactly they were doing. They seemed to have more than enough magic to do what they wanted to do, regardless of whether they were welcome or not, but they hadn't moved from the clearing. Instead, they had set up what Harry could loosely consider wards.

They were, by his estimation, clearly waiting for something. He wasn't sure what, but magic was clearly involved in it. Maybe they hoped that whatever magical population this planet had would find them? Maybe it was some sort of automatic defense system, so only magical beings could approach? Were they magical at all, if it was a defense system?

He approached cautiously, and their forms grew more distinct as he edged closer in.

There were four aliens near the downed spacecraft. They were rather spherical in form, though not exactly a perfect sphere. Small protrusions seemed to jut out at random, though after quick observation Harry did find a pattern. Their colors were gradient, starting bright in the center and fading further away. Harry shuffled a bit closer, then cleared his throat.

"Hello, I'm hoping I could speak to someone about your presence here," Harry said, raising his voice up loud enough to be heard (hopefully) by those in the clearing.

The group turned towards him, the protrusions Harry had deduced to be some sort of sensory appendage reaching towards his voice.

There were a few moments of silence, though there was plenty of movement, before Harry discerned what seemed to be a massive sigh coming from them and a swirl of magic popped up between Harry and the strangers to Earth.

At first, it was an amorphous mass of magic and color, swirling around in a tight circle, but then it rapidly expanded until Harry was encompassed by it. And then, suddenly, he could hear something.

"Can you understand us now?" The voice, if that was indeed a voice and not some magical projection mimicking a voice, was soft and low, possibly one person, possibly many. Harry couldn't tell.

"Yes, I can. Thank you for the assistance. I assume that we don't use the same sensory organs to
There was a ripple of laughter. "You assume correctly, young mage. This is a quick, if limited, method to help foster communication. It works best if you have magic, which you obviously have since you were allowed into the prison wards."

Harry felt his spine straighten, shock playing over his features. "Prison ward? Is that what that was? It felt like crackling energy, it almost stung. Why do you have a prison ward up?"

A heavy sigh echoed through the magical communication line, and the beings all slumped forward, clearly distraught. "We did not mean to land on this planet. This system is still not space-age, we should not have been in this system at all, but our mission was urgent, and this was the fastest path back to our home world. A dangerous member of our system had escaped detention, and we were tasked with retrieving them before undue harm was caused. We hadn't considered the sabotage they could rec upon our ship until we felt the stabilizers give way and the engines start to fail. This was the closest planet with a breathable atmosphere, so we had not choice."

Harry nodded along. "So the prison wards are for our protection as much as they are a containment for your prisoner?" Harry asked.

"If the crash had not dislodged the main locking mechanism, then we would have put up undetectable wards, but those wards and prison wards do not mix. Unfortunately, upon landing, we were forced to use the ship’s automatic prison wards as our ship's locks have failed. The prisoner is confined to this clearing, but until we can repair the ship, we cannot retrieve them."

Harry glanced around him, nervous. "Um...so why do you only let magicals through the prison wards? There are plenty of people right beyond them who can help you," he replied.

"Because the help of a non-magical will not be sufficient. Our prisoner is highly skilled and dangerous. The prison wards act as containment. Until they are taken down, a magical can only enter, but not leave."

"But...I...I'm magical," Harry said, eyes wide.

"Apologies for this, but we cannot let you leave until we have recaptured our prisoner."

Harry groaned. "Alright, alright, let me think. Where are you from? I can ask my dad about it, see if he can give me some help. And I'm fairly strong magically, I might be able to help you recapture your missing prisoner."

There was what seemed like a conference between them, before they answered. "We are from the Jeolis System. There are three main civilizations within the system, the Mansefri, the Klyston, and the Brun. We are of the Mansefri, and our prisoner is of the Brun."

Harry heaved a sigh. "Alright, let me go talk to my dad. He's waiting on the edges of the prison wards. I can let him know what's going on. Him and Brigadier Alistair. Maybe they can figure out something too."

"Be careful, young mage. Our prisoner is devious. They use magic like a cloak to hide themselves and can control those with vulnerable minds or immature magic. Another reason to keep the prison wards up, as non-magicals are immediately susceptible to their snares."

"I'll be back in a few moments and I want in on this recapturing plan. I don't intend to be stuck inside these wards all day, you know."

A rumble of amusement swept through the connection, and the Mansefri shifted, clearly finding Harry's words humorous. "I don't know what you believe you can contribute to our efforts, young mage, but I look forward to hearing your theories."

Harry huffed, but headed back towards his dad and the general. He would show them.

"Harry, what's the news?" the Doctor asked the moment he was close enough for normal conversation.

Harry groaned. "These are prison wards. Only those with magic can get through them, and only one way. I'm stuck until they recapture their missing prisoner, who has somehow managed to hide within the area you can't enter."

The Doctor groaned. "Alright, where are they from? I can't tell from here, I think there's some sort of added magic that obscures them from view just a bit."

"They said they were from the Jeolis system. It has three civilizations, the Mansefri, the Klyston, and the Brun."

The Doctor froze. "And from which species is their prisoner from?" he asked, voice tight.

"The Brun....which is exactly what you didn't want to hear, was it?" Harry said, watching his dad pale. "What? What's wrong?"

"Doctor, we need information. If only magicals can get through this barrier, and it is only one way," The general looked at Harry, who pressed his hand against what seemed to be an invisible wall. "Then we need to figure out something we could give Harry to help him. What do you know about these species?"

The Doctor breathed in deeply. "The Mansefri, which is who I am assuming those beings are." Harry nodded. "They're the main ruling party of the system. They've got a lot of control over the system as a whole, and they run most of the government and various other similar functions. They're a half magical-half normal society, one that's accepted magic as just another tool and trains it alongside normal skills. They communicate with a very interesting system of sub-sonic sound waves and motions, though they use magic to help facilitate translation. They're one of the few races that actively requires magical beings to be on every ship that leaves their system. Overall, they're not much of a problem."

"Well, that's good to know and all, but I could have deduced them being fairly harmless myself, dad. What I need to know more about is their prisoner, and why you seem so upset over it." Harry raised an eyebrow.

The Doctor took a deep breath. "The Brun are, for the most part, somewhat of a lesser species amongst the space-faring civilizations. They're highly intelligent, but they don't work well together, and it's somewhat of a minor miracle they even managed to make it to space at all. But those magicals among them are highly skilled with illusion magic and entrapment magic. They're much sought after for their abilities to weave complex, many-layered illusions and generally are considered little more than magicals for hire. And some of them turn deadly. Their magic is so potent that if a nonmagical encounters it, or someone whose mind is unprotected or with immature magic, they can be tricked into doing near about anything, even dying."

Harry gulped at the thought. Being trapped in an illusion so thorough that you could literally die...he shuddered at the thought.
"What do I need to watch out for?" he asked.

The Doctor shrugged. "I never encountered them, and I would guess your own magic suppresses the influence of the Brun's attempts. The Mansefri are naturally immune, a quirk of biology, which is probably why they were with the prisoner in the first place. But keep an eye out, watch for anything glimmering strangely or somewhat off. That would be an indication of an illusion, or so I've been told."

"I can do that. Any tips for helping capture the Brun?"

"Not a clue. I don't even know what they truly look like. They're not fond of strangers."

"A wonder they ever made it into space at all," Alistair mused.

"That's the general opinion of everyone who runs into them," the Doctor agreed. "So be careful Harry. They're highly intelligent and devastating with their illusions."

"Alright. Thanks, dad, Brigadier Alistair. I'll try and see if I can work with the Mansefri and get this all sorted. They've busted their ship, but they don't sound concerned about it, they might have some sort of plan to get it fixed once they've locked this Brun away again."

"I'm just glad that they have prison wards. Imagine that kind of creature loose on the planet," Alistair said.

The Doctor shuddered. "That's not something to ponder on lightly. Half the time a truly skilled Brun is hired for nefarious purposes, it's for that exact scenario."

Harry looked more than a little horrified. "Well, despite being stuck behind them, I rather think I like these wards a lot more now," he said.

"I would prefer you out of there as soon as possible, though," the Doctor put in. "So see what you can do about that, hm?"

Harry nodded. "Just call for me if you think you have something I can use, yeah?"

With the agreements from the Doctor and Alistair, Harry trudged back towards the Mansefri.

He sincerely hoped he wasn't going to be stuck here as long as it seemed he might be.

~~~In which this is a scene change~~~

Hermione was peering around the garden they had been allowed to explore, having finished her meal quicker than her friends. Rose had let her wander out here with strict instructions not to wander off or touch anything behind any kind of fence or barrier or go through any doors or archways.

Hermione thought it was all a bit excessive, how much harm could she get into in a garden of all places, but she wanted to explore more than she wanted to sit in the kitchen under the watchful eye of Rose, so she quickly agreed to follow the rules and Rose let her out through the kitchen door.

The garden was larger than she had thought such a space should be, considering it's odd location, and for some reason it was lit to average daylight levels. But they were inside, she knew that. There was no blue sky, just a sort of vaguely colored haze that looked off-white. Still, the illusion of a sun persisted, and Hermione picked her way around the garden in fascination.

There were so many interesting plants, things she had never seen or imagined. The daisies Harry had
mentioned were cordoned off, and the warning that they bit ankles was enough for her to keep her distance.

Still, other plants were also blocked off for reasons she couldn't quite guess, but if they were anything like the daisies, Hermione would avoid them. She didn't want to discover why exactly they were cordoned off.

The small lake and waterfall were amazing, and she could even see animals that might resemble fish of some sort swimming around in it.

It was hard to believe that all of this was inside that little blue box.

She didn't know much about expansion charms, but she doubted they could do this much. The Doctor must have some kind of specialized magic to make all this possible. She couldn't think of another explanation.

"Hey, Hermione, find anything interesting?" It was Blaise, sauntering out towards her.

"I found the daisies that like to bite ankles," she replied, pointing towards the area where they were fenced in. "And I don't even know what half these plants are. They're just completely new to me! I mean, I'm sure some of those colors don't actually exist."

Blaise snorted. "I'm not sure I wasn't knocked out by all that shaking earlier and now I'm having a really vivid hallucination," he said. "I mean, can all of this really fit into that little blue box?"

Hermione shrugged. "I don't know, the Doctor must be really powerful."

Just a few moments later, Neville, Padma, and Susan joined them out in the garden, with Rose following close behind.

"Hey guys," Susan said, bouncing over. "Rose said there was a gaming room we could check out!"

"Gaming room?" Hermione repeated, suspicious. "What exactly is this gaming room?"

"Well, want to come see?" Rose offered, sounding entirely too tempting.

"Sure," Blaise said. "I mean, it's either that or wander around among possibly dangerous plants until Harry and the Doctor get back."

"I'd like to stay here, if that's ok," Neville said.

Rose waved a hand. "So long as you don't leave, that's fine. But when I say don't leave, I mean it. Don't leave the garden, or we might not find you again."

There was a sense of seriousness about that last statement that they found a hard time believing, but Neville nodded anyway.

"Anyone else?" Rose asked.

"Um, I'll stay here with Neville," Padma said. "I wanted to look around at all the plants."

"I'll go to the game room," Hermione finally said. "I wandered around the garden for a while already, so it'd be nice to see other places around here."

"Let's get going then! I'll be back to check on you two in a bit. Remember, if it's blocked off, don't touch it. No doors, no arches, no touching the fenced off stuff. Got it? Good. Now, off we go you
three!"

Rose didn’t take them far, just down the corridor and to the left, and opened a door with a flourish. "Welcome to the Game Room!" she said, and enjoyed the looks of disbelief on the three young magicals' faces.

"What...what is this place?" Blaise asked, eyes wide.

It was a spectacular room, filled with all sorts of arcade machines from various eras and planets, strange games of skill that were completely unfamiliar to them, and even a wall of prizes ranging from small balls to huge stuffed animals. The lighting was skewed heavily towards dark with spotlights of brightness to illuminate specific games and flashing strobe lights to set a fun, excited mood.

"This is the game room. There are tokens over there, you play a game of luck to get as many as you can. We like to keep the authenticity here when possible, though Harry cheats the system. You can get as many tokens as you can earn, they're all recycled back into the system when you use them on a game so don't worry about that. Prizes are doled out based on the number of points you receive during your time here. As you can see, there are now four pictures on the far wall." Rose pointed, and sure enough their faces, Rose included, were on some sort of scoreboard. "Each game will give you a score, and it'll be added up. When you're done, just go press the red button over by the prizes and you'll be given your options. Word of warning, don't leave the Game Room. If you step outside, your points are automatically erased."

Hermione, Blaise, and Susan looked like they were struggling to keep up with the vast amount of information Rose had just dumped on them. "So, tokens for the games are over there, and don't leave the room or we lose all our points?" Susan clarified.

"Yep!" Rose popped the 'p'.

Blaise grinned. "Betcha I can beat you at all these," he challenged, and the three kids raced for the token machine.

Rose smiled. At least these five were easier to handle than one Harry, she mused.

If she knew what Padma and Neville would soon be getting into, she might have revised that statement.

Padma and Neville were poking around the garden. Neville was fascinated, never having seen such a vast array of flora in a single place before. He knew a lot about plants, but he hadn't seen many of these plants in his life. He wondered where Harry got a hold of them.

But the two had the unfortunate ability to get so focused they shut out the outside world. And they never even realized they had stumbled through an archway set against a wall while they had been discussing a nearby plant's odd coloring and aroma.

And then they weren't in the garden anymore.

In fact, the garden was...gone. Vanished. Just...disappeared.

Padma and Neville stared at each other, eyes wide.

"We just did something Professor Rose said not to do, didn't we?" Padma said, clearly bewildered.

"I...I think...we went through a...an arch?" Neville frowned, trying to remember. "There was one
near the spiky red plant with the strange bell-like flowers."

"But...how?"

"I think we were backing up or something?" Neville stared around them. "Where are we?"

"We can't be that far from the garden, reasonably," Padma said. "I mean, there's only so much space that can be magically...shoved...into another space, right?"

Neville nodded. "That's what I was always told, but this is...I don't know if this is actually possible." He gestured around. "It's not just the space, but all the things. I mean, there's too much space for sure, but there's also just...too much everything."

Padma breathed deeply. "Alright. Well, let's see if we can find our way back to the garden or to Professor Rose at the very least. And let's leave the doors alone."

Neville nodded. "If just going through an archway took us here, I don't want to find out where the doors might go," he said.

After a brief debate about which direction to go, both looked identical, they headed off to the left.

The Tardis sighed but shuffled some of its rooms around. She really couldn't be having young magicals lost inside her right now. That would be quite the inconvenience when her own magical was not here. It would be best if they found their way out.

So when Padma and Neville stumbled through an unexpected doorway, only to see the console room, they heaved a sigh of relief.

"That door goes out! We can find Harry and the Doctor and explain what happened!" Padma said, and was out the door before Neville could remind her that they were told to stay in the Tardis for a very specific reason.

But he couldn't let her rush out on her own.

So he raced out after her, hoping that his friend wasn't too far away.

Padma and Neville knew, on some level, that they weren't at Hogwarts anymore, after all, there were no brigadiers at Hogwarts. Still, racing out doors that once led into a stone room but now let out into the middle of what seemed like a military vehicle convention was a very odd feeling.

"Okay, so we aren't at Hogwarts," Padma murmured.

Neville skidded to a halt next to her. "W...where is Harry?" he asked, eyes trying to take in as much of their surroundings as possible.

Padma glanced around, saw the majority of those in uniform heading off to the left, and grinned. "When in doubt, follow the crowd. Bet Harry's right in the middle of it all."

The two wove through vehicles, trying to follow the crowd without being spotted.

Soon their vehicular cover vanished and they took to hiding behind trees.

"Why are we hiding again?" Neville asked, nerves jangling.

"Because that brigadier from earlier said he didn't want to have to deal with kids. I don't want us to get in trouble before we even find the Doctor or Harry," Padma replied. "Alright, over there. The
guy from before, and the Doctor's beside him. And I think that's Harry over there. Come on, Neville, let's go!"

And before Neville could offer even a token protest, Padma grabbed his hand and yanked him after her.

"Oi, you two, how did you...who let two kids into the area?" someone yelled. They had been spotted.

But Padma and Neville made it to the Doctor's side before anyone could intervene. "Doctor!" Padma panted, breathing hard from the sprinting.

The Doctor furrowed his brow. "What are you two doing out here? I thought we left you in the Tardis with Rose for a reason," he said, puzzled.

Padma gave him a half smile. "We were in the garden, but then Neville and I must have gone through an archway, we think, we aren't sure, but Professor Rose said not to go through them, or doorways, but we weren't paying attention, and then the garden was gone and we were in the middle of a hallway and we didn't know where we were. So we just headed left, because left's a good direction for mazes in general. And then we found the room with the door outside, and you were easier to find than Professor Rose, cause there's no magic out here making all the corridors shift about, and no magic doors."

There was a heavy sigh. "Alright. Alright. We'll figure this out, but it's gonna take some time. And Harry's not here at the moment, so we can't get him to help you two either."

Neville furrowed his brow. "But...he's right over there. I mean, I'm not sure what those things are he's with, but he's right there. Harry!" Neville moved before the Doctor could grab him, and the Doctor just barely managed to get Padma by the arm before she followed him.

Neville felt a wave of power rush through him, sparking and highly uncomfortable. He shuddered. Maybe that was why no one had moved any closer?

"Neville, stop, don't move! I need you to listen to me, Neville Longbottom, and I need you to listen to me very carefully." The fear in the Doctor's voice was evident, and Neville turned, confused. "Stay calm, Neville, even if something weird starts to happen. I need you to breath deeply. Don't panic."

"Why are you all staying over there? And why are you so worried?" Neville felt the confidence he had gathered slowly slip through his fingers. He headed back towards the Doctor, but stopped, suddenly unable to keep moving forward. "Doctor, what's going on?"

"Neville, you ran through prison wards. Only those magical can get through, and nothing magical can get out. And you are magical."

Neville’s eyes went wide, and he tried to rejoin Padma and the Doctor, but it felt like he slammed into a glass wall. He flattened his palm against it, tried searching for an edge, a way out, and then his wide brown eyes met the Doctor’s full of fear. “Doctor,” his voice warbled.

"You can't do something? Some sort of magic or spell or whatever to get him out?" Padma demanded, her voice unsteady.

"If I could, don't you think I would have gotten Harry out by now?" the Doctor asked, calm.

Padma flushed. "Oh, I guess you're right," she muttered. "But...now Harry and Neville are stuck
inside the wards. Why are there wards up in the first place? This doesn't look like a particularly magical location."

The Doctor heaved a sigh. "And that is our problem. Because these are prison wards, and now Neville is stuck inside them. And what are prison wards supposed to do?"

"Keep....prisoners...in?" Padma guessed, sounding unsure.

"Right in one."

Neville's eyes went wide. "I'm in here with a prisoner?" he squeaked. "And Harry's in here with it too?"

"Neville, I need you to remain calm. It's very important...what's happening, Neville? Neville! What's happening? Tell me," the Doctor demanded when he saw Neville's eyes grow shockingly wide and his hands started flailing around him. He looked like he was balancing on something, something very narrow, despite standing on solid ground.

"I....I'm....I'm on cliff!" Neville's voice rose an octave. "Doctor, where are you? I can hear you, but I can’t see you! Oh, Merlin, I’m on a cliff!"

"Neville, I know what you're seeing looks very real, but I need you to breath and think. Think; when would you have gotten on a cliff? You were just standing in a clearing in Yorkshire, Neville, how could you have gotten onto a cliff?" The Doctor looked over at the Brigadier. "Harry," he muttered.

The Brigadier nodded, before heading around the circumference of what Padma assumed was the prison ward.

"Doctor, what's happening?" she whispered, fear in her voice. Neville looked terrified.

"This prisoner can wield illusions as a weapon. And Neville is the target," the Doctor replied.

"But Harry!"

"Harry's magic is too mature for this prisoner to get a hold of him, but Neville's still young, mind and magic. He's a much easier target than Harry," the Doctor replied.

"Doctor, the-the--there's someth-th-thing c-c-coming!" Neville wavered where he stood, hands windmilling around him.

"Neville, is there anything behind you to step onto, can you step backwards?" the Doctor asked, voice low.

"I don't...I can't....it's coming closer!"

"Neville, take a deep breath, I know it's hard, I know, but please, look behind you."

Gulping, Neville glanced behind him, and his eyes went wide. "There's....there's...I can step back...


The Brigadier had moved away from the Doctor, not wanting to disturb the child who had recklessly stepped into dangerous territory without any clue to what was going on. The child who was fighting for his life against something only he could see.
"Harry!" he called, waited a second. "Harry!" Louder this time, and Harry jerked suddenly. The Brigadier beckoned him closer, hoping Harry could see him, but there was a flurry of motion, and Harry's own scream echoed around the clearing. "Dammit!" This was going to hell in a handbasket, he just knew it.

~~~~In Which This is a Scene Break~~~~

Neville tried not to look around himself. The world around him had suddenly shifted, changed, and now the sun was beating down on him. His skin was heating up, sweat dribbled down his chest, his back. His clothes were now heavy and itchy, not a great combination. The wind whipped around him, threatening to push him.

And it would be a long fall. He had glanced down once, before freezing and refusing to look down again.

He was on the edge of a cliff. A sheer cliff face with rocks and spikes and jutting features that would...he wouldn't make it. Magic or no magic.

"Neville! Neville! What's happening? Tell me."

Was that the Doctor's voice? But...why...where....

Oh, that's right. He had been with Padma, his new friend. They had gotten...gotten lost...in the Tardis...right, in Harry's home.

"I...I'm on a c-c-cliff!" he squeaked out, too terrified to be embarrassed at his voice cracking so high.

The wind whipped up around him again, and he windmilled, trying to keep his balance.

"Neville, I know what you're seeing looks very real, but think Neville." Neville tried to focus on the words, he really did, but it was all he could do to just stay balanced on his precarious foothold.

The glare of the sun was strong, but he could see a shadow approaching, something flying towards him at high speed. "Doctor, th-th-there's someth-th-thing c-c-coming!" he said, trying to keep his voice level and failing miserably.

The Doctor's voice came out of the sky. "Neville, is there anything behind you to step onto, can you step backwards?"

It was an absurd question, how could he move, the cliff edge was there, right there, under his feet. He looked at the thing approaching, feeling his heart in his throat. "I don't...I can't...It's coming closer!"

"Neville, take a deep breath, I know it's hard, I know, but please, look behind you."

Neville steeled himself. He was put in Gryffindor. He could look behind him.
As if by some miracle, the cliff went back a just a bit further, there was more space between him and the wall stretching endlessly upwards. "There's...there's..." how could he explain it. "I can step back."

"That's awesome. Neville, take a step back, Just one or two." Neville did so, feeling the wall press up against him, the edge just a tiny bit further away. Still there, but less threatening. "Very good. Now, breathe deeply. Very good, you're doing wonderfully." Neville would have been over the moon with the praise if he wasn't fighting for his life on a cliff.

He could breathe just a bit more now, his chest didn't feel so tight. But that terrifying thing coming towards him was still coming. He gulped. This did not look like it would end well.

~~~In Which this is a scene break~~~

Harry made his way back to the Mansefri, thinking of ways he could lend his own not insignificant magical strength to the capture of this illusion wielding prisoner.

"You have returned. Do you bring news?" he heard the moment he stepped within the communication sphere.

“I’ve been told a bit more about your prisoner. An illusionist who weaves deadly traps,” he replied.

There was a hum of consideration. “We had not expected a planet without any space-faring technology to even know of us,” they admitted. “Much less know the weapon that our prisoner uses.” A slight pause. “Why are you not affected by the Brun? You are magical and you appear very young.”

Harry smiled thinly. “My magic is far too protective of me to allow an illusion to take hold,” he replied. “I’m certain I’ll be scolded later for this stunt, but right now, those kind of illusions don’t work.”

“Ah, that would make it far more difficult for a Brun to sink their illusions into you. I suppose you could offer quite a bit if you are immune to a Brun’s magic. We are trying to create a spell net that would capture the magical signature of our prisoner. Every prisoner has their magical signature taken if they are in possession of magic. A level of security to make sure that the one imprisoned is who is supposed to be there.”
Harry nodded. "Makes sense. So, how is this spell net supposed to work? Is it supposed to entrap the Brun or lure them in or is it more like a kind of sticky magic that only sticks to the prisoner?"

There were chuckles all around. "You are quite clever. We were hoping to use something similar to the last option, as we are in a limited clearing and there is only so much space available for the Brun to disguise themself.

"That sounds logical. I can see if I can work with that." He looked deep into himself, his focus turning inward rather than outward, and fell into his magic.

His foci seemed to blur into being, their presence a comforting solidity in this realm of chaos. Young one, we have heard your request. This should be something we can do together. But we have also finished the scan of your magic and have much to discuss with you when you have the time.

Harry gulped. That doesn't sound good.

We are unsure. It is certainly not pleasant, but it could be an advantage. But that can wait. You must free your magic from the illusion it is under if you wish to use the net as your new friends are asking of you.

Illusion? But I thought I was safe from them.

Your magic, so long as it is strong enough, can brush off anything directed towards your mind and your physical being, but illusions that concentrate on the outside world? It does not affect you directly, so it is not something your magic can interfere in.

Harry frowned. So how am I supposed to break the illusion? I didn't even know I was in one until now.

His foci was silent for a few moments. Illusions are delicate creations. We know very little about them, but it might be possible for you to overpower it and shatter the illusion with your own power. It is unlikely to cause any negative side effects other than not working.

Alright. So just...channel magic directly? No spell or anything?
If you need something to focus on, try imagining hammering a spike into stone. Or breaking glass with a focused blow.

Alright. Let's see... Harry rummaged around, pulling his magic around him and keeping the image of breaking something in his mind. He needed to shatter the illusion he was under. Insignificant it may be, but it was keeping something important from him, he knew it.

He breathed out slowly, and let his magic out with his breath, letting it be an extension of himself. He pulled it into a spike shape, and drove it forward, letting his focus direct its flight, and when it landed solidly against something with a dull /clunk/ he knew he had found the illusion.

It was powerful. It would take some doing to break it, having sunk into the surrounding environment, found a source of magic in the ground to strengthen itself. Harry grit his teeth. He wasn't letting a bit of illusion magic stop him.

He poured magic into his next strike, and practically hammered it into the offending illusion.

He cheered when he felt the splinter.

More magic, another strike, and a more definitive break. He could do this. He could break this spell.

His next spike of magic was sharpened to a deadly point, metaphorically. All the energy was focused towards the tip, the striking portion, and when Harry let it fly, he felt the magic in the illusion loose it's grip on him, struggling to retain its shape, its purpose.

He opened his eyes, elated at the victory.

The sight in front of him was enough to startle a scream out of him.

The Mansefri were...they were covered in some sort of slightly translucent film, and they were clearly either dead or close enough that they would be soon.

The film pulsed slightly every few moments, bright blue and silver lines that flared for a moment, then died down.
Harry looked around, his mind racing. He was stuck inside the wards with a criminal who had, it seemed, overpowered or somehow tricked the Mansefri into submission, but was unable to escape. Who had been trying to get him to cast a magical net intended to recapture them, but that was obviously not what it was going to do.

Why would they need a magical net? Why?

He almost had it, almost, when he heard his name being called frantically by the Brigadier.

"Brigadier, what is it?" he called out.

"Harry, one of your friends is in trouble! And what was that scream?"

Harry turned, eyes wide, fear racing through his body. "What? I thought they were in the Tardis, why are they out here? How did they get through all your men, Brigadier?"

From this distance, Harry couldn’t see the frustration on the Brigadier's face, but he could imagine it. "Believe me, I will be asking the same thing. But the fact remains that one of your friends is in trouble and we can't help. And that scream, Harry, what was it?"

"I'll explain in a moment, but this situation is worse than we thought."

"Bloody Hell," he heard the Brigadier curse, but he was too focused on one of his friends being in trouble to be amused.

Harry whirled towards his dad and saw the situation.

Neville was beyond the edge of the prison wards, trembling and trying desperately to retain his balance despite standing on solid ground.

He raced over. "Dad, what happened?" He kept his distance from Neville.
"Neville got past the wards before I could get a hold of him. And the Brun has him under an illusion. He can't shake it off." The Doctor gave him a significant look.

Harry groaned. "That is the opposite of good. And it's worse. The Mansefri are either dead or as good as, unless the Brun is using them for some other purpose. What you saw and what I saw was an illusion woven into the ground and around their bodies. The Brun manipulated their magic to speak with me. They wanted to create a magical net of some sort, meant to latch onto the magical signature of the prisoner, but when I was preparing to work on it, I had to break an illusion." Harry gestured behind him. "If you can see it, the Mansefri aren't...well, they aren't upright anymore. Alive is, as I said before, subjective at this point, as I'm not really sure."

The Doctor swore softly. "Can you see about helping Neville? We'll try to come up with some sort of strategy for the Brun."

Harry turned towards his friend, taking in the panicked and tense form of his friend, brown eyes wide and staring at something only he could see.

"Harry? I...is that you?" Neville's voice was high and thin, quivering and terrified.

"I'm right here Neville," Harry reassured him.

"I can't see you, Harry. It's so bright here, and the wind's so strong." Neville shivered where he stood terrified. "Please help me Harry. Please."

Harry took a deep breath. This was going to take some doing.

"Harry, can you help him?"

His eyes snapped over to Padma, who was huddled against his dad, terrified but face set. "I'm going to try Padma. I'm going to try."

"Okay. I just made friends, I don't want to lose any of them." Her voice was soft.

"We'll save him Padma," he swore.
"Brigadier, I need you to find something that we can use as containment when we manage to corner this Brun," the Doctor said, looking over at Alistair, who had rejoined them.

"I'll see what I can do. I'm sure we have something Harry can magic into a proper containment unit. What do you plan to do with this...creature when you get it?"

"We'll handle that when we get there," the Doctor replied.

The Brigadier moved away, leaving just Harry, the Doctor, and his two young friends.

Harry turned to Neville. "Alright, Neville, I need you to listen to me carefully. Breath in, close your eyes, and remember back to those lessons about magic. Your magical core. Think about it, feel for it. You're in danger, your magic should be near the surface right now. It should be begging to be used, but the illusion is tamping it down."

Neville shuddered in a breath. His eyes closed, and he tried to slow his breathing down. "Harry, I can't...I can't...the wind is getting stronger," he squeaked. His arms pinwheeled as he wobbled.

Harry resisted the urge to touch him. He didn't know what it would do to Neville. It could jolt him out of the illusion, or it could drag Harry into it. Or it could intensify the effects if the illusion was feeding off of magic, and Harry had plenty of magic to spare. "Neville, think back to us sitting in those squishy armchairs Susan said were awesome. You nearly sunk up to your nose in one of them. Remember?"

Neville let out a hesitant smile. "They were really awesome," he said, voice still thin. "Oh Merlin, Harry, it's coming closer...it's coming closer!"

"Neville, I need you to think back to those squishy armchairs, think back to feeling for your magic, to the soft fizzy feeling when you touched it for the first time. Remember? You accidently lit the fire. Which was nice, it was cold and the older years forgot. Remember that fire?"

"I...I do. It was really co...cool."

"It was. Hold onto that feeling. Think of that fizzy feeling reaching to your fingertips, your nose."
Remember how it felt when you lit the fireplace. Can you think about it?"

Neville scrunched his nose up. "I...yes. I can. It felt...funny." His breathing was calmer now, less risk of him passing out and hyperventilating.

"Awesome Neville. That's great. Let it reach your fingers, your toes. Everywhere. Let that fizzy feeling spread. It should fill your whole body, every inch...Neville! Neville! What's happening?"

Neville had let out a short scream of panic, and then his body almost doubled over on itself. "I can't...I'm falling! I'm falling! The cliff vanished!"

Harry resisted the urge to curse. "Neville, you need to concentrate! Listen to my voice Neville! Let your magic fill your whole body, everywhere. Let it out Neville, let it out!"

At his last command, Neville arched back and his body glowed for a moment, before he collapsed to the ground, breathing heavily, panting, eyes closed and limbs boneless.

"Is he...he's still breathing...is he okay?" Padma asked, her eyes wide and terrified.

Harry knelt down. "Can you hear me Neville?" he asked.

"Yeah...yeah...and I'm...I'm lying...on...grass?" he panted out.

Harry grinned. "You did it!" he cheered. "You really did it! Way to go Neville!"

~~~~~In which this is a scene break~~~~~

Neville felt the wind whip around him, tugging at his clothes, pulling at his hair. His heart was beating in his throat. Harry had been coaching him on how to reach his magic, like they all tried to do in the past couple weeks. He had done it once, in the Hufflepuff common room, and he had lit the fire in the fireplace. Harry's joy at his accomplishment had warmed him.

But now it was his determination. If Harry said reaching his magic could help, if it could
make...whatever it was that was swooping closer and closer vanish, he needed to do this.

Deep inside him, his magic strained at the artificial bonds put in place long ago by the very wizard it belonged to. Fear and and a lack of confidence had hindered his development, had restricted his magic.

But it was now or never. His magic needed to respond. It needed to listen. He needed it.

And that was all his magic was waiting for.

But as his magic surged, the cliff under his feet receded suddenly. And he was falling. Falling further than the third story window his Uncle had tossed him out of (his grandmother had nearly thrown her brother out after him when she discovered what he had done).

"I can't! I'm falling! I'm falling! The cliff vanished!" His panicked shouts were almost lost to his own ears, though Harry's voice came clear and loud.

And he listened.

And his magic listened.

And then he was still, panting, lying on grass, alive and very much not falling.

He was buying Harry a lot of hot chocolate for this. He was sure his grandmother would send him some galleons to get the good stuff.

~~~~~In Which this is a Scene Break~~~~~

Neville smiled, pressing his cheek further into the grass. It was cool, the opposite of the scorching heat from before.

"I did it?" he muttered, drowsy. All he felt like doing was sleeping.
"You overpowered the illusion. You managed to force the magic out of your mind and regain control of your senses! Do you know how hard that is Neville?" Harry sounded overjoyed.

"I feel exhausted."

"I'm rather not surprised," the Doctor murmured. "If it's as hard as Harry's making it sound, I'm surprised you aren't passed out yet."

"Neville, are you really alright?" Padma asked, her voice shaking.

He gave her a thumbs-up, feeling too tired to speak. His body, finally released from the strain and tension of before, gave up on consciousness and he passed out.

"Well, what now? We've deprived the Brun of Neville, what's next?" Harry asked.

The Doctor hummed. "You've broken the illusion on the Mansefri, Neville broke the hold over him. I'm sure right about now the Brun is displeased and upset. Keep your wits about you, Harry. You might not be able to be ensnared by the deadly illusions, but you can still be tricked. And you've got to keep an eye on Neville. Until you're both out of there and the Brun packed back away until we can finish the mission the Mansefri started, I would rather you keep your wits about you."

Harry nodded. "Can do dad."

"Harry," Padma squeaked out.

"Hey Padma, sorry you had to see all this," Harry said, smiling at her. "I would really rather you wait in the Tardis.

Padma narrowed her eyes at him. "You're out here, in danger and trapped with some sort of creature who can use illusion magic to kill people and you're worried about me?" she asked, voice low.

Harry shrugged. "Well, yeah. I mean, I'm sorta used to this kind of thing."
"And you never even thought to tell us you might be in danger?" she asked.

"Well, no, not really. I didn't want to worry you...dad, is that log moving?" he said suddenly, pointing towards what appeared to be, indeed, a moving log.

"Yes, I do believe it is," the Doctor said, a note of amusement in his voice.

"Why is a log moving?" Padma asked.

"I'm sure we're about to find out," the Doctor assured her.

And soon enough, the log came to a halt near Harry, and it was suddenly less a log and more a small, multi-limbed, slightly translucent little being, barely up to Harry's waist. Several bright blue orbs Harry took for a version of eyes stared at him, and he heard a nearly noiseless chatter, before his mind filtered through the language.

"What manner of creature are you, to be immune to my illusions? To break a patterned snare? To convince another to break through my hold? You are but a child!"

Harry laughed. "Here's our little troublemaker, dad," he said, gesturing to the small Brun.

The Doctor raised an eyebrow. "Much smaller than I was imagining, but I suppose illusions are easier when you can be sneaky about setting them."

"What...you can understand that weird chatter?" Padma asked, shocked.

Harry nodded. "Yeah, sure. Takes a minute, though."

"I'm beyond the wards, it's not translating on my end," the Doctor said.

Harry took the hint. "Demanding to know how I broke the illusions, convinced I'm just a child, the usual." He waved a hand.
"Ah, I see. In that case, carry on."

Padma was open mouthed in shock.

"Alright, listen here. You just tried to kill my friend, you did something to the Mansefri, and I'm afraid I can't just let you leave here, whenever I figure out how to take down the prison wards."

There was a scoff. "You can't stop me. The magic on the ship was broken when it crashed. The wards are merely a final failsafe. They'll vanish as soon as the ship runs out of power, and I'll be free. It is only the magic of the ship and the ambient magic of this planet that keeps them up, and as soon as the ship's magic fails, there will be no direction for the ambient magic and the wards will fall."

Harry's eyes went wide. "As soon as the ship’s magic fails, the wards will fall. And I have no idea how long that will be. They’ve been up for nearly...what, an Earth day? How long are can that ship sustain something of this size?"

The little Brun's body language was equivalent to a demented smile from a human. "They don't have long now. I was so close to draining them before you broke my illusion. It's only a matter of waiting it out."

"Dad, we need something to contain them. Now. I don't know how long those wards have left, the illusion I broke had been feeding on the ship's magic for who knows how long."

The Doctor nodded. "Padma, don't move from this spot. Don't go anywhere. Please, I'm trusting you."

Padma nodded firmly. "Okay."

"Good. Harry, do what you can to contain them, but don't hurt yourself. I'll go find the Brigadier. Perhaps he has something cooked up by now, or I'll be able to scrape something together with whatever he brought with him."

The Doctor took off.

Harry looked down at the little being. "Alright, so, it's you and me for now."
"The other young prey is here as well," the Brun pointed out.

Harry glanced at Neville. "Yeah, but he's out for now. He used quite a bit of magic overpowering your illusion, but he did it."

Again body language reminiscent of a scowl. "I don't know how. He has much less magic than you, and he is still young of mind. He has none of your fortifications, protections."

"He's determined and courageous. He's stronger than he thinks he is. You could learn a lot from him, you know."

"Me, learn from a species that hasn't even made it to the stars? You are humorous."

Harry started to gather up his magic. Perhaps that net idea from earlier would work here as well. If he tweaked it, he could wrap the Brun in magic until his dad could come back with some kind of cage or container.

He touched his focus, feeling their agreement, and gathered up his magic.

It was shockingly low. He must have spent more on breaking the illusion than he had realized.

Still, he didn't need to blanket an entire area anymore. The Brun was in front of him.

He weaved his magic like he wove circuits, tightly and evenly, leaving room for his power to race between the connections. It was a small net, but if the Brun didn't run, he didn't need much more.

And he couldn't risk the ward falling before his dad got back. The Brun could still apply illusions to themself, and if he didn’t get the spell up in time, everyone in the vicinity was a potential victim. If that happened, this was over. Harry didn't have enough power to blanket a whole area to keep them from escaping.

So he leveled his wand out in front of himself, needing the focus to channel the power he wanted,
and let his will take over.

He chose his words carefully, linking them to his first language, the language he loved dearly. The language that could add time to their words. And he wove the Brun into his web.

"What...what are you doing, child? What is this magic? What have you done?" The Brun screeched, their voice almost becoming audible for a few moments, above the subsonic frequency Harry's mind and magic had compensated for.

Harry smiled grimly. "You underestimate me. I just trapped you. You cannot leave that spot or use your power until I will it, or the magic in that fades. And it won't fade. A quirk of my language, I was able to create a paradoxical spell. I'm sure I'll feel the consequences from that later, but for now, it means you can't leave. So as soon as these wards fall, I can trap you into whatever containment unit my dad finds and we can bring you to your home for the trial that is no doubt waiting for you."

Those blue spheres shook. "You could have not done that! That sort of magic is impossible!"

"You clearly don't know what is or isn't possible with magic. You just weave illusions. Very convincing illusions, but illusions. I deal in real world magic, consequences that affect more than just the target of my spells." Harry's pointed glare had the Brun trying to edge back. "You aren't going to leave. Not unless it's into the justice of your own people."

The Brun's high pitched whine became audible to the human ear, and Padma winced.

Harry swayed on his feet, feeling the drain on his magic. Using Gallifreyan had strengthened the spell, but it had nearly drained his reserves. His lack of a spell, having created the whole thing on the fly, didn't help either.

Padma glanced at him in concern. "Are you...are you alright?" she asked.

"I'll be fine. The Brun is currently trapped, and hopefully for a while, since I won't be able to pull another stunt like that until after I rest. Creating a spell with a paradox written into it isn’t the easiest thing to do. Let me check on Neville, then I need to see if there's anything up at that ship. Maybe there's some way to deactivate the wards." Harry kept his feet under him as he headed towards the still unconscious Neville, kneeling down next to his friend.
Neville was turning a bright red color, as if he had been standing out in the sun for entirely too long. His shirt was drenched with sweat and his skin felt hot to the touch. But other than that, he was sleeping peacefully. He must have used quite a lot of magic for him to be sleeping, Harry thought. Then again, breaking through an illusion the scale the Brun used was no mean feat.

He grinned, smoothing down Neville's hair. "You'll live up to Hogwarts's expectations for you, Neville," he murmured.

Padma was fretting. "Is he alright?" she asked.

"Sunburnt and sweat soaked, but otherwise he's fine. He'll need some rest, but other than that it'll be okay. I'm gonna go check on the ship. Tell my dad what I did if he's back before me, yeah?"

Padma floundered. "I'm not sure what you did!" she protested. "You took out your wand and pointed it at that...little...creature, and then you sorta sang, and then it shrieked, I could hear it, and you glowed, and then you looked smug. And now you're not even standing straight!"

Harry grinned. "That's a good enough explanation, Padma. He'll get the gist of it."

"I am never following you anywhere!" she shouted after him as he turned to go up the hill.

Harry waved an absent hand, and Padma tried not to screech in frustration. She looked instead at the small, translucent creature that was now the center of all these problems.

Really, such a little being, she wondered what it was exactly, and how Harry was able to speak with it. He kept saying it was something called a Brun, but she had never heard of such a creature and that was more than frustrating.

"Little one, how are you holding up?" a deep voice filled with command had Padma jumping, spinning around to look up at the person Harry and the Doctor kept calling Brigadier.

"You scared me!" she protested.

He chuckled. "I do apologize. I didn't intend to. I so rarely find myself able to sneak up on the
Doctor or his companions, it rarely occurs to me I could. But you aren't really one of his companions, not yet at least. You're Harry's friend."

Padma looked bewildered. "I'm...not a companion?" she confirmed. "I mean, I'm Harry's friend, but I don't know what that means anymore. I don't know what just happened, and Neville's over there unconscious and Harry's doing weirder things than normal and I don't even know what that little creature is, but it caused an awful lot of trouble, and it's all making my head spin." Padma crossed her arms. "And I don't even know where I am."

"You are in quite the predicament. How did you manage to get here not knowing where you were?"

"We just...followed Harry into the Tardis. He ran off and didn't say anything to us and we wanted to know what was going on, so we followed him. But we got lost on the Tardis and ended up back at the beginning and now it all feels so surreal. Like, did all this actually happened? Did Neville almost die to something I couldn't see? Did Harry really do some weird magic spell thing that trapped the Broon or whatever there?" She gesticulated wildly. "I don't even know what's happening anymore and it's driving me mental."

The Brigadier's eyes narrowed. "Harry did something to the Brun?" he clarified.

"He took out his wand and pointed it at the little creature, then he started glowing, then the Brun started glowing, then I heard this high pitched squeal and it seemed to come from the Brun and that was weird cause it wasn't talking before, but Harry just said he'd trapped it with some kind of paradox magic, which makes no sense, but whatever, he's Harry, he usually doesn't make sense. But he was swaying when he stood up and his face was really pale." Padma fretted at her hair. "I'm worried about him, but he just headed back up to that weird ship and said he would be back soon. He was trying to get the wards off."

The Brigadier nodded. "Alright, that's helpful. Thank you."

The Brigadier left as abruptly as he came, and Padma was left alone again.

She didn't like it so much anymore. Not in this strange place, where she couldn't help her friend. But Harry was so comfortable here, like he had been here his whole life, taking charge of things and doing dangerous stuff despite being the same age as her.

She hugged herself. She really didn't like this.
Hands landed on her shoulder. She jumped, startled, then looked up.

It was Professor Rose, young faced with old eyes, looking down at her solemnly. "What happened to staying in the garden?" she said, trying to some levity.

Padma kept the hysterical sob from bursting out her mouth. "Oh Professor Rose, we didn't mean to leave, honest! We didn't, and then we didn't know where to go and we ended up outside and then Neville almost died and Harry's stuck behind prison wards with a criminal but he did some weird magic and now he says it's trapped but Neville almost died Professor!" Padma turned and buried her face in Rose's chest.

Rose hugged the eleven-year-old girl close. "There there, Padma, I know it's overwhelming. But It'll be alright. Neville's not dead, he's still breathing, and Harry's more than able to take care of himself. We can figure this out, yeah?"

Padma wasn't crying, but it was close. "I know, but it's just all so weird and I don't understand half of what's being said and it's strange. I don't like not knowing, Professor. But I'm always lost when Harry's around." Her voice was cracking.

"You'll find your footing, Padma, you're smart. Smarter than me, I reckon. And you're doing really well right now. I know you didn't mean to get lost, it's alright."

Padma suddenly pulled back, eyes wide. "What about the others? You left them there alone! What if they get lost like Neville and I did?"

Rose grinned. "They wouldn't leave the game room. They want to keep their points and be able to get that really cool prize that they have no idea anything about. But it looks cool, and they want it. So they'll be there when we get back."

"Okay..." Padma nodded her head.

"Look, Harry's coming back. He'll have some more information, I'm su...and there he goes." Rose sighed, a put upon expression on her face as Harry suddenly tipped over sideways. "That child, he never knows when enough is enough. He wears himself to the bone more often than he doesn't. These past two weeks have been the longest he's gone without getting into some sort of scrape or other."
Padma wondered what Professor Rose considered a scrape, if the past two weeks weren't included. Harry had literally angered half the teachers in the school, caused a number of students to faint, and been the envy of her entire House when they realized how easy magic was for him.

But she supposed if Harry passing out was a common enough occurrence for Professor Rose to be unconcerned by it, Harry must get into a lot more trouble than she realized.

"Will he be okay? We aren't supposed to go through the wards, they won't let anyone back out again if you go through," she told her professor.

Rose sighed. "Harry'll be fine for a bit. He's magically exhausted. He does this occasionally, uses so much of his magic that he drains as much of it as he can and he passes out as a result. His magic levels are quite impressive, but he also does things on a scale of 'I don't know how much magic to use, so I'm gonna shove everything into this spell' and every single time he does that, he overtaxes his system."

Padma wished she understood more of that.

"Ah, Rose, I see you've found your wayward charge." The Doctor's voice was cheerful as he walked towards them.

"Yeah, well, the Tardis was helpful enough pointing me towards the console room when I asked where they had gone. It wasn't too hard to find her after that," Rose replied. "Also your son's passed out."

The Doctor looked startled, then followed Rose's finger to where Harry was sprawled on the ground. He sighed. "Well, at least he solved the issue of making sure the prisoner won't escape when the wards go down," he said.

"He passed out though!" she protested.

"He does that occasionally. He'll be fine as soon as we manage to get to him, I'm sure. It's unlikely he did anything too stupid."
Padma frowned. "He said he created a paradoxical spell, or something. So that the Brun couldn't escape as it would feed power back into itself. He said he used his first language for it. I couldn't understand what he was saying, it didn't sound like words, it sounded like music."

The Doctor's face turned a shade more worried. "That is far more not okay. Have the wards come down yet?" he asked.

"I don't know. I haven't felt anything, but I haven't tried either. But...if I go through, and they aren't down, I'll get stuck on the other side, and then I won't be able to come back through." Padma looked worried.

"I wasn't asking you to check, Padma, it's alright. Let me go find the Brigadier. He can help check." The Doctor hurried off, and was back with someone not the Brigadier in tow not a minute later. "My good sir, I would be most appreciative if you could check the barrier. If it's down or not."

The young man, looking harried and more than a bit windblown, straightened his uniform. "Why can't you check it, Doctor?" he asked.

The Doctor's face shifted. "I would rather not see how it reacted to my particular quirk, sergeant."

There was a brief flash of worry, then the young man nodded. "Alright, fine." He pressed his hand forward and met the resistance of the barrier. "It's still there. Can I go back to figuring out how to break it now?" he asked.

The Doctor grinned. "My good man! Thank you!" The sergeant walked back to the bustle of military figures working to figure out what was going on, shaking his head.

Padma frowned. "So the barrier is still there. Do you know how long it's going to last for?"

The Doctor shook his head. "Harry has that information, and he's currently passed out and beyond our reach. We might have to wait for it to come down naturally, but that could take a little while, and Harry might have done something really stupid with that spell he created. I would rather not wait that long, if I could help it."

Padma fretted. "Is there anything I can do? I feel so useless. Neville's passed out and Harry's passed out and I'm here being a bother and not helping."
Rose laid a hand on her shoulder. "You aren't being a bother, love. You're scared and uncertain and worried. It's alright to not be able to do anything right now."

"But I can do something! I can go past the barrier, right? I mean, Harry and Neville got through, it's meant to stop people without magic right? I can get through just fine."

"That's not the smartest move, Padma," the Doctor said. "The Brun may be incapacitated at the moment, but I don't know if their illusions will be, I don't know what Harry did exactly, and if he was able to stop their power. Harry's been able to cast off the dangerous illusions, and Neville broke out on his own, he's safe, but you might not be. It's dangerous."

Padma gulped. "The Brun is stuck here. I can go where I won't be seen and reach Harry that way. Or if you could tell me how the wards turn off, I can do that too. Maybe."

The Doctor groaned. Why was his best option turning into an eleven year old child with no experience in dangerous situations?

"Padma, think about this. You watched what happened to Neville. If you aren't careful, if you don't steal your mind and your magic, something like that could happen to you. And we would be helpless to stop it."

Padma frowned. "But why? I mean, can't you get past the barrier too?"

The Doctor shook his head. "My magic isn't the right kind. The barrier doesn't see my magic as being similar enough to what it recognizes as magic, so I'm blocked. As is Rose. So we are trapped out here, which is why I haven't gone in already."

"How...what?"

"We can't go inside. The barrier is meant to read only the very basic kind of magic, despite there being all sorts of varieties to magic and how it manifests. My magic, and what Professor Rose has, are both beyond the level of what this barrier is set to recognize." The Doctor looked at her, trying to make sure she understood what he was saying.
"O...okay. I think I see what you mean. But that means that only I can get past the barrier anyway..." She fumbled her words. Took a deep breath. "I can still do this. I can go and help Harry and Neville."

The Doctor looked more than worried. "Padma, are you sure? Really? Cause this isn't the time for heroics. If the Brun's illusions aren't tied down by whatever spell Harry did and you get caught up in one, no one can help you. You'll be alone."

Padma breathed deeply. She had stood by and watched Neville struggle against something she couldn't see, almost die, and then manage to break out of it. She had watched Harry use some sort of powerful spell to stop the Brun after he had helped Neville break out of whatever he was trapped in. All she had done was stand by and watch, and she hated knowing that. "I can do it."

Rose looked concerned. "I don't feel comfortable letting an eleven-year-old over there on her own," she said.

"Harry's the same age as me!" she protested.

"And you see where that's got him?" Rose burst out, then crossed her arms and turned away, breathing deeply.

The Doctor sighed. “Padma, I'm not saying you aren't capable, but you have no idea what we're dealing with. This isn't just a case of a magical creature run amok. The Brun is powerful, intelligent, and desperate. If you're trapped, you could be used as leverage against Harry, against us, to remove that spell trapping them here," the Doctor said, brown eyes focused entirely on Padma.

"Then I'll have to not get caught," she said, and saw the Doctor's face sigh. "I mean, I'm not going through here, right in front of the Brun, so can you maybe show me a better place?"

The Doctor slumped forward slightly, then hardened, resolved. "Alright Padma, I'm going to trust you. You need to get to Harry and find some means of waking him up. Magical or otherwise, it doesn't matter. He's the one who knows the situation over there. And if you feel anything strange, see anything strange, you need to concentrate on your magic, use it as a shield. It'll be your best defense. Make it as strong as you can." The Doctor took her hand and towed her around the edge of the barrier. "Be quick, but don't wander into the Brun's line of sight. Stay as far away from this side of the barrier as you can. I need you to promise me, Padma, that if you do start to see things, that you shout for me. I need to know that you will listen to me if something starts to go wrong, okay?"
Padma nodded, swallowing a lump in her throat. She was really doing this. It wasn't just a foolish notion anymore, she was really going into the barrier. "Okay. I promise."

"Thank you. Now, this is the direct opposite side from the Brun, and still near enough to Harry that it shouldn't take you long to reach him."

Padma turned towards the barrier that was keeping everyone else but her out, rubbing her palms on her sweater. "Okay. Okay. I'll get Harry up as fast as I can, Doctor." And then she stepped forward, beyond the reach of the people who could keep her safe and now much closer to danger.

But Harry might have really done something stupid, and she needed to make sure he was safe, that Neville was safe.

She hurried off as quickly and as quietly as she could towards Harry's prone figure.

She skirted around the strange contraption everyone kept calling a ship (there was no water, how was this a ship?) and flinched back at the sight of the shapes lying near motionless in a huddle around the broken door. They were multicolored and looked very odd, and a strange while film was pulsing slightly, covering them entirely. She looked away.

More strange creatures she didn't understand.

But Harry was just over there, just a few meters away.

She hurried to him, and knelt down by his unconscious form.

"Harry," she hissed. "Harry, we need you to wake up. The barrier's still up and they don't know when it's going to come down and no one else can come in here to help until it's down, and we don't know if the illusions that the Brun can use are still a problem, so we need you to wake up Harry."

When she got no response, she took his hand, feeling his skin cool and clammy to the touch. His forehead was beaded with chill sweat, and his eyes were vibrating.

"Oh no, oh no, Harry, what have you done, what have you done, Harry!" Padma panicked. Harry
had clearly overextended himself, more than she had expected.

Her hands fluttered about trying to figure something, anything out.

A glint of gold caught her eye.

Harry's necklace. What he said kept his power restrained inside him, confined it. Maybe...maybe if she took it off, it would jolt him back into awareness.

She didn't have much else to try.

The moment her fingers unclasped the necklace, a wave of power swept out, almost physical in its force, and her fingers brushed against his skin.

Her mind was filled with fear and pain and terror.

She screamed.

Harry's eyes popped open. He could breathe freely again, he could see, he could feel, he could….

"Padma? Padma? What are you doing over here...oh crap." He saw her hands on his arm, felt the power surging from him to her, his emotions overpowering hers as the torrential backlash from the illusion that had hooked onto him swallowed her up.

And where he had been able to fight against it, she could not.

He staggered to his feet. "Shit, shit, bloody buggering hell this is not good. Damn it, what was she thinking coming over here?"

"She was thinking that two of her friends were passed out and no one else could reach them but her and that you were in danger, Harry," he heard his father say. "And now you need to handle the problem you failed to wrap up. Before it consumes Padma."
Harry clenched his fist. "I am well aware, thank you. I was just trapped in that same illusion."

"How?"

"I left a loophole open, somehow, and the Brun was able to latch onto my magic and use it to feed an illusion. And if Padma's stuck in it, I need to get to work now. Because she might not survive."

Harry raised a hand to his friend, who was sitting frozen, eyes wide in horror, mouth opening and closing. He brushed lightly against her skin, trying to send hope, courage, strength, anything that would keep her fighting just long enough for him to tie up that one last loophole.

"H...Ha...Harryyyy" she moaned. "I can't see...I can't breath...oh Merlin Harry...It's so dark...I can't feel anything..."

"Save your air, Padma, you'll need it. Calm, calm, center your mind. Calm, let it engulf you, a lake of tranquility. Center your mind in that lake. Breathe deeply. You can still breathe. You still have that power." He tried to weave some of his magic through his voice, project the calm Padma would so desperately need to stay alive.

Padma took a shuddering, gasping breath, let out a rattling cough.

"That's good. Keep breathing Padma. Keep breathing for me." He turned to the Brun, eyes dark. "As for you, you're going to regret not just letting us bring you back to your species peacefully."

The Brun's body twitched. "You let your guard down, child. Your spell may inhibit my ability to move, may limit my power, but what you did, it let me touch your power, and what power you have. And now that child will feel it."

Harry let out a hissing breath. "I would demand you let her go, but you're not going to do that, so I'm just going to make you do it. And you're not going to like it. But that's fine. You don't have to like it." Harry reached out, his focus in his hand, and he slashed it around in a half arc, the magic all but visible with it's power.

"What are you doing child?" came the shriek from the Brun.
"I don't have enough power on my own right now to stop you, but the magic powering this ward is plenty enough. And I don't have my limiter on. I can drain the magic here, and use it as raw power."

There was a shudder of disbelief from the Brun. "No being can possibly..."

"You shouldn't have used my friends, used me," Harry said, voice low. "I'll make sure you remember that bit of knowledge."

With a vicious slice, Harry redirected the magic he had pulled from the barrier towards the Brun in a shrieking spike of visible power, and the Brun coiled back in on itself.

But the spell from before was holding, and the spike was deadly accurate.

Harry head Padma flop bonelessly to the ground behind him, the connection broken, the illusion shattered.

He hoped he had made it in time, but he didn't have time to check right now. The edges of his vision was going dark and stars danced across what was left of his field of view.

His dad swam into focus, blocking off part of the sky. He must have fallen down again.

"Hey Harry, I've got you. It's alright. I've got you."

Harry smiled. "Wasn't...much of...an adventure," he groused, struggling to stay conscious. "We...only went...to Yorkshire."

The Doctor tried to muster a smirk, failed, and ended up looking like he was trying not to cry. "I'll aim for something a bit more exotic next time, yeah?" he said.

"You better." And with that, the world went dark.

~~~~In Which this is a POV Switch~~~~
"Is he alright?" Rose knelt down next to the Doctor, who had Harry in his arms.

"He's magically exhausted and mentally strained. Whatever he did was powerful, the Brun isn't even moving an inch, but I don't know what he did to himself in the process." The Doctor took the golden chain from his son's hand, clasped it back on. "How's Padma?"

"She's breathing. Her skin's clammy but her breaths are evening out. So there's the good news. I'll take her and Neville back to the Tardis, then I'll come get Harry. You square away that alien and then we'll get this group back to Hogwarts."

The Doctor nodded, lifting Harry up and holding him close. Rose held Padma in a loose cradle, shifting until she had a free hand. Then she walked over to Neville and managed to get him onto her other hip, before heading back to the Tardis, two eleven-year-old, unconscious children in her arms.

The Brigadier came over. "So are they alright?" he asked.

"They'll be fine. I'll check them over in the Tardis, see what I can treat if there's anything wrong. Did you scrape together something to stick the Brun in?"

The Brigadier nodded. "Our team dug out a capsule from storage, and if Harry's spells hold, it'll be big enough to rehouse our unwelcome guest for you."

The Doctor nodded. "His magic will hold. And I have several devices I can put around it to keep magic within the capsule only. Go grab the capsule, let's get this wrapped up fast. It's going to be a nightmare making sure these six aren't missed at the school."

The Brigadier snorted. "Good luck with that."

Rose came back quickly enough and took Harry from the Doctor, leaving his hands free to finish the task of relocating their prisoner.

It took far less time locking away the being that had caused all the havoc than seemed warranted, but the Doctor wasn't complaining. Anything that would get him back to his son and the two other children affected by this mess was welcome.
"You heading out already Doctor?" the Brigadier asked, a look of resignation on his face.

"I've got children to see to. And I'm assuming you all are qualified enough to take care of the mess in the clearing on your own, yeah? It's just clean up now. The Mansefri were overwhelmed by the Brun and used to power the original illusion, their magic drained completely. I'm sure you can handle it, yeah?"

The Brigadier sighed but nodded. "We'll take precautions but we can handle it. Thanks for turning up, this could have been a far worse disaster without your Harry."

The Doctor smiled. "Thanks. Ta for now, Brigadier."

~~~~~In Which this is a Scene Change~~~~~

The Doctor set the capsule with the Brun in it off to the side and headed for the controls. "First things first, let's get you squared away. I don't need you lingering around any longer than you have to be here."

He left the time rotor alone, homing in on the Brun's home planet.

The moment the Tardis settled down, he stalked out the door with the capsule, right in the heart of the Brun Center for Uncontrolled Illusionists.

"I believe you have misplaced someone," he said mildly, the capsule in his hand.

All around him, little translucent beings of varying colors burst into activity.

"Where did you come from?"

"How did you capture them?"
"Who are you?"

"How did you get in here?"

"Who is that?"

"Weren't the Mansefri Council in charge of that one?"

The sonic screwdriver was in his hand and he released a high pitched whistle. "QUIET!" He waited for the noise to settle. "Thank you. Now, as I was saying, you've misplaced a prisoner. The Mansefri are dead. My son was almost killed, as were some of his friends. I would appreciate it if you didn't lose anyone in the vicinity of the Sol System in the near future."

There was a wave of chattering, but the Doctor was through with it. He left the capsule in the middle of the room and stalked back to the Tardis. He had children to check on. He brushed off the feeble attempts at illusions with a glare at the Brun and slammed the door behind him. Really, he had just returned a dangerous criminal bound and helpless and they tried to put him under an illusion.

But he couldn't dwell on it.

He relocated them back to Hogwarts, back into their rooms, and then swept down the hallway.

Rose was coming to meet him.

"Squared everything away?"

"The Brun is back where they belong and we are back at Hogwarts. Where are Harry, Neville, and Padma?"

Rose turned. "This way. I put them in the infirmary."

"And the other three?"
"Game room. They haven't left and I haven't let them know anything has changed. If you're good, I'll go grab them."

The Doctor waved a hand. "Let them play a bit longer, but go keep an eye on them. If they ask questions, use your discretion, but don't let them run off. The last thing I need is one of them getting lost in the Tardis."

Rose sighed, leaned against the Doctor for a brief moment. "This could have gone much worse," she murmured.

"I know. I'll just be glad when they all wake up." He pressed a kiss to her head, then gently dislodged himself. "I'll be in the infirmary. If they get too curious, you can bring them there."

Rose nodded, and they headed their separate ways.

The infirmary wasn't far away, and the Doctor was pleased to see the Tardis had provided a few extra beds for the influx of patients.

It was easy to see Neville's injuries were mostly external. A dreadful sunburn marred his face and exposed skin (little of that due to it being November and cold in Scotland) and a few wind burns did not help.

Padma was breathing better, but it sounded a little rough at the edges. He would have to check and make sure her lungs were fine. All of her organs, really.

Harry lay still, nearly motionless, and the Doctor breathed heavily. At least this he was familiar with. Extreme magical exhaustion always made Harry nearly catatonic until he had recovered enough energy to move about better. He would have to wait until Harry had gathered enough energy for a proper scan.

He turned to Padma. Based on what Harry said, the illusion had been intense and deadly, and while he had been able to fight against it, Padma could have possibly been overwhelmed with whatever it was that had trapped Harry.
Her mental activity was within the norm, and he let out a breath he hadn’t know he had held. However, the scan found her lungs sported a few...were those void burns? But why would…

They had severely underestimated the Brun’s power. An illusion that could even simulate the void well enough to trick the body into causing such burns was deadly. He set up a regen pod around Padma’s form and set the system for human-norm-female. He would let it run for a cycle and check Padma over again.

For Neville, he found creams and gels that would soothe his skin and help the healing process. Within a couple days, his sunburn should fade completely.

And the stampede of footsteps was obviously the three children who couldn’t be persuaded to wait. Though he wasn’t surprised. Really, they were Harry’s friends. If they weren’t the tiniest bit curious, he might have wondered why Harry had befriended them.

~~~In Which this is a POV change~~~~

Rose found the three laughing and giggling in the game room, Susan beating the other two quite squarely in points.

“Professor Rose, check and make sure Susan isn’t cheating!” Blaise called out, a disgruntled look on his face. He was dead last point wise of the three, only ahead of Rose by virtue of the number of games he had played.

“You can’t actually cheat at these games, Blaise,” she replied.

“Where’s Neville and Padma? Are they still in the garden? They’re missing out on all the fun!” Susan said, grinning.

Rose sighed, and the action was enough for the three to stop whatever they were doing. “What happened?” Hermione asked, suddenly scared.

“Padma and Neville ended up outside, and they got caught up in the situation. They’re okay, but they’re in the infirmary with Harry and the Doctor.”
Blaise’s eyes widened. “What? What happened to them?”

“It was unexpected. We didn’t foresee the problem being so severe, and they got caught in the middle. They’re okay,” Rose stressed.

“Where’s the infirmary?” Susan said, eyes serious. “And don’t play that what about the points game, they’re our friends!”

Rose held up her hands. “I wasn’t going to. But if you go to the infirmary, you have to be calm. Don’t panic or get upset. They need to rest, okay?”

“What aren’t you telling us?” Hermione asked.

“Come along then, you three. Follow me, don’t stray.” She turned, hearing them scramble after her.

They made it to the infirmary pretty quickly, and Susan, Blaise, and Hermione all gasped in shock.

Even Harry?” Susan breathed.

“Why is Neville so red?” Blaise asked, horror in his voice.

“What is that around Padma?” Hermione’s soft voice chimed in.

“Hello, you three. I see you’ve joined us. I rather expected this, to be honest. Neville got on the wrong side of the sun, but he’ll heal up. Harry’s magically exhausted, and Padma is currently undergoing a regen cycle. They’re not up for company right now, but you can take seats or beds wherever available. Don’t touch anything, please.”

Hermione’s eyes were large, shock and fear in them. “Are they really okay?” she asked.

The Doctor turned, his face kind. “They’ll be okay, Hermione. I’ll do whatever I can for them, okay?”
“What about Madam Pomphrey?” Susan asked. “She’s got potions and stuff.”

The Doctor shook his head. “It would be hard to explain how Neville ended up with severe sunburns in the space of a couple hours, or why Padma has void burns inside her trachea and lungs, or why Harry is so drained of magic he’s unconscious. Best I take care of them here. You’re welcome to stay, Neville should be up and about in a bit, and Padma might be awake by the evening. Harry’s gonna be out until tomorrow at least.”

The three all found seats in the infirmary, clearly deciding that they were staying with their friends.

The Doctor smiled. Harry had found a good group of kids, he really had.

~~~~In Which This is a Scene Break~~~~

Hermione, Blaise, and Susan all traded worried looks.

“What happened to them, do you think?” Susan asked, keeping her voice down. “I mean, you don’t just get on the wrong side of the sun, or get burns in your lungs, and Harry being magically exhausted seemed impossible.”

Blaise nodded. “It hasn’t been that long since we saw them last.”

“They must have run into something really dangerous,” Hermione said, looking worried. It’s been nearly an hour and Neville still hasn’t woken up. Oh, wait...his eyes fluttered. Neville? Neville? Can you hear me?”

Hermione jumped up from her seat, getting closer to her fellow Gryffindor, who blinked blearily. “‘Erm’ne?” he mumbled. “‘S tha’ you?”

Hermione beamed. “Yep! It’s me!”

“So ‘m back ‘n th’ Tardis?” he asked.
“In the infirmary of all places. What happened?”

Neville blinked, then pushed himself upright. The Doctor, sitting on the far side of the room near Padma, gave him a quick look over but didn’t stop him. “Um, I...I was caught in an illusion. There was this barrier that only magical people could get through, but you couldn’t get back out. And there was some sort of...prisoner? I don’t know. But it could use illusions really well.” Neville gulped, looking down at his hands. “If the Doctor and Harry hadn’t helped me…” he trailed off.

Blaise couldn’t quite believe what he was hearing. “An illusion caused your sunburn? And those wind burns?”

“It was a very good illusion,” Neville said solemnly.

“Is that what happened to Padma and Harry too?” Susan asked.

Neville looked shocked. “Padma? But she was on the other side of the ward...and Harry wasn’t affected by the illusions...” he trailed off. “I don’t know...I passed out before everything. But I broke the illusion. Harry helped encourage me, but it was my magic that broke it.” He sounded proud, as if he hadn’t been burnt to near a crisp by the sun and almost died.

“It was indeed, Neville, and you should be proud. Don’t be surprised if your spells start working differently than they were before,” the Doctor spoke up from the other side of the room. “Good news, Padma has minimal damage. The regen cycle did wonders, and she should be up and about soon. And Harry’s recovering at a steady pace as well. Ah, and there’s Pashti. I wondered where you wandered off to. Not up for the excitement today?”

Pashti had indeed sauntered in, tail waving, ignoring the Doctor and jumping up onto Harry’s chest, laying down and purring at a volume audible across the room.

“She’s really loud,” Susan commented.

“You get used to it after a while. Neville, let me check out your burns. I have some creams you can use, I would recommend them, to get rid of the stiffness and help them heal quicker. And since you lot seem like you want to wait for Harry and Padma to wake up before heading back out, it should fade quite a bit before tomorrow. Enough so that you can blame a long afternoon by the lake for the redness rather than being fried in a tanning booth.” The Doctor grinned as he said this.
Neville gave him a small smile. “Thank’s Doctor. And thank you, for helping me, before.”

The Doctor nodded. “You did very well Neville. I’m proud of you.”

Neville was probably flushing, but with his skin being a shade of red darker than any flush it was hard to tell.

There was a small noise, and the Doctor grinned, headed back to the young girl’s side. “Ah, Padma, you’re up! How are you feeling? Everything in working order?”

Padma sat straight upright, eyes wide, her breath coming in gasps, before she took in her surroundings, the calm face of the Doctor sitting on a chair next to her, the lack of trees or grass, Neville, Harry, and the wide-eyed trio. “I’m...I’m okay. I’m okay. I can breathe. The bed’s right here...I can see you all. I’m okay.” She took a deep breath. “I’m okay.”

“It’s going to take a bit for your mind to adjust, so let me know if you have any troubles. Please, Padma. You should never have had to do what you did.”

Padma shook her head. “It was my choice, I wanted to help somehow. And I did. Harry...I remember Harry doing something. I couldn’t see anything, and I could barely hear him, but I did. I heard him talking to the Brun. And he helped keep me calm. It was so dark, Doctor, and there was nothing. It was just...nothing. So much nothing that it was overwhelming.” Padma shivered.

“It was the void. Harry read an ill-advised book about it, and it’s one of his deepest fears. The Brun must have latched onto it and used his knowledge about the void to craft the illusion,” the Doctor said, face serious. “It’s good to know that the illusion wasn’t as serious as I feared. But I’ll need you to come back in a couple days. I need to check your lungs and trachea for and left over scarring.”

Padma rubbed her throat, nodding. “Okay. I can do that.”

“Wonderful. Alright you five. Harry won’t be up for a little while yet. Let’s get some food into you all and then you can either stay here or I can go hunt down a room for you to bunk in, or you can go back to your dorm rooms....ah, yeah, negative on that last one. Well, discuss what you want to do amongst yourselves, I’ll go track down food and I’ll be back soon. Don’t leave, alright?” There were five firm nods. “Good.”
They ended up staying in the infirmary, wanting to be nearby in case Harry woke up. A couple more beds popped up from nowhere and they pushed them into a rough circle so they could sit and talk while munching on pizza the Doctor had dug up from some corner of the Tardis.

“What happened to you?” Hermione asked. “Neville said he doesn’t remember because he passed out before you did,” she said to Padma.

“He did,” Padma confirmed. “After Neville passed out, Harry used some really powerful magic to...stop the Brun, and I don’t know what it is either, so don’t ask me. But it somehow managed to get a hold on him. Harry was immune to the really dangerous illusions, they said, but this time it used his magic and he had lost a lot of strength casting that spell. And he passed out, but no one else could get past the wards but me, so I went to try and help him. I did, but when I managed to wake him up, the illusion latched onto me instead.” She shivered, drawing her knees into her chest. “It was terrifying. I don’t know how you managed so well, Neville, I was so scared. I couldn’t breathe, I couldn’t see, I couldn’t feel. It was like everything wasn’t real…”

Hermione, Blaise, and Susan all traded wide-eyed looks.

“That...that sound horrifying,” Susan finally said. “I’m glad you’re okay.”

“What exactly was all of that stuff, though? The Brun, and what else?” Hermione asked, eyes wide in curiosity.

Padma smiled. She liked that Hermione managed to still be curious. It made things seem a bit more normal. “The Manfree or something like that. I don’t know exactly what they were but they weren’t….alive...when I saw them. And after everything that happened, I was unconscious when it was all over.” Padma gave Hermione a small smile. “The Brun was really small, like toddler sized, and translucent. And it didn’t speak using anything I could understand, though Harry understood. But Harry used really really powerful magic to capture it. I don’t think I’ve seen him use that much magic before,” Padma admitted.

There was silence around the group.

“Anyone up for less disturbing topics? At least until Harry’s awake and we can ask him?” Susan asked.

There was a chorus of agreements from all of them, and they changed the subject to their homework,
favorite books or plants, anything that didn’t touch on why Neville’s face was still lobster red or why Padma hugged a pillow to her body and didn’t want the lights off when she went to sleep that evening when they were all too tired to keep their eyes open.

The Doctor checked up on them that evening. They were a solid group of kids. They would be fine. It would be rough, but Neville and Padma would pull through, he had faith in them.

His son was still passed out, still in a magical coma. He hoped that morning brought a different story.

~~~~In Which this is an Ending~~~~

Chapter End Notes

Hey! This ended up being...about 5,000 words longer than I expected it to be. I had vague plans for Tardis adventures or something, not what happened, and yet that’s what ended up being written. Sigh…I’m still mildly worried too much happened and not enough happened at the same time..like, did I cross some sort of line here?

Yes, I know this was late but a few days. I’m working on getting better at deadlines. I really am. It’s NaNoWriMo right now, and I have participated in NaNo for seven years, so I’m not about to give up now.

Also, I have what might be a huge huge huge test in December that I’m still worried if I can take. I need to step up my studying game if I want to take it...ugh.

And for all of you commiserating with me about KPOP, it’s MAMA season. Kpop gods, please forgive all our souls for the travesty that will occur online this month. I swear, no other fandom has as many infights as kpop fans do during MAMA...and it’s worse this year. Oh my god is it worse this year than last year.
As for my new self-imposed deadline *pulls out diary* November 27th. That’ll give me enough time to get a chapter written and maybe another chapter as a buffer so I can feel less panicky about deadlines.

If you have reviewed and I haven’t replied, I will get to you, especially if you have a question/suggestion. I got overwhelmed this month. It’s flu season here in Japan and I’ve gotten mildly sick twice this month already. >.<

Thank you all! And more special thanks to MischiefManaged33 who betas this for me and catches all those things that slip through in my hurry to get this written!
Hello! I’m Back!

To everyone who reads and reviews, THANK YOU SO MUCH!! I appreciate it all. To those who lurk, THANK YOU SO MUCH!! I’m glad you enjoy this story and come back to check up on it every so often.

To my beta, MischiefManaged33, THANK YOU FOR EVERYTHING! The reminders sent a couple days before my self-imposed deadline and the quick turnaround on these chapters, I really appreciate it.

Now, onwards! Enjoy! This is sort of a bridge before the storm that gets kicked up soon.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

~~~In Which This is a Beginning~~~~

The headmaster's office was a bustle of activity. All four heads of house were there, all with varying levels of worry and panic.

"Where are they? How did six children just up and....and...vanish!?" McGonagall exclaimed, fretting.

It was Sunday, and Blaise Zabini, Hermione Granger, Neville Longbottom, Susan Bones, Padma Patil, and Harry had been missing since early the previous day.

No one had paid much mind until their dorm mates had reported that none of the children had shown up at bedtime, and their beds were still empty the next morning, having been untouched.

All four heads of house made their way to the headmaster's office, looking for answers. There were ways for the headmaster to keep track of children in the castle, making sure everyone was present.
and accounted for, that there were no unwelcome visitors that could harm the students.

Dumbledore had calmed them, taken out one of the strange contraptions that littered his office, and muttered some sort of spell, until a to-scale version of Hogwarts was floating in the air between them.

"Please show me Blaise Zabini."

There was a moment where nothing happened, then the castle's image shuddered and rippled, before blanking.

Dumbledore frowned, concerned. He reactivated the device. "Please show me Hermione Granger."

Again, the strange shuddering, before the device shut off.

And it repeated for each of the missing children.

"Where could they have gone?" Sprout exclaimed, worry in every line of her body.

"It is not feasible for six students to just...disappear like they did. They were last seen in Hogwarts. Where could they have possibly gotten to?" Snape muttered. "It's that boy's fault, I know it is."

"How could Harry have done something like this? He is powerful, but that powerful, I think not. To hide five other children as well as himself from something like a Searching Ward tied into a location as magically powerful as Hogwarts is not something that is actually possible," Flitwick argued. "Not without both an immense amount of magic and skill in warding. At eleven, no matter his other abilities, warding is not something you can just spontaneously become good at."

Dumbledore nodded. "That is true. Warding is less a branch of magic and more a branch of art. It takes time and patience to master the finer details of how it works. I do believe Harry hasn't quite managed that yet. He could imitate, I have no doubts on that, and he could break simple wards by sheer force, but he couldn't create one as complex as what this would require without alerting me to his actions and quite possibly blowing something up."

"Then where are they? Where have six children vanished off to? Jack is still here, I doubt they would
have left him behind, no matter how irritating he can be," McGonagall pointed out. And indeed, Jack had been seen yesterday evening and this morning enjoying breakfast, though he had looked a little put out.

There was silence in the office. "If they don't show up by this evening, I will conduct a thorough search of the castle for them," Dumbledore finally said. "As it is, I will put all the ghosts and portraits on notice. Perhaps they have seen something, or will see something, before we do."

A reluctant agreement circled the room. They would have to contend with that for now. Having students disappear like these six had was not something that happened on a regular basis, or at all in McGonagall's memory. And when they came back, they were finding the source of all this commotion. Vanishing from Hogwarts was not something they could let slip by.

~~~~In Which This is a Scene Break~~~~

Harry stirred early the next morning, feeling his head pounding and his body aching. He had really overdone it and he would be paying for it for at least a whole week, if not two.

"I see you're awake." His father's voice would have had him jerking upright, if not for two things.

One, Pashti was curled up on his chest, purring like the Tardis engine and would be very unhappy to be disturbed.

Two, his whole body protested the mere thought of moving any faster than a particularly slow snail.

"Hey dad," he said, glad his voice was working just fine. "How long have I been out?"

" Barely long enough for your magic to replenish some of its stores. It's a bit after normal waking hours, but you'll do. Your friends are still asleep. They were up late last night eating pizza and chatting amongst themselves."

Harry's eyes went wide. "They're okay then?" he asked. "Padma and Neville?"

"They're fine. Neville's got a pretty bad sunburn but it'll heal fairly quickly. Padma has some internal
scarring that is almost gone, but I'll check up on her in a few days just to make sure. Padma's not fond of the dark now, and Neville's probably not going to like the Astronomy tower for a bit, but with support, they'll be fine. They're currently worried about you, as you were unconscious far longer than they were." The Doctor had moved into his line of sight, eyes serious. "So, tell me, how bad is it?"

Harry groaned, shifting Pashti to his lap so he could slowly sit up. "My body's protesting moving, but that's because everything aches from the amount of magic I used on top of fighting off that illusion." He pet Pashti gently, enjoying her purrs and the gentle waves of peace and calm she radiated. "It'll pass in time, but I'm gonna be sore for a while at the very least. And it'll take a bit for my magic to replenish itself to the level it's normally at."

"How long?"

"A week? maybe two?" he said.

The Doctor grinned. "Ah, Earth time terms! Glad to hear you're using them. As for that week, you're going to be restricted to what you do in class only, understand? You can handle the spellwork performed there with little difficulty, as it's designed for children just getting used to manipulating their magic, but no more special lessons until you don't ache every time you move. Understand?"

Harry sighed but nodded. "I figured as much. It's gonna suck, though. Neville's going to need some help and guidance as he broke through some sort of barrier on his magic when he shattered the illusion," he said.

The Doctor looked thoughtful. "That could explain why he is healing so quickly. My creams shouldn't have been working that fast."

As he spoke those words, the boy in question blinked open his eyes blearily, saw Harry sitting up, and his whole face changed. "Harry! You're awake!"

"Huh? Wha? 's awake?" Blaise muttered, sleep fogging his voice.

"Harry's awake!" Neville repeated.

"Harry's up?" Hermione joined, pushing her hair out of her face. "Oh, he is up! Harry!"
And that was the beginning of the chorus of greetings from his friends.

"Yes, yes, I'm up, I'm up. It's good to see you all too. How are you two?" He looked at Neville and Padma.

"I'm okay. My face feels really shiny but okay," Neville said.

"I'm okay too," Padma joined.

Harry narrowed his eyes. "If you feel at all not okay, let me know, please?"

Padma and Neville nodded.

"Alright, now, let me scan you. I wanted to wait until your magic levels were more stable so it wouldn't interfere with my readings. Otherwise, all I get back is 'Critical' and that's extremely unhelpful." The Doctor bustled around, pulling out a long rod. "Lay back down, Harry, I need to check you over. And if you start moving about it'll make it harder to get a good read on you."

Harry sighed but settled back onto the pillow. "Why does it read critical at you?" he asked.

"Your magic makes up quite a bit of your life force, Harry. When it's low, it reflects as low blood pressure, low oxygen intake, low anything else, even when you are breathing perfectly fine and I can manually take your pulse and check. So I generally wait until you're no longer so magically drained to check you over," the Doctor explained, waving the scanner over Harry.

A sheet of paper was spat out of one end, and the Doctor looked it over.

"Well, am I ok?"

"You're gonna have some sore muscles for a bit, but I'm not surprised. And you have some of the same trachea scarring as Padma, also not surprised. I'd put you under a regen cycle, but the last time I did that you blew my machine to bits." The Doctor leveled a look at his son.
"Hey, not my fault. You shouldn't have used it when I was practically on death's doorstep and my magic near uncontrollable," Harry protested.

"Well, if you think you have a handle on your magic, I'll run it." The Doctor looked Harry over closely, before he fetched the pod-like device from before and set it up around Harry. "Now, you know the drill. Don't move, keep your magic to yourself, and just wait for the beep."

Harry grinned. "Can do."

"Um, is that safe?" Padma asked.

"The Doctor had it around you yesterday," Hermione replied. "And you're fine."

"But he said Harry also blew one up," Padma countered.

"I'm sure he knows what he's doing," Susan said. "Otherwise we would have been sent out."

Sure enough, Harry did manage to not blow the regen pod up this time, and the beeping signaled the end of the cycle.

"Alright, last scan. And yep, the scarring's gone down. Same as Padma, I want to see you in about a week to check for sure that it's gone. It's never a good idea to leave stuff like that alone." The Doctor grinned. "Alright, who's up for breakfast?"

The chorus of agreement around the room had the Doctor's grin at full blast.

"I can walk down there, right dad?" Harry asked. "I mean, I don't have to stay here, yeah?"

The Doctor frowned at him. "Take a few steps first, let me make sure you're not going to fall on your face before you head to the kitchens."
Harry shifted, enough so that Pashti headed up to his shoulder to curl up under his ear, winding her tail around his neck.

He was wobbly when he stood, but after a few steps, he didn't seem to be in danger of falling, so the Doctor gave his reluctant permission.

"Alright, who's hungry?" Harry looked around at his friends, and their faces lit up.

"Are we going back to that awesome kitchen by the garden?" Blaise asked.

"Yeah, it was huge. What do you even do with that much space?" Susan piped up.

"I liked the garden," Neville added. "It had a lot of really interesting plants."

Harry ran a hand through his hair. "Alright, to the kitchen near the garden it is. Let's go!" He headed out.

"Do you mean there's more than one kitchen here?" Hermione asked, scrambling to catch up.

"Well, yeah. I mean, there's lots of everything here. We just happen to misplace it sometimes. Speaking of which, don't wander off."

"Why is everyone saying that?" Blaise asked, hands to the ceiling. "It's not like we could leave without going through the console room. What's the harm in wandering off?"

Harry gave him a mysterious smile. "Oh, I'm sure if you wander off you'll find out. I mean, there was that one time this guy snuck on, we weren't paying attention, and dashed off down the halls. We still haven't found him. Though sometimes my juice is missing, so we figure he's still alive." Harry shrugged.

All five just stared at him. "You're not serious," Padma deadpanned. "How could you get lost in a finite space? It's not like you could get out of the box."
"You'd be surprised what can happen in the Tardis, Padma."

"We did end up somewhere weird after stumbling through an arch, Padma," Neville said. "And then we couldn't find the garden again, or anyone else."

Padma nodded thoughtfully. "I suppose you're right. That was weird."

Harry smiled. "Alright, the kitchen. Feel free to take what you'd like. Fridge is there, cabinets with food over there, and the table is, obviously, there. If you need to heat something up and can't figure out the buttons, get me. Please. No explosions, I just woke up and don't have the constitution for it this early in the day."

His friends giggled, but set out to explore the kitchen and find food.

It was an odd collection of edibles they brought to the table, most of it not Earth in origin and exclaimed over by the five.

"What's this?" Blaise held a fork with strands of black colored not-noodles dripping down.

"Think of it as squid tentacles. It's close enough to be similar."

"Harry, why does this move?" Hermione poked at the jelly substance on her plate, which quivered.

"It responds to your voice patterns. It's not alive, but the molecules will mimic movement in response to the closest or loudest voice."

"I don't think this is apple juice, Harry." Padma held up a glass of bright green liquid.

"There are green apples," Harry countered, knowing full well that the juice was apple, just not current century Earth Apples.

Still, breakfast was finished in a reasonable manner, and Harry sat back, petting Pashti absently. The tiny cat was finishing off the leftover meat on his plate.
"So, what do you want to do? We're back at Hogwarts, we can head back to the castle," he said.

There was immediate resistance. "But we've barely seen this place! It's huge!" Blaise protested.

"How can an expanding charm fit so much space?" Padma asked.

"I didn't think it was possible for there to be so much room inside a box the size of the Tardis," Susan said. "I want to see more of it!"

Harry looked around, sighing. "Alright, if all of you are in accord?" They all nodded firmly. "What's rule number one?"

"Don't wander off," the repeated in stereo.

Harry snickered. "Glad to see that's been drilled in. Now, let's get going. Don't touch anything I don't say you can touch, kay?"

Nods, and they left the kitchen for the winding corridors beyond. "Where are we going first?" Hermione asked, eyes wide and curious.

"The training room. Rose and Jack usually have me in there more often than not, but I figure you'd like to see it. Blaise, step away from that door, it likes to bite those that are too close."

Blaise practically leapt away from the door, a startled squeak escaping his throat. "You have biting doors in this place?" he said, hand to his chest.

Harry shrugged. "Not on purpose. The Tardis often thinks they're amusing so we have to put up with them for a while."

There were wary eyes at the surrounding doors. "Anymore biting doors?" Susan asked warily.
"Nah, not around here. Let's get going. This way, Neville. If you wander off that way I'm going to be looking for you for ages." Neville hurried to catch up with them.

"Why is this place so confusing?" Hermione asked. "I mean, you keep saying we'll get lost and never be found if we wander off. Why?"

Harry contemplated the question. "Well, think of it like Hogwarts. The staircases move and there are secret passages everywhere. Now, instead of just the staircases, imagine the hallways move around, and the classrooms aren't always where you left them, and sometimes the Great Hall decides to just vanish for a bit." Harry waved around at the Hallway. "That's basically what happens here. I mean, if you're nice, the Tardis often moves things closer to you so you don't have to spend so long searching for them. If you notice, most of the doors have some sort of label or mark on them. That way when they move, we can still figure out what's what without opening all the doors."

Indeed, there were small marks or words on all the doors. Some of them were odd and didn't make much sense, like a whirling spiral or the phrase "Excavation Hall". Others seemed more straightforward, though, like "Lavatory storage", "Laundry Hall" or "Old Books".

"So the locations change but the doors don't?" Blaise clarified.

Harry cocked his head. "Something like that. It's almost like just the entrance to a particular room is changed, not the actual location of the room itself. But we don't really know. We just generally keep to a pattern. There are often rooms that end up around each other more often than not, so we have a good idea of where everything is at any given time. And here's the training room."

There was a running man on the door, with "Training Room" written above the drawing.

Inside was a room far bigger than any other they had been in, and the five piled through in awe.

The room was host to what amounted to full stadium seats, for reasons Harry couldn't fathom, there were only four people on the Tardis, hardly a reason for their to be 5000+ chairs.

"How... this place is huge!"

"How does this even fit in the Tardis?"
"Is that a full sized track?"

"Is that the obstacle course?"

"Is that Professor Jack?"

The five's questions all vied for Harry's attention, but he focused on the one that seemed the most pressing.

Uncle Jack was, indeed, on the track, jogging around in a circle.

"Uncle Jack! Uncle Jack!" he waved his hands, shouting.

His voice was penetrating and Jack looked over at him, blinking. "Hey, Harry! What are you doing here? Why are all your friends here? Where did you all go?"

Harry raced down to the track, jumping the last few stairs of the entirely pointless stadium seating to grin over at his uncle. "Sorry about the leaving you behind thing. We thought you were in the Tardis, then we have these five to worry about and they were a bit more pressing than you were at the time." Harry thumbed over at his still bewildered friends.

Jack looked at them, grinning. "Hey you lot, come on down, we don't bite."

Harry took great joy in showing his friends around the oversized fitness room. Really, the place was huge for what they used it for. There would totally be better uses for the huge space, but the Tardis seemed to think that they needed all that space. For what, Harry was never quite certain.

Still, they left fairly quickly, Harry eager to show his friends more of his home. Really, he was surprised that they were still with him. Neville and Padma especially, having been near about tortured by the Brun just the previous day.

"So, where to next?" he asked, a bounce in his step.
"Um...library?" Padma offered up.

Harry's eyes lit up, then they died. "Argh, sorry, can't do that one." He really couldn't bring people from this century to the library. There was blatant evidence of their future there, just waiting for nosy brains to start poking at it. And he had more than a few nosy people in his friend group.

"Why?" Hermione asked, eyes begging him to let them see the library.

"Dad never got the pool fixed, so it's currently flooding the area with a decent amount of water. The books are protected, but it's not the safest area to be in at the moment," he lied flippantly. Really, he should probably not be friends with people when he could lie to them so easily, but he would rather that happen than any weird timeline quirks.

Hermione's face turned puzzled. "Pool? But I thought this was about the library?"

"Yeah, that's where the pool is. Don't ask me, I didn't choose the location. But it certainly is convenient when you need it to be. A nice good swim after a long read is always a pleasure." He grinned.

His friends just shook their heads. "Whatever Harry, don't tell us the real reason, but you could have come up with a better excuse. A pool in a library? Who would be dumb enough to come up with that combination for real?" Blaise asked, sighing.

"You might want to watch what you say, the Tardis doesn't take kindly to insults," Harry said, a note of warning in his voice. It was gone, and they felt like they might have imagined the chill tone if it hadn't been for Blaise's wide eyes as Harry spun around on his heel and marched off.

"That...that was scary," Susan remarked. shivering.

"Keep up! I don't want to have to spend a whole cycle looking for you if you wander off!" Harry called back to them, and they hurried to keep up.

"Where are we going?" Hermione asked.
"Well, I was thinking of the games room, but I've won all the games, so I figure we can hop by the entertainment area and you all can watch a movie or something," he said.

"You were 'MagicRulez!' in the arcade!" Blaise exclaimed, pointing a finger at Harry.

Harry raised an eyebrow. "You were in the game room?"

"Yeah, Professor Rose let us play around in there. It was awesome!" Susan said. "But your score was so high, none of us could beat it," she bemoaned.

"Well, that was kind of the point," he said. "I had to take out Uncle Jack and Rose's scores first. They weren't easy."

The group looked amongst each other. Harry really was too good at too many things, they all thought. Really.

It was, however, at that moment when Harry decided that losing consciousness was something he should do, and partway through a step, he collapsed to the floor, a puppet whose strings had been cut.

His friends stared, wide-eyed and disbelieving.

"Oh no," Padma muttered. "Oh no, this is not good."

"Well yeah, Harry just passed out," Blaise said. "That's kind of the definition of not good."

"No, you don't understand, we don't have any idea of how to get him to the Doctor, or even where Professor Jack is!" Padma said, voice climbing. "This whole place has some kind of weird magic on it, it redirects you down hallways you didn't mean to take and I don't know how Harry finds his way around, I really don't, but I can't do it."

Neville was fretting with the hem of his shirt. "What do we do? Harry just passed out and we're all just talking," he said, mustering up courage from somewhere.
Hermione nodded decisively. "Alright, let's get him a bit more comfortable while we figure out our next plan. It has to be simple though, we can't just decide to go wandering around the Tardis hoping to find someone who can help," she said.

They shifted Harry until he wasn't lying on his face anymore and then stood around, uncertain, wary. What would they do now? They had no idea how this place even worked, much less what they should be doing.

The five looked around at each other, then Hermione spoke up.

"Well, we need to find someone, standing around isn't going to help anyone, so splitting into groups is the best way, yeah? I don't think it's safe to wander around alone, but with two people, we can keep track of each other. And one person should stay here with Harry in case Professor Rose or Professor Jack or the Doctor come."

Padma nodded. "And we should leave some sort of mark. This place moves around too much and if we don't leave some sort of path back here, we might not find it again. Does anyone have something to make marks on the wall?" She looked around, and everyone shook their heads.

Blaise frowned. "Wait, you know that spell, Scribblifors? Well, Harry made a point of using it to turn a fork into a pen rather than a quill. He said it was about intent, the shape the object turned at the end. So long as it was a writing utensil like the spell intends, then our will is what shapes what kind of writing utensil. So if we have something smallish, we can make a pen or something."

Hermione's eyes lit up. "That's brilliant Blaise! Alright, what have we got in our pockets?"

The five dug into pockets, pulling out various bits of trash people tend to shove there when they're too busy to find a trashcan, several pieces of parchment torn off of larger sheets, a fork (Neville admitted that he had been in rather a hurry the other evening and hadn't remembered he'd put it in his pocket), and several small miscellaneous toys.

"So, the fork will definitely work, and this should be good too. Maybe we should make four, though, in case one of you gets separated." Hermione picked through the pile, pulling out a couple chess pieces and a bendy stick that might be a toy wand young children play with.

"We can all do the spell, yeah?" Blaise confirmed.
"But I've only ever made mine a quill," Susan said. "And a pen that will make marks on this wall? What kind of pen does that?"

"Ah, I know! Let me go first!" Hermione took out her wand, closed her eyes for a moment, then opened them, determination flashing.

A moment and a spell later, a simple black marker lay on the floor in front of her where the bendy child's wand had been.

"What's that?" Padma asked.

"It's called a permanent marker. It'll leave a mark on just about anything. There was a kid at my school once who used it on the board instead of the dry erase marker and the teacher was really upset." Hermione demonstrated by making a small 'x' on the wall next to her.

"Let me see." Blaise took the marker from her and studied it carefully, before taking one of the chess pieces. A second later, he had an identical copy of the marker in front of him, and his face split in a grin. "Well, I guess Harry's more right about things than the professors would like him to be," he said. "I made a pen and a marker with the spell Professor McGonagall said was only supposed to make quills."

After Susan and Padma studied the marker, they too transfigured markers out of the respective pieces.

"So, who's going with who?" Blaise asked. "And who's staying here with Harry?"

"I'll stay," Neville volunteered. "Harry helped me, so maybe I can help him this time." He looked down at the floor.

Padma gave him a soft smile. "That sounds excellent, Neville. Susan, you and me can go to the right, Blaise and Hermione, to the left. Mark every three meters or so with an arrow pointing back this way. Try not to separate. We'll be doing the same."

"What about the doors? I mean, I doubt we'll run into one of them just wandering the hallways,"
Susan asked.

"Hmm, well, I suppose we should knock on any doors we run across. That way we can check if anyone's inside," Hermione said. "I don't want to open them, though."


Hermione, Susan, and Blaise nodded, then the four stood up and headed off, marking the wall as they went.

~~~In Which This is a Scene Break~~~~

Harry blinked, looking around. Well, looking was a stretch. He didn't think he had a physical form to look around with, but it was as good an approximation as any.

"Hello? I'm fairly certain this is my body, but being inside it is rather weird. Anyone want to come explain what's going on?"

It wasn't darkness that spread around him, but more a pearly effervescent light. He wasn't sure what it was, exactly, but it was beautiful.

Then the area lit up, blindingly bright. *Our Harry, we apologize for the abruptness of our actions, but this could not wait any longer. When you drained your magic, there was a surge in power from the anomaly we discovered.*

Harry felt like blinking to clear nonexistent stars from his eyes. In front of him was a magnificent black thestral with a silver mark in the center of its forehead and a bright stone set between its eyes. His focus. "Oh, hello. It's nice to actually see you, though I'm not really seeing anything in the literal sense. And anomaly?"

*Yes. if you recall, your head hurt whenever you were around your Defense teacher, and we have been running a scan through your body since you mentioned it to us. We have discovered the source, but after the recent incident, this became much more pressing.*
"In what way?"

_The drain in your energy allowed this anomaly to start reaching further into your magic. If you had a central core, this might have been harder for it to accomplish, but that is not the case. And as it is, you cannot afford anything leaching off your magic. And we cannot do anything about it as we are not certain as to what it is. We are hoping you will be able to lend your knowledge to the problem._

Harry nodded. "Alright, let's go see this anomaly, wherever it is."

There was a rush of colors and noise before it all swirled to a stop. Harry felt dizzy. _There is the anomaly, our Harry._ The Thestral indicated a direction with their snout.

"That was mildly disconcerting." He shook his head. "Alright, let's take a look at this anomaly."

He spun to look at what his focus was indicating, and he couldn't stop a gasp escaping.

A pulsing, black sphere, webbed through in red light, pulsed almost like a heartbeat. It had tendril-like protrusions and they were reaching through the milky light, grabbing whatever it could and bringing it back to the hub sphere.

It wasn't taking much, not in the least, but that could change, and change quickly. Harry watched it pulse and grow just the slightest bit bigger. A fraction of a centimeter bigger, but bigger.

"Okay, that...that is disturbing. How have I never noticed this before?"

_Before you drained your magic so thoroughly, this was smaller, and only if your magic ran into it directly did it absorb it. Still worrisome but not as bad as this. But we cannot allow this to continue. There must be a way to block this thing off._

Harry contemplated the issue. Really, this was not what he was expecting when his focus said they had found the source of his problem. "Alright, what do we know about this thing? It makes my head hurt whenever I'm near Quirrell, or if he looks at me directly and especially with eye contact. It can use magic to feed its growth. It's black and red and not looking nice at all. Downright unfriendly, really. So, what could this be..."
He stared at the sphere. In all of this space, it was relatively tiny, but he couldn't allow it to get any bigger. It was not of him, it was not his. That alone meant it didn't belong in his body, in his mind.

*Our Harry, it feels like magic. Could this be someone else's magic, placed into you?* his focus asked.

"That is a distinct possibility, and a very likely one. Quick question, where is this place exactly? I mean, what is it? Is this a mental plane? A magical plane?"

*This is your magical core.*

Harry hummed. "Alright, I know magical cores are supposed to be locationless, in a sense, but is there any way to...wrap...the anomaly in magic, then move it to the mental plane? I feel like it would be much easier to handle when it isn't swimming a pool of pure magic, and cutting it off from my magic is the priority, right?"

There was a moment of silence. *That...that would be a complex task. Your magical core and your mental plane are very distinct places for a very specific reason. We are not certain what moving that anomaly from one to the other would do to you. If that is indeed pure magic, then it may not be able to be moved from your magical core to your mental world.*

"Well, we won't know until we try, so we might as well give it a shot," Harry said, planning out a way to wrap the tentacle sphere in enough magic to move it to the mental plane. "Besides, what's the worse that could happen? It's only going to keep feeding off my magic if I don't move it."

*Our Harry, please be careful. If it doesn't work, it could latch more firmly onto your core and make it much more difficult to remove later. If it does work, then it could exert an influence over your mind,* his focus cautioned.

Harry waved a hand. "I'll handle it. The priority is getting it to stop taking my magic, yeah, so let's focus on that for now."

Harry concentrated, moving his consciousness closer to the sphere, seeing it pulsing ever more slightly now that he had a better vantage point.

The sphere wasn't that big, in the grand scheme of things. Maybe the size of a small marble, Harry guessed, but that was already bigger than he wanted it to be.
He twisted his hands through the magic floating around him, spinning bits of it into thread. Really, this was a highly unorthodox way of using magic but he was in his magical core. He doubted he actually needed spells here.

Thread after thread, he collected magic until he could form ropes, and then spin those ropes into a net. An efficient way of trapping something, seeing as nearly every civilization developed something of the sort.

When he had finished, he carefully wrapped the sphere in it, making sure to get every tentacle and checking that none slipped through, before he closed the other side and sealed it.

"So, that's done. Now what? I mean, I can get to my mental plane just fine, but bringing something along with me? I don’t think I’ve ever done something like that."

He swore he could hear his focus sigh. *Follow us, Our Harry, and do not let your net go. Your ability to bring that with you will depend on how much of the anomaly is pure magic. If it is as we suspect, then it will not come with you, as pure magic is not able to be represented in the mental plane of a magical.*

"Then what will come with me, if it's pure magic?" Harry asked. "I mean, it would be rather pointless to do this if it were just pure magic and there would be no positive outcome."

*You may see a representative object, or a clue as to whom placed this magic within you, if it is pure magic. Some object that will relate to the other magical.*

Harry brightened. "That would be awesome. So, what are we waiting for?"

*This will be uncomfortable, Our Harry. Hold onto your net tightly.*

Harry felt like his whole body was squeezed, pushed down into a point infinitesimally small, and he would have had a hard time breathing, if he had needed to breathe. As it was, he felt like all of who he was was mixing, getting jumbled and shuffled around; he wasn't sure if he remembered his name, was he a he?
A she?

A xe?

Did he/she/xe like apples?

What were eyes?

What was language?

What was up?

How many fingers did this body possess?

Then everything snapped back into focus, and he fell forward onto his hands. If he had a physical body, he was sure he would be panting for air. As it was, he was waiting for his entire perception of himself to stabilize.

"That...that was weird," he finally said. "That was really weird. I did not like that. It felt like everything that I was made no sense. I hope I never have to do that again." He shook his head, feeling the last bits of himself settle.

*Our Harry, the mental plane and your magical core are separate areas of your being. There should never be any travel of your consciousness between the two. One should never be able to sink into their magical core in the first place, immersing their entire consciousness into it. The only reason you were able to was because we pulled you into it. Without our interference, you would be nearly unable to access it yourself in the same way. His focus sounded amused. And it is not necessary. It seems we may have been wrong about what the anomaly was.*

Harry whipped around to stare at the glowing net, which wasn't much of a net anymore. And the sphere within wasn't a sphere anymore.

In fact, if Harry was right, this was...this was a person.

"But...what? How? How did this? I don't....what?" Harry spluttered, staring at the unconscious man.

For indeed, this human was a male. Lacking any distinct female characteristics, easy enough to tell as they wore no clothing, the anomaly was unconscious, sprawled out on the mirror black surface of Harry's mental plane.

_We are uncertain. We did not expect for a human to appear when you brought the sphere with you. We are not sure what it could be._

Harry sighed. "That's what I was worried about. How could another human appear in my mind? I mean, I know why you're here, you're my focus. And I'm here cause this is my body, but why would they be here?" Harry gestured at the naked man. "I certainly didn't invite anyone else in here. And they don't look like anyone I recognize. They're old. Fifty human years or so. And nearly starved. You can see all their ribs. They're practically emaciated."

_We would recommend some way of containing this human here, before they wake up. They're obviously weakened and would be unlikely to be a threat, but we don't want to chance them being able to take over your mind. You have few enough defenses here as it is, even if your considerable mental capabilities have made up for it._

Harry blinked, looking up.

His mind looked much like he imagined it did. A version of the Tardis, where things were stored and categorized according to how he recalled them. He was, it seemed, in his meditation room, where he went to collect himself whenever he had need to control his emotions. The mirror black floor was indication enough, but he could see the room he stored his memories of his friends right outside the door.

"Alright, so let's lock them up somewhere before they're conscious enough to protest, and then set about putting up some sort of defense."

Harry picked up the stranger, knowing that they probably weighed little enough as it was, and walked out the door and towards a part of his mental map that was fairly easy to expand upon. He didn't actually have anything set up in his mind to act as a jail, but he could create it easily enough.
His focus followed, unwilling to be left out of the situation developing. They needed to know what exactly this anomaly-turned-human was doing, and they also needed them unable to influence Harry or his magic.

The hallway came to an end, and Harry frowned. "Alright, this is as good a place as any. Let's get started."

And he twisted his mind to the task.

A prison wouldn't be too hard to craft. He had seen the inside of numerous prisons, enough so that he had a decent idea of what a good one should look like.

The wall bulged, stretched, then buckled under Harry's stare. A room formed beyond it, taking shape as Harry willed it too. There were windows looking out onto a garden that was definitely not out there, and the glass was reinforced, unbreakable. A couch, a chair, and a bed, in Harry's preferred colors of green and black, all morphed out of the floor and walls. A desk with several different writing implements popped up near the windows, alongside a fridge and a table.

Harry walked in, remembering to fashion a light as it was dim and hard to see, and laid the still unconscious man on the bed, covering them up with a blanket. He mentally created a robe and set it on the nearby chair. Sure, the man was a prisoner, but being naked wasn't really necessary.

The final thing was the door, and Harry made it diamond hard. So long as he had the refractions right, it was easy to see through and impossible to break out of. Not unless this prisoner could really overpower Harry mentally. He shut it and locked it, hiding the key where he hid most important things in his mind; inside a simple, unmarked, pale blue box beside his own bed. His mental apparition of Pashti guarded it viciously.

"Alright, that's done. Anything else? Or can I get back to my friends? I was showing them around the Tardis, after all." Harry grinned at his focus.

Then he felt a jolt shock his system.

And again.
He groaned. "I passed out, didn't I?" he asked.

His focus nodded. *It was most important that you deal with the anomaly. We couldn't be concerned about your physical body when your magical core was in danger. Besides, your friends were nearby, Our Harry. They were able to adequately watch over you.*

"Yes, but passing out in the middle of walking isn't exactly a sign of being healthy," he protested. "Now I'm gonna have to explain all of this and that's gonna be fun."

But he couldn't stay here. Not if those shocks meant what he thought they meant. A mental scan was never fun.

So he forced himself awake, and cracked open his eyes.

The first thing he noticed when he was finally back in the physical world, was how much....lighter his magic felt. It was such an odd sensation that it took him a moment to realize what it was.

The second thing he noticed was his head hurting something fierce.

The third thing was his dad, Susan, Neville, and Padma all staring at him, faces concerned and worried.

"Hey, sorry...about that. I...I didn't actually mean to pass out, you know." He laughed, then winced as the motion made his headache stab at him fiercely.

"What, exactly, happened?" the Doctor asked, words slow and measured. "Because your friends say you passed out in the middle of walking and talking. Which I have never seen you do. Ever."

Harry closed his eyes, sighed. "You remember when I said that there was something weird going on with Quirrell? How my head always hurt when he was close by or whenever he looked at me? Well, my focus decided to do a scan on my magic and found the issue. Except it was....weirder than we thought it was." He opened his eyes, frowned. "Wait, where are Hermione and Blaise?"
Padma, Susan, and Neville fidgeted. The Doctor frowned. "Those do not look like the faces of children who are going to tell me good news," he said. "Please don't tell me you all split up."

More fidgeting, then Neville piped up, "They have markers that can write on the wall."

Harry groaned. "Why did you all split up? That's the worst thing you could have done!"

Padma whirled on him. "You passed out! In the middle of the hallway, with no warning or explanation! And you just got up from a magical coma due to exhaustion. We had no idea what was wrong with you, but passing out in the middle of the hallways is not a sign that someone is healthy!" she informed him, eyes narrowed.

Harry raised his hands in meek defense. "Okay, sorry. But, why split up? Why not go as a group or something?"

"We figured it was faster," Susan said. "One of us could stay with you in case the Doctor or Professor Rose or Professor Jack came alone, and the other four could make two groups and go one way each. We transfigured permanent markers to make arrows on the wall,"

"I saw those. Clever," the Doctor interrupted.

"And we decided to knock on doors instead of opening them, since you talked about the door that likes to bite people and we really didn't need anything like that to happen, then we headed off. We were worried about you, Harry," Susan finished.

"Alright, but that still doesn't explain where Blaise and Hermione are right now. They could be anywhere. The Tardis is huge."

"You still haven't finished explaining what went on in your head, Harry," the Doctor reminded him.

"Well, we can talk about a problem I have, for now, dealt with, or we could go find Hermione and Blaise, who could be wandering into the Tardis's core, for all we know."
The Doctor blanched. "Ah, yes, let's go get your friends first. And then we're going to have a long talk about rules. And show you all how to use the inter-Tardis communication system." The Doctor levelled a look at the three pre-teens. "Now, let's get going. Harry, you okay to move?"

Harry pushed himself up, feeling his head swimming. The ache had subsided, but it was still there. He should be good for a while, though. "Yeah, I'll hold."

"Let's get going then. You were in the general storage wing when you decided to collapse, and Padma and Susan found me in the library. Blaise and Hermione headed the other way, but until we know where they branched, we can't be sure of where they are."

~~~In Which This is a Scene Change~~~~

Hermione and Blaise set out carefully, marking the wall every few steps and knocking on doors.

Their first problem came when they found a split in the hallway. "So, which way do we go?" Hermione asked, peering around. There was no indication of what way led where, and Blaise would swear that the hallway even wavered in the distance, as if it was still deciding if it wanted to be real.

"Um, flip a coin?" he said.

Hermione gave him a long stare. "We don't have a coin," she said.

"Spin around in a circle and whichever way we stop, we go that way?" Blaise suggested.

"You're hopeless."

"I don't hear you giving any good suggestions," Blaise retorted.

"Well, we might as well go left. That's always a good way to go in mazes," Hermione said.

"Better than just standing around. Alright, let's put an arrow on the wall and head off. I'm hoping the hallway decides to be real when we get to it," he added, voice low.
Hermione rolled her eyes but marked the wall as they took the left fork, heading into deeper into the Tardis.

Around them, the lights seemed to change hues, turning both dimmer and startlingly white. Everything seemed to grow more...wavy, indistinct.

"Are the walls still solid?" Blaise wondered, eyes wide.

"I can still write on them, so something's there," Hermione said, clearly unnerved. "Where are we, Blaise?"

"We're in the Tardis, whatever that means," he said. "And I really don't know what that means anymore. I mean, we've been walking for nearly half an hour, we should have gone over a kilometer, but there doesn't seem to be an end..."

Hermione shivered. "We should turn back. I didn't realize we'd been walking so long. It would be better to see if they've found someone to help Harry than to keep walking so far away."

Blaise agreed fervently. He really wanted to get out of this area of the Tardis. "I don't even think this place can exist," he said. "I don't know of any magic that could work like this."

"I don't know enough about expansion charms and runes to know, but this...this doesn't feel magical, and I think the atmosphere is really weird. I haven't seen anything magical, not really magical, or obviously magical, but it's not normal either." Hermione looked pensive. "The games from earlier, I've seen similar ones when I had a friend take me to an arcade before. Those were way simpler, but they had some of the same controls and stories. And aside from the expansion, what has been magical here?"

"Not a clue, but right now I would appreciate not being stuck in a hallway and lost forever."

"We made arrow marks," Hermione pointed out.

"And where did those go?" Blaise remarked, looking back down the hall and seeing none of the arrows they had so carefully placed.
Hermione whirled around. "They're gone!" she exclaimed. "They're gone! How could they be gone?"

"I'm learning that the Tardis is just as weird as Harry, if not more so. I wouldn't be surprised if it just decided to vanish for the fun of it." Blaise grimaced. "So where do we go now?"

"I...I'm not sure. I mean, those marks were the only way we would have found our way back, otherwise I can't tell the difference between anything." Hermione was panicking. "We need to find the marks. We came from that way, so let's head back. Maybe the marks start up again a bit further down."

"There's not much else to do. Standing here and waiting doesn't appeal to me," Blaise turned around, heading back down the hallway, at least he hoped they were heading back. It was a very real possibility that they weren't. But he needed to do something.

Something not just standing around.

The walls wavered around them, seemingly solid and smoke. It made Blaise shiver.

What was Harry's home made of? What kind of magic actually made this possible? He wasn't sure he wanted to know, except knowing was probably the only way to find their way back.

Hermione's hand clenched onto the back of his robes. "Blaise, this place feels really strange. We've never been here before, and my skin feels like it's sparking."

"Sparking?"

"It feels tingly, like right before lighting strikes," Hermione clarified. "And I don't like it. I'm not sure if it's safe or not, but I don't want to stand around and find out. But I don't know how to get back." Hearing Hermione admit this was chilling. He relied on her to make sure they got out of Harry's insane plans alive, and if she was losing that calm, he was sure he wasn't far behind.

"We'll figure it out, Hermione," Blaise tried to reassure her.
Hermione made a broken, panicked sound as the hallway became darker and more indistinct with each step. "Blaise, we're going the wrong way," she choked out, her voice clogging up. "We can't have come this way, there's nothing this way! Literally nothing! Blaise, it's completely black!"

She made a wild gesture around them, encompassing the vanishing hallway and the encroaching darkness.

Blaise was sure that she was more right than wrong, but giving into her panic wouldn't get them anywhere, and Blaise needed her brain to be working. Hermione was smart. If she could just calm down, she could think of something, anything, to get them out of here. Or a better attempt than the one they were currently on. "Hermione, breathe. In and out, slowly. Panicking won't get us anywhere at all. In fact, it's just going to get us more lost and turned around. And that's not going to help at all. And I need you to use that brain of yours that Harry's always impressed by and put it to the current problem."

Hermione's wild brown eyes found the cool, steady grey pools of Blaise's, and she slowly shuddered out a breath, took another shaky one, and let it out. Blaise was pleased to hear it significantly less unstable.

"Alright, alright, you're right. If we panic, we'll just end up wandering around here forever. And that won't help Harry at all. So we need to get back. How do we do that?" Hermione steadied herself, looked around.

The hallway was no longer a part of their landscape. In fact, it seemed as if nothing was actually a part of their surroundings. If they weren't certain that they were standing on solid ground, Blaise would have sworn he was floating in the middle of blackness.

"This is disconcerting," he remarked, trying to keep the cool he was desperately projecting to Hermione.

"That's one word for it," Hermione agreed absently. "There's something in the distance over there, some sort of gold light."

"Well, that's better than just about anything else here simply by virtue of being light," Blaise said. "Let's go."

"Wait!" His foot paused just before it touched the ground. "We don't know if the ground is solid that
"Why wouldn't it be?"

"Maybe because everything else vanished, Blaise?" Hermione asked, her voice heavy with sarcasm. "What if there's nothing over there and you just...fall? Into nothing?"

Blaise gulped. "I'm liking Harry's home less and less every moment I spend in it," he said, eyes wide. "And I'm thinking Professor Rose was more right than wrong about people getting eternally lost in the Tardis. Seriously, this place is just weird."

"I'm sure you can complain to Harry when we get back, but we have to get back to complain. So first things first, make sure you can step onto something over there."

He knelt down, setting his palm against the floor by his feet (it didn't look like a floor, but he was willing to just go with it by this point). Then he slid it forward, feeling solid floor under his palm as far as he stretched. He stood up, took a step, and repeated the process, Hermione creeping along behind him.

But Hermione proved once again correct when he hit a patch of clear space. No floor. He gulped. "I found the edge, I think," he said quietly.

"Take out some of that trash you shoved in your pocket earlier and toss it forward. Maybe it'll hit more floor," Hermione suggested.

"That...that's clever," he said, blinking. Then he took out one of the crumpled up pieces of parchment he had shoved in his pocket yesterday, tearing it up and rolling it into little balls.

He tossed a few forward, heart sinking when he saw most of them just fall. But one landed on something not sixty centimeters in front of them.

"There's more floor over there," he said. "The paper landed on it."

Hermione breathed. "okay, that's good. Is it big enough to step on?"
"I can't tell, but it's close enough that I can reach it from here without taking all my weight off my back foot. Grab the back of my shirt." Hermione bunched her fist in his shirt as Blaise slowly reached out his foot, feeling for the floor the paper ball said was there.

He found it and grinned. It was wide enough to stand on, so he stepped over, feeling around and checking the space.

"Is it okay?"

"It's like a continuation of that floor. Maybe that hole was just a weird part of the floor or something," he said. "Come over."

And so it went. There were several more empty spaces they stepped over, until they reached the golden light, and looked at each other.

"Together?" Hermione asked, holding her hand out.

Blaise grinned. "Couldn't imagine holding hands with a first-generation a month ago, but then I also couldn't imagine someone like Harry. So yeah, together." He grabbed her hand tightly in his, then they stepped through the light.

And stumbled into a large, light-filled chamber. With walls. And a ceiling. And a visible floor.

Hermione threw her arms around Blaise. "There's walls Blaise! Walls!"

He grinned hugging her. "We did it!" He still had no idea where they were, but at least they were somewhere with walls.

They collapsed into a tangled pile on the floor, leaning against each other and letting the adrenaline leave their bodies. Their hearts were pounding and they could hear their blood rushing in their ears, feel their heartbeat in their fingertips, against their ribs.
The golden light in the center of the room sang to them gently, and Hermione and Blaise let their energy fade, and their eyes drooped in exhaustion. The high tension alertness of the previous moment had passed, and they were now bone tired.

"Juss f'r a m'm'nt," Blaise slurred, already half asleep.

"Yea..." Hermione echoed.

They drifted, the song of the Tardis lulling them to sleep.

Until a door somewhere slammed open and their eyes went with it.

And they found themselves a good few meters closer to the golden energy.

"Hermione! Blaise! Stop!"

"Harry?" Blaise mumbled. "Was that...did I just hear Harry?"

"Yeah...I did too...but...then..." Hermione's focus returned abruptly. She spun around, taking Blaise with her. "There! There he is!"

Blaise's head did not like the spinning, and he clutched his temples. "No circles. No spinning right when I've woken up from some Merlin awful sleep spell," he said, groaning.

"Oh Thank the stars, you two are alright! We traced you back through the Void corridor and into here and I don't know how you managed to get through that corridor, I'm impressed you made it through, one wrong step and you really wouldn't like where you end up. Which begs the question, how did you make it through? And then how did you find this place? I mean, that's not something that just happens. How did you even make it this far?"

"Harry, Harry, one question at a time, please. I've had a long afternoon. We've both had a long afternoon," Blaise said, gesturing at Hermione. "And I would like to be somewhere without lullaby music luring me closer to the golden sphere of something I really don't want to know about."
"I want to know about it," Hermione interjected. Then she caught Blaise's look. "We can learn somewhere else, though," she quickly said.

Harry looked between the two of them, then sighed. "I guess somewhere else is better in general. Let's go. Susan, Padma, Neville, and my dad are all waiting in the hall, and we need to go let Rose and Uncle Jack know we've found you so they can stop looking around."

Hermione nodded, and she tugged Blaise out of the room by the hand, as they hadn't let go yet.

"Hermione! Blaise! You're okay! It took ages to find you, and Harry had to do some weird thing to figure out where you were, and then he took off running, and if we didn't have the Doctor we would have been lost too, but I'm so glad we found you!" Susan babbled, grabbing them both in a hug.

"How long were we gone?" Blaise asked. "You make it seem like it's been ages."

The Doctor looked over at them. "You were missing for nearly three hours. And missing for three hours in the Tardis is not something you want to be," he said, face serious. "It's time we have a discussion about following rules. Because they are in place here for a reason, a very important reason."

Hermione, Blaise, Neville, Padma, and Susan nodded. Harry hid a grin.

"Don't think you're getting out of this, Harry. You fainted in the middle of the hallway, which is why they went wandering off in the first place. You'll be right there with them."

Harry shrugged. "I wasn't planning on skipping it. I mean, I can clarify rules and there's a few things I can add to the discussion about the Tardis rules."

The five all looked between themselves, then to the Doctor, who sighed. "Alright, let's get to the kitchen, get you lot fed, and we'll have that talk after you are hungry little monsters."

"Oi, we're not monsters!" Harry retorted.
"You especially, my son. Those five at least have the grace to look guilty when they break a rule. I'm lucky if you decide to acknowledge a mistake within the first day or two, unless it's something extremely obvious. How do you think the roller coaster ended up so badly planned?"

Harry bristled, but stayed silent, trying not to feed into the truth that was his dad's words. So he had some issues of his own to work out.

There was minimal talking as the septet made their way to the kitchen, and the same atmosphere persisted as they made a simple lunch of fruit and sandwiches and juice (though not any juice they were familiar with, even Hermione).

"Alright, so, now that you're fed, it's time to talk about the Tardis. What have you all discovered about the Tardis in your adventures, however ill-advised they were?"

The food was half eaten or finished, set around the table on plates or napkins, as the Doctor spoke.

"Well, everything changes. Like, things don't always stay the same even if you were just there," Blaise said.

"And things don't always go where they look like they go," Susan put in.

"And Harry knows his way around," Neville added quietly.

The Doctor smiled at him. "Yes, good point, Neville. We generally know our way around, and things don't change in the central corridors. Padma and Susan were able to lead me back to Harry without much difficulty, but you two," he looked at Blaise and Hermione. "You two wandered way off the main area. I'm still not sure how you even got out of that part of the Tardis, you shouldn't have been able to."

Hermione swallowed. "It was really weird. The walls disappeared, then the floor vanished. We could still see, there was still light, but I couldn't tell where it was coming from. I made Blaise check the floor before we took steps since we couldn't see where the floor was."

Harry whistled. "I'm suitably impressed. That was smart."
She flushed with pleasure at the praise. "Thanks."

"Alright, but you still haven't quite gotten the point I was going for." The Doctor looked around at them. "The Tardis is dangerous. And the rules are there for a reason. When you left to go look for an adult, why did you not think to put a time limit on your search?"

They looked at each other, guilty expressions on their face. "Um, whoops," Padma said.

"Also, Padma, Neville, I'm sure you two have learned the value of listening to the rules after your adventure yesterday." The two nodded rapidly. "I'm aware that you all didn't exactly mean to end up in the middle of everything, but the fact remains that you did. And that could have been worse than what it was. You two could have died."

Neville gulped, knowing how close he had actually come. Padma shuddered. "I'm sorry," she said softly. "We really didn't mean to leave the Tardis. It's just...we couldn't find anyone. And then we were back where we came in, and I just thought it would be quicker to find you or Harry." She looked down at her knees.

"We didn't notice the arch," Neville added softly. "We didn't mean to end up outside the garden."

The Doctor sighed, resisting the urge to knead his temples. He needed a show of strength right now, not one of weakness and despair. "I understand. But did you not think when you saw all the military trucks? Think that maybe this was not a place for you to be, that maybe waiting in the console room was a better option? We would have come back eventually, or Rose would have found you when she realized you were gone, if you had stayed there."

Padma didn't look up. Her mind was recalling the terror of slipping through the barrier that even the Doctor couldn't get through, the panic and fear when she realized that Harry was in real trouble, and the utter, mind-numbing horror of being stuck in that illusion of nothing, so much nothing she felt like she was becoming nothing.

Neville gripped the chair with both hands. "I'm sorry," he said. "I...I thought it was better if I went with Padma when we left. I didn't realize how dangerous it was."

Hermione looked startled at her two friends. It must have been worse than they had implied, if this was their reaction to being scolded. "It's understandable, though! You brought Harry with you, and he's our age! If it was so dangerous, why not leave Harry behind?" she pointed out.
Harry sighed, closing his eyes. "Guys, I know how weird, or arrogant, this is going to sound, but really, I've been doing stuff like this since I can remember. And I can remember really far back. I know when I can handle something, for the most part, and when I can't."

"But...you're eleven! What kind of trouble could you really get into?" Hermione burst out.

"Quite a lot, living here," Harry said, gesturing around. "Speaking of which, you all should know how to use the inter-Tardis communications system, or ITCS."

"ITCS?" Blaise parroted, feeling more than a bit lost.

Hermione looked puzzled. "But, communication technology doesn't work in Hogwarts," she said. "I had a pager my mom gave me for Christmas to keep in contact with her, but it never turned on."

"You think technology doesn't work here? What do you think half of this stuff is, Hermione?" he asked. "I mean, it's not all magic, you know."

"Then...how?"

Harry grinned. "Never thought you'd ask!" He wiggling his fingers. "I finished working on them before we started this whole adventure, so, here you are!" He reached into his pocket and pulled out five palm-sized circular objects and set them on the table. "This is the basic framework of the ITCS."

The devices were five different colors; blue, yellow, red, orange, and purple. Harry pulled his green one out to show. Hermione gasped. "That's what you were talking on before!" she accused.

"I was. These are special, I only programmed me, my dad, Rose, Jack, and the other colors into them, so you can only reach those devices. But they will work under any ward, inside any special spell or building, and under heavy enchantments." Harry grinned. "So choose a color and I'll show you how they work. That way if you ever get lost again, you just have to call someone and we'll come find you."

There was some hesitance, before Padma grabbed the purple one, quick as a snake, and Blaise snatched the yellow one up. Neville pondered, then took the red, leaving Susan and Hermione to
choose between the blue and the orange.

"Orange," Susan said, and Hermione took the blue one.

Silence fell, then they all looked at Harry. "So, how do these work?" Blaise asked, holding his up.

Harry pressed a button on the side of his green device, and it popped open. “This is the screen. You can touch it to interact with the features, or you can use the buttons down here.” He tilted the little device towards them so they could see the screen.

It was a rather odd little machine. They had never seen anything like it, and they all looked down at theirs.

"So, like this." Blaise popped it open, then blinked at the screen that flared to life. "Wow, that's really neat. Are you sure it isn't magic?"

"Pretty certain. I did make them, after all. I would be aware if I had used magic."

Hermione stared at hers, eyes wide. "You made this?" she asked, disbelief in her voice. "This is really advanced. How could you have made this?"

Harry waved a hand. "It's just a simple com set. Really, it's not as complicated as you seem to be making it," he ignored the stunned look on Hermione's face. "Now, I want you to press the green button on the keyboard. Something should pop up on the screen."

"A...list?" Padma said. "It's got...your name, the Doctor, Rose, Jack, and four colors."

"Yep! It's the list of who you can call with that com. If you press on the color, you can change the name to whomever has that com," Harry said, and Padma immediately did so, changing the red entry into Neville. When it worked, she grinned.

"So how do you call someone?" she asked.
"Press the name of the person you want to call, and when the screen comes up, you press the green button again."

Padma did so, and Neville near jumped out of his seat when his com device started ringing.

"How do I...?" He fumbled with the com.

Open it," Harry said, and Neville did, shocked when it stopped ringing and Padma's face, low angle, showed up on the screen.

"Um...why is Padma's face on the screen?" Neville asked, confused.

Padma leaned over to look at Neville's com. "Wow, I am there! That's so cool!" She tilted her head. "Though...that's not all of me. It's half my body and the fridge behind me."

"Well, you've moved out of the com's visual range, face-wise. If you move your com back to your face, you'll see it show up on Neville's, and if you look at your screen, you should see Neville."

Padma slingshot back to her com, eyes wide, and saw that Harry had been telling the truth. Then she looked over at Neville's screen again, and saw herself looking off to the right. "This is so weird."

Harry watched his friends scramble to figure out all the new features. He grinned over at his dad, flashed a thumbs-up, and sat back.

His dad looked just a tad bit put out. "Harry, we're going to have to continue this. You know you can't turn the Tardis into a meeting place for your friends now. I am not going to be responsible for five preteens wandering around here, even if they have coms now. They've wandered into the void corridor, almost into the central time chamber, ended up in the middle of an encounter. This is not something that can continue."

"But dad..."

"No. I will not be responsible to parents for their children getting torn into tiny time-incompatible pieces, as that will be what happens if they stay around long enough. We don't have enough time to
show them how to navigate the Tardis, and there are too many of them to do even the basics with any level of thoroughness. I'm not saying once in awhile you can come here, but not on any kind of regular basis."

Harry sighed. "Alright. Fine. We'll stick to the common rooms and the library. At least Ms. Pince likes me."

"I'm shocked the librarian likes you. Look, this is my shocked face."

Harry tossed a cookie at his dad.

~~~This is a Scene Break~~~

"Those six are still missing," McGonagall said, standing in the Headmaster's office during the dinner hour on Sunday. "No one has seen them, and their beds are still undisturbed."

Dumbledore rubbed his temples. "Alright, let me see what I can do. Hogwarts should be cooperative." He stood up, rummaging around on a shelf until he found a sphere, pulsing with a gentle blue light. "Let me see if Hogwarts is willing to help us."

McGonagall watched with some trepidation. She had heard about this feature of the Headmaster's position, the ability to connect magically to Hogwarts. There was a myth that the amount of magic performed when creating the castle, and the constant stream of new magic coming from children, had given Hogwarts a kind of sentience that the Headmaster could tap into when it was necessary.

Dumbledore placed both hands on the sphere, closing his eyes and sinking into the magic that emanated from the sphere.

_Hogwarts? I am searching for several missing students._ The headmaster let the words linger for a moment, hoping the castle was listening. He had always known the castle was more sentient than it appeared to be, but this was a true test of that skill.

_Headmaster Of Hogwarts School, you say students are missing?_ The answer was less overwhelming than he had imagined it to be. Rather, it was a kind of gentle, soft voice, no distinct gender but not as powerful as a castle the age of Hogwarts implied.
Yes. Six students, Hermione Granger, Neville Longbottom, Blaise Zabini, Susan Bones, Padma Patil, and Harry. He thought each name with the image of the student in his mind, their young faces bright with joy and excitement.

There was long pause, then the castle seemed to chuckle. Ah, yes, your little mage and the collection of Enchantresses and Warlocks. You have a number of extremely powerful students, Headmaster of Hogwarts School.

Dumbledore couldn't feign the shock if he tried. Mage? But...that's not the point right now. They are missing. Can you help me find them? We are worried about their safety.

Your students are safe, Headmaster of Hogwarts School, the young mage would not allow anything to happen to them. I am sure they will return to your sights soon enough. There was a level of humor there the headmaster hadn't expected.

So you are saying they are no longer in Hogwarts? he tried to clarify.

I have conveyed no such thing. They are safe, if beyond my ability to sense. Your students will come back soon, Headmaster of Hogwarts School. If you have no further questions for me, I shall ask you to leave.

With that, Dumbledore was politely booted out of the conversation, returning to his body within his office, rubbing furiously at his temples in an effort to stave off the headache he could feel swamping him.

"Did you find out where they were?" McGonagall asked him, concerned.

"They're safe, which is about all I know. I'm sure they're somewhere in the castle, but Hogwarts was less than helpful in telling me where. But Severus was right, it appears that Harry has something to do with it. Though how, I couldn't even fathom a guess."

McGonagall worried her fingers. "Could it have anything to do with that blue box they arrived in? I mean, it must be pretty powerful magic to make it through Hogwarts wards unhindered."
Dumbledore steepled his fingers, blue eyes serious as he peered over his half-moon glasses. "That is most definitely a possibility, but I find it strange that Hogwarts would be unable to sense them if they were in that box. Space expansion charms shouldn't have such an effect on a Searching Ward as complex as the one the castle uses."

McGonagall sighed. "I guess we'll have to see when they show up. The ghosts are on alert, and the portraits have been told to keep an eye out for them. The last time anyone saw them, they were dashing up through the staff quarters hallway."

"Alright. Thank you, Minerva. I'll keep you updated on anything I can do from here. Please let the other heads of house know the situation." He paused a moment. "Maybe leave out that Harry is involved," he added. "I do not want to listen to Severus gloating over being right about him."

"I was planning on it already," she said. "I'll let you know if we find anything."

Dumbledore waited for her to leave before heading to his bookshelf and sliding a slim book out from between several thicker tomes.

'Magicals and Magical Aptitude: A Guide to Discovering your Potential'

It was an outdated book, as magical aptitude had fallen out of favor when it was revealed that pureblood families rarely produced anything higher than 'Above Average Magical' the past half century, but its contents were still relevant, regardless of the purebloods disdain.

He flipped open the index.

Magicals
-Squib
-Squib+
-Low-level magical
-Magical
-Above Average Magical
-Sorcerer/Sorceress
-Warlock/Enchantress

-Mage

Hogwarts had distinctly said warlocks, enchantresses, and a mage. A mage, at his school. There had been no mages discovered in well over a century, and even then that child had died during Magical Maturity due to ill-prepared quarters and a lack of understanding from their parents.

Warlocks and Enchantresses were more common in comparison, but still not common enough to be normal. In fact, Dumbledore had qualified as a warlock when he had tested his magical maturity, and he had briefly wondered if Tom had ever checked his own aptitude. He was probably between a Warlock and a Mage, also a rare combination, Dumbledore mused.

For there to be a mage at Hogwarts was something Dumbledore was not prepared for. And for that mage to be Harry Potter, a child not anything like he expected, was almost twice as bad. Harry was destined to be powerful, he had been able to tell that much when the babe had been in his custody for several short days. But the Harry Potter he had thought would arrive and the Harry Potter who did arrive were as opposite as day and night.

And the child was so powerful. Merlin, Harry was powerful. And he didn't seem to be aware of how much power he commanded. A very alarming prospect, considering just how dangerous he could be.

Then he went and surrounded himself with young wizards and witches who were also blossoming into powerful young magicals.

Dumbledore didn't know whether to groan or laugh. Either was appropriate at the moment.

He could only hope the sextet showed up soon. He could ill afford to deal with six missing students any longer.

~~~~In Which This is a line Break~~~~

Harry and his friends were back in Hogwarts proper Monday morning, having had their clothes washed while they were asleep and borrowing pajamas from the Doctor's extensive wardrobe.

The moment the walked into the Great Hall, every single person turned to stare at them.
Silence stretched for several long moments. Neville fidgeted behind Harry, Susan put a calming hand on his shoulder, and all six of them looked confused.

"Mr. Harry, I would like a word in private with you and your friends."

Harry's attention was directed to the Headmaster, who had spoken over the hush. "Why?"

The whole school turned into a hub of noise at the simple question.

"QUIET!" The headmaster waited until the chatter died down, then looked at the young students again. "You have been gone for an entire weekend without telling your heads of house or anyone where you went. We were unable to locate you and had no idea if you were safe or not. Now, this discussion should be moved to a more private location. My office, if you please. Minerva, stay here. There needs to be some order in the Great Hall."

Dumbledore swept towards them and beckoned them to follow as he passed.

Harry looked among his friends. "Um, whoops?" he said.

"It's as much our fault as yours. We didn't really think before following you," Susan murmured.

"We're going to be in so much trouble," Hermione fretted as they followed after the headmaster.

"We should have gone for dinner in the Great Hall yesterday," Blaise said, sighing. "Then this could have been done and over with last night."

"We've been gone for nearly two days. I'm not surprised the professors were worried. There's not many places for a student to vanish off to." Padma said.

"Are we going to get detention?" Neville asked, voice soft and worried.
Harry waved a hand. "We'll be fine. I'll explain it, just let me do the talking."

There were nods all around. None of them knew what exactly to say. The truth wasn't really an option, not in this case.

They arrived at the gargoyle, who merely grumped at Harry as he passed, then they were in the Headmaster's office.

Dumbledore settled himself behind his desk, peering at the six students who had put the castle on high alert all weekend. "You six," he began. "Vanished from the castle grounds so thoroughly not even a Search Ward could find you. This is not just unusual, but unheard of. You were not seen leaving the grounds. In fact, the last time you were seen was in the staff quarters hallway." Harry looked no different from normal, but he was hardly an expert on the boy's moods. The other five were clearly nervous and uncertain. They hadn't realized what they had done. The headmaster resisted the urge to sigh.

"Ah, that would be my fault, headmaster. I didn't realize the Tardis was beyond your search ward, even if it was in Hogwarts." Harry was cheerful about the whole thing, which just made Dumbledore more frustrated with the child.

"The Tardis? Your blue box? I was not aware that it had wards on it to prevent something as complex as a Search Ward, Harry. Or that it was spacious enough for six children and three adults for a whole weekend."

Harry grinned. "It's my home, it's fairly large. I wanted to show them something and we got caught up in various things all weekend. We probably should have come to dinner yesterday but there's plenty of food in the Tardis and so there wasn't much need."

There was an urge to sigh in frustration, but the headmaster resisted. The last thing he needed was Harry taking advantage of obvious signs of weakness. The boy was too troublesome by half.

"I would appreciate it if you did not vanish again, or if you plan on doing so, let someone know. So that we don't put the entire castle on High Alert and so your Heads of Houses don't spend days worrying over missing students." He wasn't sure why he added that last part, but it was probably because this would not be the last time these six vanished.

Harry rolled his eyes but nodded. "We can do that. Not planning on vanishing anytime soon, but we
Dumbledore collected his thoughts, remembering the other things he needed to tell Harry. "Also, you have been removed from the Astronomy lesson at the request of Professor Sinistra."

"I've been what?" Harry said, shocked.

"Professor Sinistra has requested that you be removed from her class. You are beyond her ability to teach and she would like it if you didn't take over her lessons. So you have been taken out of the Astronomy lesson." Dumbledore watched as Harry opened his mouth in confusion, clearly not sure what to make of it.

His friends, however, were hiding their giggles. "You should have expected this, Harry," Padma said, a grin on her face. "Professor Sinistra didn't like it when you took over the lesson on Jupiter your first class or how to find historical stars properly the next class."

"It's not my fault her information was wrong!" Harry protested. "I was just informing her of the more relevant points that she hadn't taught."

"You did so by taking over her class. She didn't teach after you took over everything," Blaise said. "And she didn't look very happy with you when you did it."

Harry groaned. "Dad's gonna make fun of me for ages," he complained. "Getting kicked out of Astronomy of all things."

"You were the one saying you were overqualified," Hermione pointed out. "Now that's been confirmed. You should be happy."

Harry gave her a look. "You think my dad's going to let me live this down? No, he's going to hold it over my head for ages. 'Oh, Harry, can you tell me the name of the nearest star cluster? Oh, wait, that's right, you got kicked out of Astronomy!' 'Harry, since you seem so well versed in the stars today, why don't you do the entire reading for the cycle?'" He grimaced. "I'm going to hear about it for ages."

Dumbledore hid a grin behind his hand. It was still nice to know Harry was answerable to someone, even if that someone was as strange as the Doctor. "Just cross Astronomy off your schedule, and you
should be good. Now, I would hurry, as it is about time for you to be jogging around the lake with your fellow peers."

Harry's eyes went wide, and he turned for the door. "Let's go. I don't fancy being late this week. I have no wish to be subject to Rose and Uncle Jack's new dodging designs first up." The five others followed quickly, and Dumbledore was left alone in the office.

He somehow felt like he hadn't really made his point, in the end. And he wasn't sure why.

~~~In Which This is an Ending~~~

Chapter End Notes

Hey~ Hope you all enjoyed! This was a bit of a pain to get all of what I wanted down the way I wanted it down, but I think it went well. Next chapter really starts going off the canon HP rails, so yay!

Thanks for reading and sticking around with me! Next chapter should be out….December 18th. I’m aiming for that cause NaNoWriMo has boosted my wordcount so most of it is going to be sorting out some coherency to make it mesh together the way I want it.

Have a good holiday season, everyone, whatever you celebrate! Japan is getting all cold and snow-inclined and as much as I like snow, I don’t like driving in it, so stay safe everyone!!

Kuroi
In Which There are Problems

Chapter Notes

ACK!! I’M LATE!! I had this mostly written, but it was all scattered because NaNoWriMo does not lend itself well to regulating your stream of consciousness. I got it pieced together in what I hope is a coherent order. It has a lot of bridge-building and foundation setting in it.

Thank you to MischiefManaged33 for betaing this for me and catching the mistakes I left behind! Anything that you may find is of my own fault.

Thank you!

And now, ON WITH THE STORY!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

~~~In Which this is a Beginning~~~

Monday passed with as little fanfare as possible. Harry knew the professors were more than a bit upset at their disappearing act. Dinner arrived with the news of the Inter-House common room, located near the Library in a relatively unused section of the castle. It was decorated in muted shades of the House colors and boasted half a dozen couches and twice that many armchairs, with desks lining the walls beside bookshelves and supply shelves.

The inter-house common room was not popular at first, except for the six students it was, honestly, designed for. When the announcement had been made about the room and its purpose, Harry had immediately decided that they would meet there, rather than in the common rooms, when they weren't in the Library. As this had been loudly proclaimed in the Great Hall, every other House knew fairly quickly.

The audible sigh of relief from every single House did not go unnoticed by the staff, though Harry seemed quite oblivious to it.

The four Heads of House were keeping a close eye on the five students who had gone missing for a weekend, searching for anything that might tell them what had occurred. Harry was watched by all
as it was, but the five who had become his companions hadn’t been as scrutinized before their disappearing act.

It was clear something had happened that weekend.

Neville had certainly changed, gaining some measure of confidence and more magical aptitude than McGonagall thought possible for a single weekend. But other than that obvious rise in power, there wasn't any clear idea on what exactly had gone on.

The six certainly stuck together far tighter than before, and they were a near impenetrable wall of incomprehensibility for every other student. Draco Malfoy paled whenever he looked over at Harry, having retreated to the safety of his House's common room in his free time and sitting as far from the boy as possible when in class.

The rest of the school had started regarding the group with wary respect and, depending on House, awe, jealousy, confusion, or loathing.

While the five who were not Harry were somewhat uncomfortable as the center of attention, it was easier to just ignore it than to give in, and Harry made ignoring it much easier.

Harry, however, had something more worrying to handle. He hadn't yet talked to his dad about the man he had found in his magic and had imprisoned in his mind. He also hadn't stopped by to see if the man was awake, despite several days having passed since the entire fainting incident.

So that evening, when he normally would have been in Astronomy, he retreated to his meditation chamber within the Tardis and, with Pashti curled up in his lap, took off his necklace and sunk into his mind.

The familiar corridors were there, reassuring in their solidity and comfort. He passed them by, heading towards the section he was still debating about warding off. It would have to wait until he had talked to the man. He wasn't sure how someone else took up residence inside his magic, but he intended to find out.

He stood in front of the door, steeling himself, the looked through the window.

The man was definitely awake now, sitting in the armchair Harry had provided for him,
"Hello," he called.

The man jumped, startled, before turning to look at him. He was older, physically, than his father, Rose, and Uncle Jack. His hair was going grey at the temples and his skin was acquiring the wrinkles that human aging left as a reminder of time's passage. His eyes were a vivid blue, not dulled by the age that lined his face. "There is someone else here?"

"Yeah, well, you are in my mind, I would expect me to also be here," Harry replied, curbing a chuckle.

"Your mind? I am not in prison?" Those piercing blue eyes were sharp, and Harry felt himself fidget slightly.

"You don't know where you are?"

"I assumed I was in prison, though not one I have ever seen before, nor one so lacking in guards. But that is obviously a falsehood." There was a long pause. "I did not expect to be in a mind. Tell me, what is your name?"

"I'm Harry. And can't I have the name of the person who has somehow intruded upon my mind?"

Silence, then, "I'm Tom Riddle, Harry. You sound very young."

Harry wrinkled his nose. "Age isn't really important here, considering it is my mind you're locked into. You weren't originally in my mind, though. You were in my magic. I had to remove you before you leeched too much of my magic away."

"I'm sorry, but I swear you just said you moved me from your magic to your mind," Tom said, bewilderment in his voice. "I wasn't aware such a thing was possible."

"Well, I've found with an adequate amount of will, there is very little that is impossible. And I've got plenty of that laying around for the use. Besides, my magical core is quite large. I'm sure that's why..."
you actually appeared as you do, rather than shrunken or malformed. You absorbed enough of my magic to make up for the fact that you are only a small piece of someone else's magic. As to what you were doing latched onto my magic, I have no idea." Harry paused for a moment. "I was hoping you could answer that question."

Tom was quiet, staring at the door he couldn't see through. "What is your name again, child?"

"Harry. I'm the Doctor's son, if that helps any," Harry offered, because sometimes it did.

"No, no, that's not right. I don't know any doctors. That's a muggle term. Are you muggleborn?"

"First generation you mean? No, I'm not. Both of my parents were magical."

There was a sharp intake of breath. "Were?"

Harry shrugged. "Yeah. I mean, I'm not, strictly speaking, dad's biological son, or not completely, but my birth parents were both magical. And my dad's name is the Doctor. It's not a title, or well, it is, but not in the same sense as the non-magical 'doctor'."

"You do know you ramble quite more than is strictly necessary, right?"

"Family trait!" Harry said cheerfully. "So, Tom Riddle, want to tell me what you might have been doing inside my magic? Because you haven't quite gotten around to explaining that bit."

A long sigh, then Tom settled back into the armchair. "I can only speculate, as this is not a situation I expected, nor do I think I can recall just exactly what happened to bring me here. There are holes in my memory, holes I can't really explain adequately." Harry watched Tom tap against the chair. "I suppose you can think of me as part of a soul, mistakenly removed and having latched onto the closest magical supply to support myself."

Harry tilted his head. "A piece of someone's soul? Isn't that fairly unstable magic? I mean, a soul isn't something to play around with, and I imagine ripping a soul would be detrimental to the health of the original soul. With less and less of the soul existing within the body of the original, there would be drastic personality changes and moments of instability and a lack of concrete planning."
Tom gave the door a long, considering look. "You are far more intelligent than a child your age should be, judging by your voice. Unless I am dealing with a child vampire, or something similar."

Harry laughed, feeling the amusement spread through him like quickfire. "I am no vampire, or any other immortal creature. I leave that sort of stuff to Rose and Uncle Jack. They're better at handling it than I ever would be."

Tom seemed to take this in. "You are strange," he finally replied.

"If I had a star for everytime someone told me that, I would have my own personal galaxy at this rate," Harry mused. "But really, I don't think the person who tore their soul apart gets to judge me for weirdness."

"I can't place who you are. I feel like I should know you, somehow, but I don't and it's frankly a little frustrating." Tom glared at the door he couldn't see through, though he was aware that he could be seen.

There was a pause, then the door seemed to shimmer, warp, and turn into a startlingly clear version of itself.

A child stood on the other side, no more than a first or second year Hogwarts student. He wasn't dressed in robes and wore no House insignia. His eyes were a shocking green, brighter than even the Killing Curse he favored for its swiftness. His hair, inky black, curled slightly at the ends and was longer than Tom thought boys should keep their hair. His skin was tan, almost bordering on having spent far too long in the sun, and pulled tight over a small frame. His face was all cheekbones and jawline, and Tom thought he would grow up well.

And there was a nagging familiarity in that face, those eyes, that he wasn't able to place right away. Something he should know...

"If you stare at me any longer, you might actually burn a hole through the door," Harry joked, and Tom was dragged out of his thoughts.

"Boy, who were your birth parents?" he snapped.

An eyebrow rose, and Harry crossed his arms. "Why is it so important? I mean, I don't actually
remember them, I was too young to have concrete memories. All I have are scattered bits of their voices and a couple memories tainted by having been just over a year when they were killed. And actually having a loving, if danger-attracting, parent means I didn't exactly dwell on their loss. I was too young to really understand at the time what happened."

Tom hissed. This child, telling so much and nothing at all. It was frustrating, not even his most subversive followers had been so meandering with their words. "Because, child, I might be able to tell you how I got here," he grated out.

Immediately Harry's face cleared and he grinned. "Ah, well, you know, if you had actually said that, I would have been more willing to answer the question. Being snappy and impatient is a really good way to never get anything you want done, or at least not done properly." Harry grinned. "My mum was Lily, and my dad was James. They were killed when I was a year and several months old."

Tom tried to silence the growl that demanded their last names. Harry hadn't even given his last name, he might not know it, but he had to know, because he had his suspicions. "What is your last name?" he asked, trying to keep his tone even. Being a prisoner made one reconsider their stance on blatant rudeness.

The utter confusion on Harry's face was a shock. "Last name? I don't have one...are you referring to that weird tradition when a child receives part of their name from one of their parents? Since Uncle Jack is Jack Harkness, he said his name was passed down his mother's line, though Rose says hers is from her fathers. Is there a consensus on who gets to give the child their last name? Does the last name actually hold any meaning? I mean, being the child of someone is rather enough, wouldn't you think? Why put a label on them claiming them? They're gonna grow up into their own person at some point, you know."

Tom swore he had never heard someone ramble quite so much. "Yes, I am referring to that long-held and closely valued tradition of giving a child their father's name, usually," he said, finally finding a lull in the boy's speech to get a word in edgewise.

Harry nodded. "I thought as much. Well, dad says my birth mum was Lily Evans and my birth dad was James Potter. Probably why everyone wants to call me a potter. I'm not a potter. I don't do plants, and I think by now I've made my skill in herbology abundantly clear to everyone. Why anyone would even consider calling me a potter after those disastrous herbology lessons, I have no idea."

There was a buzzing ring of silence around him, Tom thought. Something blocking out the noise, the overwhelming ring of silence pushing anything not it beyond his attention.
Harry Potter.

He was stuck in the mind of Harry Potter.

The child he had tried to kill.

The Prophecy Child.

How could this have happened? How could he have created a horcrux and placed it inside the body of a barely toddler? What in the seven hells had gone wrong that night? And why could he not remember?

"Oh please don't tell me there's a prophecy here too," he heard break through his self-imposed wall of silence. "Please. Please please please don't tell me that there's a prophecy. Because I really can't take another one of those interfering in my life. They're inconvenient and frustrating and when made by magical folk really hard to circumvent. And I do my best to circumvent them."

He whipped around, staring open-mouthed at the child complaining beyond his prison. He wasn't sure when he got his feet under him, when he approached the door to stare down at the boy, but he was there, looking down at his doom, complaining about the very thing that led to this entire situation.

"You hate prophecies?" he managed to ask, somehow forgetting all the other questions that had swirled around his mind when he heard Harry complain, wondering briefly if he had spoken everything out loud.

Those too-green eyes looked up at him, frustration clear in their depths. "I loathe them. They're more trouble than they're worth and they rarely have any clarity to them. It's guesswork and hoping that you've worked out the right meaning. And then there's those prophecies that are self-fulfilling. They're almost more like warnings than prophecies. Really, they only become prophecies if one party acts on the information contained. And they're the worse, because they really shouldn't have been labeled prophecies in the first place."

Tom stared at the boy, Harry. "What's the difference between a prophecy and a self-fulfilling prophecy?" he demanded.
Harry sighed, rubbing his head. "You're more trouble than you're worth if you acted on a self-fulfilling prophecy and dragged me into it. I had no say, I was a baby, and yet you go and drag an infant into the worst thing to come out of magic since magical humans, mostly, decided they only needed one kind of focus and literally cut your power in half." Harry massaged his temples. "Self-fulfilling prophecies are usually given by a seer, someone with connections to the Lay Lines that tend to be stronger than others, and usually a magical tie that centers around the Occipital Lobe and the Lateral Frontal Pole, enough so that the latter is actually double the size of those found in the normal human brain. A seer who gives True Prophecy gives something with specific events, something that can be planned for, usually. Or if the seer is particularly inclined to flowery vocabulary there might be too much poetry to be sure until after the event has passed.

"A self-fulfilling prophecy, on the other hand, comes more as a kind of heralding of something, or a warning. Where True Prophecy gives the event, good or bad, without options, self-fulfilling prophecy comes with some kind of option or warning." Harry looked at Tom Riddle. "I'm betting you heard the latter."

Tom Riddle might have been looking down at his captor, but he felt like the boy was enormous. The amount of knowledge that just spilled out of his lips was...he wasn't sure it was possible, to be honest. "I am unsure," he finally admitted. "I was only told half the prophecy, as my spy was discovered before they heard the whole thing."

Tom swore the child was looking like he wanted to reach through the door and strangle him. He actually felt a bit threatened. "So you decided to, what, try and kill a toddler because of half of what was probably a self-fulfilling prophecy? I don't think I've ever heard of something so ludicrous, and I grew up on the Tardis," Harry growled. "You must have ripped your soul into tiny bits to do something so foolish. That's the only thing I can think to have happened."

"It was given by a known descendant of a famous line of seers," Tom said, feeling the need to defend his choices.

"Which is foolish. Relying on a line of seers. Like that actually works. Seeing might be hereditary, but not every single generation inherits it. In fact, it would be a bit odd for successive family members to inherit the Sight. It's more common for it to skip a couple generations." Harry groaned, rubbed his head. "Dad's gonna be so pleased to hear about this. I hate prophecies, and he hates them more than I do. And you, you are a problem we're going to have to deal with. Now that you aren't in my magic, I don't have headaches whenever I'm near Quirrell, so I solved the initial problem. But you just dumped a whole other problem on me. How am I supposed to handle a soul piece and look into this incomplete prophecy and work with my friends on their magical cores and get my homework done and work on the roller coaster?" Harry glared at Tom. "You have really shitty timing, I hope you know that."

Tom felt mildly insulted. "I've been here for years and now I have bad timing?" he said, affronted.
"Shouldn't you have handled this before?"

"I didn't even know you were here until two weeks ago. You've never been a problem before, but then Quirrell started making my head hurt, and my focus told me it was because of you, and then I drained my magic quite significantly and you got a firmer foothold into it, and then I had to do something about you, so really, I didn't intend for this to happen either," Harry told him. "And now I have to leave. If you want something to do, I put some of my favorite fantasy books on the shelves. You're unlikely to get into trouble with those, at least." Harry gestured towards the formerly empty bookshelves, now with several shelves covered in books. "I'll be back later Tom."

Then Harry pulled himself out of his mind and back into the real Tardis, petting Pashti absently.

"Dad's not going to be happy," he finally said.

Pashti just nuzzled up against him.

~~~In which This is a Scene Change~~~

Not happy was an understatement.

"You have a WHAT in your mind?" the Doctor nearly shouted, eyes wide in horror.

"A piece of someone's soul. Their name's Tom Riddle, if that helps. And apparently, they acted on some kind of prophecy, though he doesn't know if it was self-fulfilling or not. I would bet on the former. I mean, why else attack a child?"

The Doctor rubbed his temples. "Tell me from the beginning. You're starting somewhere near the middle of this. So, once again, your focus narrowed down the problem you were having with Quirrell."

Harry nodded. "Yeah, and they figured out it was something leeching off my magic, and after that scuffle with the Brun, it was able to get a firmer foothold. So they needed me to handle it. I moved it from my magic to my mind, cause I could actually section it off there, and it turned from a black sphere to a person. But I didn't have time to talk with them until today. They said their name's Tom Riddle and that I'm some sort of Prophecy Child, though I don't know if they intended to say that last bit out loud." Harry put his hands on his hips, the air of affront all over him. "Tom acted on a prophecy that wasn't even complete and was most likely a self-fulfilling prophecy. Because it has to be one of those."
The Doctor closed his eyes and took in a deep breath. "So a piece of someone's soul was latched onto your magic, and you moved it into your mind, because that was a better idea?" he clarified. He was really trying to avoid the prophecy and everything that word implied when it came to Harry.

"Well, it was either that or let it continue to leech off my magic. And my head hasn't hurt since I moved it, not even when Quirrell stares right at me." Harry's smile was small. "I mean, not the best solution, but I don't mind the results."

"What did the soul piece look like when it appeared as a person?" the Doctor asked, holding back a sigh.

"Physically older than you, bright blue eyes, pale skin begging for more time in the sun, male in form, to my eyes at least, seeing as there weren't any human-norm female appendages. And the name Tom is generally male on Earth, right?" Harry cocked his head at his dad.

"Usually yes. So, an older human male, blue eyes, pale skin, and...dark hair? Light hair?"

"Dark, going gray," Harry said.

The Doctor jotted it down. "Anything else relevant?"

Harry paused. "Well, until I told Tom James' and Lily's last names, everything was more or less fine, but the moment I said anything, Tom's face got even paler. Like, are you okay, do you need to go outside? pale." Harry shook his head. "I just don't get the last name thing, but whatever. And that's when he said I was a prophecy child." Harry screwed up his face in disgust.

The Doctor sighed. "We're going to have to sit down with you one day and explain traditions of the culture you were born into," the Doctor said, trying to suppress a smile. "I don't think I did enough work with you on that."

"Why? I mean, it's not like I'm actually going to live here or something," Harry said.

"Yes, but understanding traditions also helps you understand why some things are the way they are, and the best way to go about fixing them," the Doctor pointed out.

Harry groaned. "Why do you have to be so logical?" he muttered.

"Because otherwise, you run roughshod over everyone and everything around you," his dad said, quite reasonably. "Now, I'm going to look into soul pieces and any information this planet and time might have on them before I go searching through other planets and times. You blockade that section of your mind quite thoroughly. I don't need anything leaking out from that soul piece into you, understand?"

Harry gulped and nodded. "I'll be thorough," he promised. "And about that prophecy…"

The Doctor sighed. "I'll look into it, Harry. I have my suspicions. Just give me some time. Now, remember. Ward that section of your mind well, and make sure this Tom is cut off from your magic."

"I'll make sure, promise."

"Good. Now, it's late and you have class tomorrow morning and some research of your own, I suspect. Transfiguration or something of the sort, right?"

"Yep! I wanted to check some of the limits of transfiguration, what you can and can't do with certain spells, the like."
“Don’t blow up anything important, do your experimenting away from my labs, okay?”

Harry rolled his eyes. “I know, I know. I’ll probably use the common room the headmaster set up.”

“Good. Now, bed.”

~~~In Which This is a Scene Change~~~~

Tom Riddle was contemplative. It was not a state he was familiar with, not in recent memory. But somehow, being in close proximity to, of all people Harry Potter, was enough to return some measure of his mental processes that he can recall having vanished. Was it really the fact that he had absorbed the boy's magic? Leeched off it? How was that even possible? A Horcrux should have been shielded against influence by the host, in the case of a living thing being used as a container. It shouldn't have been able to mix with Harry Potter's magical core. That was a recipe for disaster, where the Horcrux could either be subsumed and absorbed into the host, or destroyed, or even, if the host wasn't mentally or magically strong enough, to take over.

But what Harry Potter had done, moving him from his magical core (where he shouldn't have been, Merlin's balls), to his mindscape, was not something that should have even been possible. There was a reason they were two separate entities, mental and magical. To intermix could be disastrous.

Not that anything about the Potter boy was remotely normal. His intelligence, for one, astounded him. A grown adult lauded as a genius, stunned by the brilliance of an eleven-year-old (if he was eleven). He was confident, holding himself far more surely than any child had the right to. And he was unafraid to state his opinions loudly and pointedly.

It was the oddest thing Tom Riddle had encountered. And now that he was stuck here, unable to leave, he would have to contend with the boy more often.

He had tried to leave, prodded at the door (a solid layer of something hard and opaque, a stone of some kind? He wasn't sure) but it was fused with the walls, as if it just happened to be a clear section of them.

The windows too were the same, not actually set against anything, just parts of the wall that weren't...wall colored.

The furniture he had been provided was comfortable, but also part of the floor. It wasn't movable. In fact, the only things he could move were books, pens, papers, and any small, miscellaneous object that was laying around, and the single chair in front of the desk.

He had perused the books, topics ranging from the Universe to the biology of Earth Animals to Magic's Origins. He had expected them to be blank or poor summaries of the original, as books in a mental landscape were just memories of the original, but he was surprised to find them intact, nearly
complete in their information, aside from what seemed to be a few fuzzy pictures that must not have stuck as well.

Tom wondered what kind of child had read all these books, and just how he remembered them. He was no more than twelve, no more than a second year, but to have accumulated this amount of knowledge was astonishing.

He had the book on the Origins of Magic open when his captor made himself known.

"Hey Tom, glad to see my books being put to good use," he said, grinning.

Tom raised an eyebrow. "Your books?" he queried.

"Yep. I wrote at least a quarter of those. It's easier to store memories of a book when you wrote it, you know," he said, shrugging.

Tom wasn't sure if Harry was joking or not. He decided to ignore that fact for the moment. There were more pressing things to deal with. "Are you planning on keeping me in here forever?" he said, sounding mildly insulted by the thought of it.

"Well, until I know for sure why I have a piece of your soul in my head, one that seems far more intact now than it was when it was put here, you're going to be my permanent guest. Though now you get a bit more freedom, I suppose. Being a sphere of pure power that feeds off of magic has got to be rather boring, you know."

"Being stuck in a room is also rather boring," Tom pointed out.

"Well, you could just change the windows. I mean, they're not pointing at anything specific. But I did add my memories of movies I watched to them, so you could watch movies for a bit. It'll run out at some point, but they're good movies," Harry said.

"I'm beginning to think you're a bit insane," Tom said dryly.

"Only now?" Harry grinned. "That's a record. Usually that's the first thing out of someone's mouth
when they meet me."

"I wonder why."

"Oh, I was meaning to ask, why exactly were you attacking a helpless baby, and what exactly made you stop? I mean, I wasn't a threat at barely a year old," Harry asked. "What kind of prophecy endangers a child?"

"Your parents were the main problem, and you had been prophesized to defeat me. I might have been more than just a bit unstable by the end," Tom mused. "I must have also become a bit more honest," he muttered.

Harry laughed. "You don't know as much about the mental realm as you think. It operates by the creator's rules, and my first and absolute rule is honesty. You can choose not to say something, but if you say anything, it must be truth. Most of the time that's just for me, so I can't lie to myself about something important when I'm having troubles, but it also applies to any other minds inside my mental palace." He spun in a circle, gesturing around him. "I don't get to test it with others all too often. Dad's not fond of 'invading my mind' as he puts it, and Rose and Uncle Jack can't do mental magics. So it's only the occasional crazy megalomaniac with some measure of mental skills or magic that manage it. I'm glad to see it's a long term thing as well."

Tom couldn't stop the shock from engulfing him. "You can do that?" he breathed.

"Of course," Harry said, looking perplexed. "It's your mind, your rules. Why else would it be yours? A bit of magic and force of will, and you can do just about anything. I should know, I've done quite a lot of things people keep saying I shouldn't be able to do." Harry shrugged, like he hadn't just shattered Tom's entire view of occlumency.

"Have you ever done any research on Occlumency?" he asked, trying to keep the shock from his tone.

"I've been told I should look into it, but I rely on techniques developed for primarily human brain types, though I work in some of my dad's techniques cause I can, and a few more esoteric ones that allow me more control over what I want to do. Human mind techniques deal more with memory and recall, I needed far more finesse." Harry bounced on his feet. "Something I'm going to put in place with you. I need to make sure your influence can't spread beyond this sealed off portion of my mind. I'm taking extra precautions as I don't know what kind of effects you could have, consciously or not, while you're here and I would rather not find out the hard way. So until I can figure out a way to get you out, I'm upping the security on this section of my mind. It'll be a bit suffocating, possibly. I'm not
sure, you'll have to tell me, but it's necessary. I'd apologize, but you were the one who put a piece of your soul in me, so," he shrugged.

Tom frowned. "It was not intentional, I assure you. Otherwise this could never have happened. A Horcrux should not have mixed with a magical core. There are devastating consequences if something goes wrong, so I never bothered trying it. Safeguards must be in place if using a live host for a horcrux, and I obviously didn't bother when I made...well, me," he gestured at himself.

"So you're called a Horcrux...that's good to know. A place to start research," Harry mused. "Well, no matter what you did, it wouldn't have been any good. My magical core is much too big for you to have placed it somewhere else."

"I would ask, but the explanation is going to be something I don't believe and then I'm going to have to ask you to stop speaking, so I'll just avoid it all together." Tom waved a hand. "Do what you must. Oh, and if I was reacting to someone else's presence enough to cause you pain, I would suggest that as a starting place for figuring out how to get rid of me," he said offhandedly.

"Thanks! I'll be back later." Then Harry faded from existence, and Tom felt something pressing down all around him. As if he were in a sauna, the heat oppressive by its very presence. But there was no heat, just the pressure.

He could get used to it, he supposed.

He was also going to figure out what kinds of movies Harry Potter had stored away in his mind.

~~~~In which this is a scene break~~~~

They were in Potions, and Snape looked like he wanted to upturn Harry's cauldron on him. Probably would have, if they weren't dealing with potentially explosive ingredients today.

The rest of the class had literally taken shelter behind their desks and the professor and the student who refused to back down glared at each other.

"You cannot start adding whatever you feel like adding as if this were cooking and your cauldron a pot of water!" Snape shouted. "This is against every law of basic common sense and potioneer's rule guidebook!"
"Then you should maybe consult your precious guidebook and see how new potions were made," Harry said, face hard. "You can't deny that I have created the asked for potion every single time."

"Yes, but those were potions that were relatively harmless, with the worst outcome possibly being a skin rash for whomever happened to get splashed! This potion could explode if handled poorly!"

"If you were so concerned with how I made potions, why only intervene now, after I've shown you that I'm able to handle myself?" Harry retorted. "You let me have free reign for weeks over what I wanted to do, but you stepping in only now, after I've proved myself several times over?"

"Because this is a matter of you possibly blowing yourself and your classmates up if you mess up! Magical Scorpion Tails and Fire Salamander blood are highly reactive and corrosive ingredients if not handled properly!" Snape felt himself coming apart.

Harry had walked into class with the Slytherins and Gryffindors, automatically pairing with Neville Longbottom, whose grades were steadily improving. Snape had started the lecture out reminding everyone that they were handling dangerous ingredients today and that if there was one instance of dunderheaded foolishness, it was detention for a week.

Then Harry had pulled out that damn box of his and started taking out ingredients, one by one, for the potion set out for the day, one designed to invigorate skin growth.

He felt the horror creep over him as Harry pulled out ingredients that were far more dangerous than the ones he had set the class to work with. Fire Salamander Blood! Where had he even gotten that stuff? It wasn't available to anyone below Potions Apprentice for a reason!

Harry huffed. "Yes, it's dangerous, but only if you're stupid about handling it, and you have had weeks to make sure I'm not stupid when handling materials." He glared at the Potion's Master. "You're making entirely too big a fuss about this."

Snape felt the urge to strangle the boy take over him and he had to clench his fists by his sides to stop himself. "You are eleven years old and handling things masters barely deem their apprentices able to handle! I don't know where you got a hold of it or why your father even allowed you to have the stuff, but I cannot allow you to use it in my classroom! Use the materials every other student here will be using!" He glared Harry down, not giving an inch.
There was silence, a tense, snapping silence filled with an increase in magical pressure.

Finally, Harry sighed. "Fine, since you seem to be having such an issue with it, I'll figure out how to do it without the Fire Salamander blood. Though really, you are overreacting." Harry picked up the vial containing the burning red liquid and slid it back into his box.

"I am hardly overreacting when your choice of ingredient could literally destroy half the classroom," Snape sniped back. "And I will be providing you with a list of all ingredients I refuse to allow anyone not in my NEWT classes to handle, and I expect you to stick to the list. If you can't I will find a way to make detention for a month stick, even if I have to drag you to your father and explain the situation to him. I'm sure he'll be less than impressed that you put your classmates in danger just because you didn't feel like working with a recipe."

Harry barely resisted paling. His dad would certainly be more than just upset. "I wasn't going to screw the potion up," he muttered.

"It's not the intention, but Fire Salamander's Blood is on the restricted list for a reason." Snape was feeling the tension die down as Harry pulled out a less dangerous substance. "You'll get the list by the beginning of your next class with me." He looked around, eyebrow raised at the sight of the entire class hiding behind the furthest desks. "We don't have all day to do this potion, get to work."

The students scrambled to obey as Harry started directing Neville to prepare the ingredients.

There were whispers floating around the class.

"You know, your reputation as that weird kid with authority issues has just been upgraded to scary kid who doesn't know the meaning of authority," Blaise whispered to Harry. "What possessed you to argue with Professor Snape like that? You two had been getting along pretty well the last couple weeks." Pretty well was relative, as Snape decided that the better part of valor was ignoring Harry as best he could when his attempts to intimidate him had failed.

Harry rolled his eyes. "I don't usually work with a partner, or anyone else. It didn't seem unreasonable to me to use Fire Salamander Blood in the potion, as it provides the quickest way to remove dead skin cells, and the cleanest, in my opinion. Professor Snape may act like he hates the lot of you, but he doesn't want accidents to happen, and apparently my ingredient choice was more likely explode the classroom than it was to work effectively." He privately thought he could have gotten it to work, but Snape looked like he might just explode so Harry conceded the point. He could figure out another way.
"You and Professor Snape don't really get along, do you?" Hermione asked. "I mean, he lets you do what you want, but he also glares at you whenever you get the potion right."

"He's not used to people who can actually think their way around a potions set. I like it, it's relaxing and an easy way to test my recall ability." Harry shrugged.

The class finished with only one student (a Slytherin girl) splashing some on her arm. The boils that sprung up were painful, and Snape glared her out into the hallway with a friend to go to the Hospital Wing.

~~~~In Which This is a Scene Change~~~~

Harry had taken over part of the inter-house common room and erected barriers that kept out onlookers. Within, puffs of smoke, what was assumed to be cursing in several different languages, and occasional fits of laughter, emerged.

No one was really brave enough to go see what Harry was up to.

But when he showed up to Transfiguration, the Slytherin/Gryffindor class, because, in McGonagall's mind that class was doomed to be the worst class in her entire history of teaching at Hogwarts, it was with a smirk and a glint.

"Professor," he started out, before she had even begun her lecture.

McGonagall turned to him with trepidation. "Yes, Harry," she said, a note of wariness in her voice.

"I've figured out why exactly you seem to think that spells can only do certain things. Or why you say some things can't be done with transfiguration."

"I'm really thinking I shouldn't ask, but since you have brought the subject up and I suspect you won't drop it, please explain." She was really regretting that phrase the moment Harry's eyes gleamed.
"So, we talked before about how intent is the most important part of a spell, right? How wanting the spell to do what you ask of it is the most important part of casting a spell. There should be a connection between the words you speak, the movements you make, and the thoughts you have, to make a spell work. You can leave out the words or the movements if you have enough sheer power, but it's easier with both. They create a kind of pattern your magic follows, so that once you've laid the groundwork with a spell, casting it successfully and managing to produce the desired result, the pattern is reinforced, so you can start casting it automatically, without needing the same intention. So your magic falls into a pattern. Your expectations for the spell create the end result because that is how a pattern works. You have traced over those paths so many times that it's become ingrained. Straying from that path is nearly impossible, because it requires a new kind of intention. Like carving a new path for a river. Sure, a bit of the water will flow that way, but most of it won't because that's not the way it's been going for ages. If you work at it, though, you can. You can change the way the river flows."

McGonagall tried to process what Harry was saying, his gestures grand, his eyes alight in passion. It made some sense, if she thought about it. But it also implied a fundamental flaw in how she learned magic, in how she believed magic worked.

Which didn't sit well with her. "So you're saying that with intention, you can change the desired outcome of a spell? I highly doubt you could use the spell to transform a matchstick into a needle to change the matchstick into a mouse," she said pointedly.

Harry waved his hands. "I don't mean that at all, though you could, but I don't recommend it, as it would more likely burn out your magical pathways than it would work. What I mean is, a small deviation, creating a throwing needle instead of a sewing needle, or something else similar, something that has the same general shape or function as the original outcome, would be possible. You do remember Scribbilfors, yes?"

She nodded. "You created an ink pen rather than a feathered quill."

"Yes. Both have the same function, to write. They're both similar in shape, long and narrow. So it isn't hard to change the intention."

"You mentioned something about how this handles things people think can't be done with transfiguration," McGonagall pointed out.

"Yes, yes, some of your Laws that can't be done. The food one is sort of amusing. I did manage to get a piece of fruit, but it was rather poisonous, so I don't count it as success. I'm sure I'll figure something out about that, though. But the other ones."
McGonagall tried to keep her face stern. "Gamp’s Laws are not to be played about with, young man. They are in place for a reason. The food one may seem trivial, but raising the dead or creating money are not things to be trifled with." McGonagall was seriously considering how much Fire Whiskey she needed to order at this point. Harry was fraying her nerves.

"He set up barriers in the shared common room, Professor," Padma pointed out. "None of us could get past them."

McGonagall gave her a long look. Padma shuffled in her seat but remained firm. "Be that as it may, what possessed you to fiddle with laws of Elemental Transfiguration? Those are not things to be played with! And you failed to inform me about these experiments!"

Harry raised a hand in supplication. "I didn’t touch the one about raising the dead, I’m not that foolhardy. Besides, dad would certainly take me apart molecule by molecule if he found out I was messing with stuff like that. And I didn’t have anyone recently cursed with dark magic, or anyone cursed at all, to touch that one, but the others were fair game."

McGonagall held back the groan that she really wanted to express. This child, this eleven-year-old, who was definitively not eleven mentally, had played around with fundamental laws of magic, in the castle, and no one thought to inform her, or even tell a teacher. "This is not what I wanted to hear. And this class is not the time to discuss it. We will bring it up later, when I'm sure you can't corrupt your classmates."

Harry crossed his arms, frowning. "Why?"

"Because, you are talking about not just magic deemed impossible by the general public, but magic that is dangerous to fiddle around with. And it's almost December, and I am not about to send students home with any ideas on how they could possibly blow themselves up over the holidays. So, Harry, we will discuss this later. And your apparent inability to find a responsible adult when you decide to experiment with dangerous magic." McGonagall felt her hold on her temper slip, and she tightened it.

Harry was practically oblivious to his impact on others. She wondered, at first, if he was deliberately dragging his friends into mess after mess after chaotic situation after disaster zone. But he wasn't she now realized. He had no clue that it was him, his sheer force of personality, that attracted his friends to him, that made them do insane things.

Just earlier this week, she caught Padma Patil and Blaise Zabini, during the class Harry was not part of, experimenting with the spell they had been set. They had reasoned that, since Harry managed it, they should be just fine. And she honestly couldn't say if that was true or not, but it was only after their triumphant shout from across the room, followed nearly immediately by a burst of smoke that turned both of them coal black, that she realized what they had been doing.

They had been given the task of transfiguring a smaller object, in this case a rod of wood, into something larger, though still made of wood.

In their thinking, they had turned the little piece of wood into a wood burning stove, complete with
flames, chimney, and heat. It was impressive, utilizing more creativity than she had thought eleven-year-olds possessed.

The following billow of smoke as the flames consumed all the wood at once, subsequently extinguishing itself in a puff of black dust, was amusing.

But that relatively harmless transfiguration could soon turn far more dangerous once they moved onto more advanced subjects.

And Harry was there, waiting to usher his friends into those subjects with a cheery grin and the words that nothing was impossible if you used enough magic and intention.

And it would end up with one of them hurting themselves, and Harry was entirely oblivious to it.

She clenched her jaw, unclenched it, sighed, heaved a breath, then looked at the boy she was finding less and less of Lily and James in. "Harry, we will be having a long talk, alone, when class is over. There are several things you need to be made aware of, and right now is not the time. Stay after class. Mr. Zabini, Ms. Patil, your presence won't be necessary. You can wait in the hallway for him."

Harry gave her a baffled look, clearly lost for words. Her attitude shift had thrown him for a loop, and she was grateful for the little things. She would take all she could get.

Class ended with Harry having turned the teacup they had been given into an extravagant box meant to hold who knows what, and his friends had managed similar odd feats.

She was glad no one had fainted, blown anything up, or otherwise caused harm to anyone else.

"Alright, Professor, I'm here," Harry said, curiosity in his eyes.

McGonagall took a deep breath. "You are dangerous, Harry," she said, cutting to the point.

"I'm what?"

"Dangerous. Not just to yourself, but to your friends. You encourage feats of magic that are beyond most adults, and you make it seem easy. As if breathing were more of a challenge."

Harry looked baffled. "I'm confused. You're saying my ability to do magic easily is dangerous to my friends?"

"I'm saying you encourage them to do things beyond their scope. You push the boundaries of fundamental transfiguration, and they don't even know those fundamentals."

"I don't either," Harry pointed out. "And I do just fine."

McGonagall's face was stern, "You have an abnormal amount of magic at your disposal. More than your friends could hope to have. And you have more control over your magic than most adults I've met."

Harry frowned. "Why is that a problem?"

"Because, Harry, magic takes time to mature. It isn't something that comes fully formed and ready to use. It matures with the user. Magic is influenced by the life of the user. The more danger, the more honed the magic is, responding quickly to spells. This is seen in fighters and duelists. But I see those same reactions in you, an eleven-year-old, who has no business having so much magic or such
reaction times. Your magic is nearly instantaneous. And you encourage your friends with the same ideas you apply to your magic." McGonagall was trying to press the importance of this.

"But...I don't. I don't press anything. If they ask for help, I give them advice. I encourage them to use their magic, but that's no different from what you lot are doing."

"You encourage them by giving them impossible tasks. Or seemingly impossible tasks!" McGonagall said, leashing her frustration.

Harry shook his head. "It's only impossible because you've only learned that way. Magic isn't something that is ever so specific as to function one way."

"I have been seeing that the longer you are in my classes, but your magical control is astounding and your intelligence is frightening. And your lack of awareness in regards to danger scares me. Because with your power and your intelligence, not being able to distinguish what is or isn't dangerous to your friends and yourself is a prospect I do not see ending well."

Harry paused, frowning. "I don't get what you mean. We're in a school. A place of learning, exploring, experimenting. Something I've been doing all my life, but here it's for magic. Dad doesn't let me explore magic on the Tardis, I broke too many things before, but here I can! And I know safety protocols. I take precautions."

"The entire point is, Harry, that you lead by example. Your existence is encouragement enough for your friends to start poking at magic in ways that are dangerous."

"And you suggest I fix this how? I can't change who I am. And they know the dangers of messing about with magic...or they should. I learned the hard way once. There is a reason language is integral to how a spell is presented. And there is a reason I know that." Harry's face darkened for a moment.

"You may have learned about those dangers, Harry, but your friends have just started their magical education. They are just now starting on things you seem to have mastered long before now."

McGonagall’s eyes were hard, unyielding.

“Don’t you all teach them those dangers? I mean, just tossing a bunch of eleven-year-olds with magic wands at spells seems counterproductive.”
“We can teach them, but many disregard them until they have had an experience that shows just how important they are. A situation you must have already faced, as you have said.”

Harry grimaced. “Yes, well, I was stupid and young. I’m much less so now.”

“You have shown none of that knowledge in my class. Instead, you blatantly ignore the laws of transfiguration and just...do what you want. The spell today, for instance, was intended to create a box. The focus of the spell was the size. I intended for you to make a box larger than the material provided would create without magic. You went and decided to fashion something extravagant, designed by deft hands and intricate patterns with materials not made of wood. And then you turned and taught your friends how to do the same thing. Do you know how much magic it takes to focus a spell like that so precisely?”

"Yes, I am aware. And I know how to focus my intention properly so that I can use my magic to the best possible degree."

McGonagall nodded. "And do your friends know it? And were you planning on teaching it to them before they burn out their magical pathways when they try something beyond their level?"

Harry raised an eyebrow. "How little magic do you think they have? Neville's got a tremendous amount of magic, and Hermione's is all bubbling underneath the surface. Padma's is cool power, Blaise is all sharp edges and opaque, and Susan's is bright and bouncy, for lack of a better term. They have such potential, but they have to be pushed. Just letting them stay at the status quo would be a disservice."

McGonagall growled in frustration. "One of your friends is going to get hurt, and then you’ll have to confront how dangerous your methods are,” she said, voice low.

"My friends are fine. They don’t really do anything overmuch to push their magic."

"Just...take more precautions when you push your friends. I would hate to see them succumb to burnout. They are talented and eager to learn. And your obliviousness to danger is guiding them faster down a path I never intended first years to walk." She sighed. "As for the borderline illegal messing about you've done with Gamp's Laws, come see me this weekend. I want to see exactly what you've done and how you are doing it. I have a class in just a few moments otherwise I would have you show me now."
It was Saturday, and the sextet were currently all split up, though more by circumstance than choice.

Hermione and Padma huddled in a corner of the Inter-House common room, voices low. "What did you do exactly?" Padma asked.

"I just sort of...searched. I mean, not in a physical sense. Like, thinking of every part of my body. Just a bit at a time, mentally thinking about each spot, until I could feel a tingle. It was all...fuzzy. Like...like a really shaggy carpet. But more bubbly."

"Alright. Easier to close my eyes, I guess."

"It helped me," Hermione offered.

Padma shut her eyes, trying to contemplate how to go about...thinking around one's body.

She decided to start at her toes. Just think about your toes she thought to herself. Your toes...feet...ankles...calves...knees...thighs...hips...waist....stoma...what is that?

"That would be your core," Padma heard Hermione say. "Oh...sorry. You...you said that out loud."

Padma waved a hand at her, silence.

That feeling was...fuzzy. Really fuzzy. How could she have ever missed this? It was like that sensation when her hand or foot just decided to not work. Blankness.

"What now?" Padma asked, keeping her voice soft.

"I'm...not sure. I've only just found it myself," Hermione said. "But...I've poked at mine. It's sort of...reacted. Like, sent out more magic. And I felt more energized."
Padma hesitantly sent her thoughts towards the fuzzy feeling, thinking of poking it, then feeling it react.

Her limbs vibrated and her eyes shot open. "That...that is weird." She had to check to make sure her hair wasn't standing on end.

"But magic is almost...easier after you poke at it. Like, it doesn't take nearly as much effort to do a spell, even a new spell!" Hermione's eyes lit up. "That must be why Harry never has any issues with spells. He said his core was not bound, so he must feel like that all the time!"

"How could he exist like that? I feel like I rubbed my feet on the carpet then touched the door handle. Except it doesn't hurt, it just feels all...shakey."

Hermione grinned. "Non-magicals have electricity, that might be what you're thinking of. It reminded me of that time we played around with electro-magnets in science and I touched something I shouldn't have and I zapped myself, except it doesn't hurt, it's just that strange, shocky sensation."

"Exactly." Padma frowned. "So, is it safe to poke at it?"

"Well, Harry's doing just fine. I mean, he does better than anyone else in class every single time we practice a new spell. It must do some good."

"So...wanna try it again, then cast a spell?" Padma grinned at Hermione as she waiting for the answer.

It was the same grin, reflected back, that told her Hermione was more than up for this challenge.

The two girls closed their eyes, reaching for the fuzzy spots they had determined their cores were located at, and prodded at them.

A moment and a levitation spell later, they stared in astonishment at the hole in the ceiling.

"But...I was only levitating a pen," Padma said faintly.
"I was going for a book, but...neither of those things should have punched a hole into the ceiling. That's stone!"

The two girls stared at each other. "So...magic's easier," Padma confirmed.

"But we can't control the spell," Hermione countered.

"I'm sure with practice we could/"

They shared another smile. "Well, let's get practicing!"

~~In Which this is a POV change~~

Neville was having his own issue, sitting in the Gryffindor common room trying to get himself under control.

Under his skin it felt like there were small insects crawling everywhere, a sensation that made him want to itch and scratch until it was gone. But he had tried that, and it had yielded nothing but blood and scabs.

So he huddled by the fire. It must be his magic. He had been overpowering even the simplest spells, spells he knew by heart. He had transfigured a fork into a two-foot-long ball point pen, much to professor McGonagall's chagrin.

He had turned not just his teacup but every other teacup around him for five tables a solid green with faint yellow outlines of falling leaves. And Professor Flitwick had been unable to remove the spell.

He dreaded what could happen in Potions if it required magical preparation, as he would be less that useful in handling the materials.

The book on the armchair rattled, and he grabbed for it before it floated upwards, where he would never get it back.
There was something wrong with his magic, he just didn't know what, and he didn't know who to talk to about it.

~~~~~In Which This is a POV Change~~~~~

Blaise was doing his best to avoid his House common room. He had been less than welcome in recent weeks. There hadn't been any direct confrontations, but it wasn't hard to see the rest of the Slytherins pushing him out of the social circle he had never really belonged to in the first place.

He went to bed as late as he possibly could and spent all his time out of this House common room. It wasn't hard to manage, his friends had something going on at all times.

Except right now, Harry was with Professor McGonagall, being dressed down for messing with magic so far beyond what he should have been messing with that McGonagall was furious.

Padma and Hermione were wrapped up in experimenting with something relating to their cores, having promised them that they would share when they figured out what should be done.

Neville had vanished after lunch, his face nearly as nervous as it was when Harry had Herbology.

And Susan had been called into a meeting with her Head of House, leaving Blaise on his own. And he needed something from his trunk. So he had to venture into the Slytherin Common room while other Slytherins were there.

"Zabini, you decided to show your face here instead of sneaking back in like a mouse," he heard Flint drawl from across the room. "Where's your mudblood and squib friends? Did you finally decide to ditch them and rejoin us?"

Blaise reigned in his temper. "I'm not staying, Flint. I don't want to be here any more than you want me here."

Flint sneered at him. "You're mouthy for a first year. What, you actually use that Inter-House common room?"
"My friends are in different Houses. It makes meeting easier to organize." Actually, the devices Harry had handed out made it absurdly easy to get a hold of any one of his friends.

He should probably call Neville, see if there was something wrong.

"So you sneak back in like a coward. Can't bear to confront the rest of us, traitor."

Blaise scowled. "It's not against any rules to have friends from other Houses." He wanted to lash out at the smirks on those Slytherins in the Common Room.

"Your...friends...are blood traitors, mudbloods, and squibs. You're an Old Pure Blood. How can you even associate with them?"

"Because they're nice. They're fun and smart and they don't care about anyone's family history back who knows how many generations. It's a nice change from this...this atmosphere of one-upping and backstabbing your neighbor." Blaise glared around at the room. His could feel the magic he was becoming far more familiar with roiling under his skin.

His family had a dark history. His mother was from a line that played on the dark side of grey, messing with magics even dark families found distasteful. Killing your spouse for a magical boost and extended longevity, even if it was done "with consent of the spouse". Part of his mother's nuptial papers had a clause, written in Old Latin, spelling out the spell and the details. He had found out once while searching for the order form for the pet shop.

Point being, he grew up around backstabbing and betrayal. He knew what forms it took, the vanity his mother swam in, the lack of regard for life she had. The desire for more power, more beauty, more youth. And he found it all again in Slytherin. His ambition to be better than his mother had stuck him in the environment that had formed her.

"Watch your mouth, Zabini. Your mother's protection doesn't extend to Hogwarts," Flint warned, voice low. "Who'd believe a firstie saying their own House members cursed them?" He said it with a sardonic lilt to his voice.

"Harry would," Blaise replied. "Hermione, Padma, Neville, Susan, the Doctor, Professor Rose, Professor Jack. They'd all believe me, if you could even land a curse."
Flint's face twisted. "You're arrogant, Zabini."

"Not so arrogant that I can't see how your entire point hinges upon me being even the slightest bit unhappy with my position. I like my friends. I like their company. I don't like you, or this common room. If your goal was to try and isolate me, make me feel alone, you've failed." Blaise grinned, and then had to twist out of the way of a purple curse Flint had sent at him. "That wasn't nice." All that practice dodging paintballs paid off, he thought.

"Stay...still...Zabini!" Flint cursed.

"I don't know what that spell does, do you really think I'd stay still? Besides, I only came to get a book and some paper to get homework done."

Blaise ducked behind a couch. "Don't you think the spells are a bit much? I mean, really. I'm a first year, and here you are casting curses at me."

He could hear the mutters from the other Slytherins.

"He's just a brat, Flint. Leave him alone."

"He's not worth the trouble."

"Just ignore him, Flint. He's not worth it."

Blaise felt his chest tighten a bit. He had friends, he had good friends, but being relegated as insignificant by his House was harsh to take.

"Get your stuff and leave. And if you show up with one of your little friends again, we won't be so kind." Flint's face was a storm of anger when Blaise poked his head out from the couch.

"I'd like to hear you say that to Harry," he replied, being entirely truthful. "I mean, he would probably love an opportunity to inform you of how insignificant your entire worldview is." The thing was, Blaise wasn't sure he wasn't telling the truth. Harry was much too hard to get a good grasp on. Still, it was enough to twist Flint's face up and have him growling. "Get your crap and get out Zabini."

Blaise did exactly that. He was only willing to push his luck so far. Sure, his friends would stand up for him, but he would have to make it out of the common room to even tell his friends something was wrong, or get a call out and hope someone answered. Better to just leave. He didn't want to be there in the first place.

~~~This is a POV Change~~~~

Susan Bones sat in her Head of House's office, legs slowly swinging. "You wanted to see me, Professor Sprout?"
“I did indeed, Ms. Bones. I am sending letters home to parents this evening, and I have realized that I am not entirely sure what to send to your aunt. Vanishing as you did this past weekend, your remarkable improvement in classes but lack of interaction with your Housemates... I am finding myself at a loss of words. I am unsure what to report to your aunt.”

Susan tried to find the words to tell her Head of House that nothing was wrong. But she could tell how it would seem like it. She sighed. “I’m doing fine, Professor Sprout. My friends are fun, I’m doing much better in class now, and I’m really enjoying my time here.”

Sprout contained a heavy sigh. “It isn’t that you’re doing well in your classes, Ms. Bones, but that you seem to have alienated yourself from your former friends. Your housemates are confused, and find it odd that a first year Badger is friends with members from each House.” Those were probably not the right words, Sprout thought, as Susan’s face turned dark.

“Why does it matter what House my friends are from? We do homework together, study, have adventures, it’s fun and interesting and I’ve learned more in the past few weeks than I ever have before!” Susan was keeping her cool as best as possible.

“I will make sure to convey your happiness to your aunt. But I am also sending my concerns, you understand.” Sprout looked at the first year, stubbornly insistent in her position, and sighed. There had been inter-House friendships before, it wasn’t unusual for Houses to mingle, but to the extent to that they shut out their own House? It was concerning every other Head of House as well.

The only explanation seemed to be Harry, who had started shaking things up to an extent the Hogwarts staff were distinctly uncomfortable with.

“If that’s all? I wanted to see what Hermione and Padma were up to! They said they had something exciting and I don’t wanna miss it.” Susan was practically vibrating in her seat.

“That’s all for now. I’m sure I’ll have more to talk with you about when your Aunt’s reply comes through.” Sprout dismissed the young girl, before sighing over the parchment and quill she had pulled out for the letter she was struggling to write.

~~~In Which the Scene Changes~~~~

Harry stood in front of Professor McGonagall and the several items he had transfigured in odd ways in front of him.

McGonagall, for her part, was just trying to contain every stray emotion running through her.

This child waltzes into Hogwarts, refuses to follow dress code, argues with any professor about any topic, and then goes and performs magic not just above first-year level but beyond the reach of most magic users in general.

And he does it with this look of ‘Well, of course I did it, that’s what was supposed to happen. Can’t you do it too?’ as if he didn’t realize how impossible he was. And she can’t tell him that, because as much as it irritates her to see her own student surpassing any and every expectation she ever had, breaking laws of magic and generally being the most frustrating student she had ever taught, the world needed people like him, people who could do the impossible then expect you to do it as well.

Because those people motivated others, made others better, made them strive for more, because it was expected of them, because someone as charismatic and intelligent and obviously talented as they wanted them to do better, to be better.

It was why she had let James Potter, Sirius Black, and Peter Pettigrew continue studying the
Animagus after she had figured out what they were doing. James and Sirius were some of the most charismatic students she had seen walk the halls, second only to the man who would become the Dark Lord. They would do great things, would have done great things, if their lives had not been so tragically halted, one by death and the other by prison for that death.

She could make it up to James with his son, with this child who was technically James Potter's heir, who was so much more than any one of them could have imagined.

But she wasn’t just going to let him have free reign. He was still far too inexperienced to be let loose on whatever he felt like, without someone to hold him accountable. So that’s what she would be.

"Alright, tell me again how you've managed to use a spell I know was designed to turn a piece of wood, clay, or metal into a simple sculpture to create teacups, pens, and vases," she said, more than a bit dry.

Harry grinned. "It's all about your desire. Sculptures are basically art, and art is what you make of it, you know. You have this idea that art has to be fixed, has to be something that is on display for others to see and admire. But art is about your impressions of it. Houses are just art pieces we live in. Cups are pieces of art we drink out of. Pens are functional art. Vases are traditional art. So long as your intention is to create art, you can control the shape that art takes."

McGonagall turned that over in her mind. It made sense, in a fundamental way. It was a lot more mental than she had expected, this idea that you had to intend for something to be art to create it, but it opened up the world to the idea that you could simply think that anything was a piece of art, and create it that way. "So it's all mental," she said.

"Exactly! That's what I've been trying to tell you! Your idea of art influences what you create with this spell. Change the idea, you change the outcome of the spell."

"So, essentially, you could do just about anything you wanted with this spell, so long as you think of it as art?" she asked.

Harry frowned. "I'm sure if you have enough strength of mind and magic, you could, but a lot of your ideas of art and what it is come from your culture. So it would be hard to transfigure, say, a live animal with this spell, because your cultural background doesn't consider it art. And if you managed it, the animal wouldn't act normally, I'm sure. It would become living art."

"Then what is the solution?"

"Well, that is why we have many spells and not just one," Harry said. "Spells work off of intention and focus. It's easier to create a new spell for something than try and change an already established spell."

McGonagall groaned. "Only you would consider spell crafting to be easier," she muttered. "Then again, you shouldn't able to change the intention of a spell either, and yet you have."

Harry grinned. "That's what I'm here for."

The Transfiguration professor rubbed at her temples. She could feel the headache coming on. "Now how have you applied this....thinking to breaking the fundamental laws of transfiguration?" she asked, wondering if she wanted to know the answer.

She could see the eagerness in his eyes, the wild light they lit up with that she was beginning to associate with an explanation she would only partially understand at first.
"So, the money one was simple." She couldn't see how. "Money is, in essence, a representative of what cultures value, exchanged for goods and services. Britain's wizarding world actually uses valuable metals, gold and silver and bronze, rather than a representative of it like most cultures do. Transfiguring gold isn't actually that hard, it's just a shift in an object's chemical composition, changing the atoms in an item. If you know the chemical make-up of gold or silver or bronze, it isn't all that difficult." McGonagall held back the mild gaping she wanted to do at his words.

"So you've managed it?" she asked.

Harry grimaced. "Only in small quantities. Even if I start with something larger, the process shrinks the resulting transfiguration into 5% of what I started with. So yeah, I can do it, but it's not very efficient in the long run."

McGonagall held onto that bit of knowledge with tight hands. At least Harry couldn't do everything. "What other laws of magic have you broken?" she asked, resignation in her voice.

"Not sure. Never looked them up. I mean, sure, yeah, don't be an idiot and hurt yourself or others, but why not try and stretch what you can do with magic? I mean, if I try hard enough, and have enough intention and focus, I can do more or less what I want, though it's incredibly draining because there is no prior spell or path I can direct my magic down. When you use a spell, magic is channeled into a small stream, easier to work with and you use less magic overall. But when you don't know a spell and have to cast something without focus or direction, you literally send a wave of magic at it, with intention, and hope you've done the job right." Harry looked pensive. "If you could find a way of controlling the flow of unfocused magic, you would be nearly unstoppable. Pure will and intention, directed out at your thought. That would be something."

McGonagall fervently hoped Harry would never figure out how to do such a thing. She didn't think she could handle Harry with any more power than he already had, much less an unlimited supply of it, directed at thought and intent without a focus. "That is highly dangerous. Magic used in such a way has been known to drive a wizard or witch mad." That was true, more or less. Wandless magic was no easy feat to master. She could only do a few simple spells that she was extremely familiar with. Flitwick was much more proficient at it, as was Dumbledore.

But Harry looked pensive, rather than excited. "I'm aware. We use foci for a reason, you know. They're there to provide direction and focus for our magic, and without it, magic is highly destructive and volatile. Yes, you can use it to help and create and grow, but it's more likely to be used to destroy and tear and rend when used without a focus like a wand."

Harry could, once again, surprise her with his maturity.

"Well, in class I would like you to focus on the lesson. Expand it however you want, but no experimental transfiguration during lessons. If you want to play around with that sort of magic, please come find me on a weekend. I would be much more willing to let you experiment if I could actually see and make sure you weren't hurting yourself." She sincerely hoped he would find her. Aside from making sure he didn't blow himself up, she wanted to see what kind of process he went through to alter a spell. "Also, class time is not the time for you to refute everything I say when you think I'm wrong. It's disruptive at best and harmful to your fellow students at worse. If you have an issue with something I say, take a note of it and we can discuss it after class has ended. I'm tired of turning lessons with you into half an hour of debate."
“But what if what you’re saying isn’t right?” Harry said, a tinge of complaint in his voice.

“The middle of class is not the proper time to discuss it. If you can bring it to me, logically and without heated emotion, I’ll consider it and we can discuss your ideas. You’re smart, I know you’re smart, everyone in your classes knows it, you don’t have to show us every time you disagree with something. If your idea has merit, I’ll bring it up in future lessons.” McGonagall gave him a long stare. “Do we have an accord?”

"Well, I can try. I mean, I'll do my best." Harry could hear his dad reminding him of his tendency to walk all over people and how he needed to not be so overwhelming.

"Then off you go. I'm sure you have a group of friends to wrangle before they get too bored." She waved Harry off.

Only to call him right back in as a ripple of magic overtook the castle, making her gasp and clutch at her chest.

~~~In Which This is a Scene Break~~~

Neville squirmed in the armchair before the fire. Something was definitely wrong with his magic.

He had cast a spell, levitation, and the book had gone through the ceiling. The stone ceiling. And the ceiling beyond that one.

And now he could feel the rolling, churning, bubbling of his magic pushing back at him, at the edges of his skin, trying to break out.

He was too hot, too cold, too everything all at once, and he didn't know what to do, who to tell.

He should have told Harry, the moment this started happening, but he didn't know how to bring it up, didn't want to be a bother. It was his fault, having left the Tardis when he shouldn't have. He had done something to his magic while trapped in that illusion, and he should figure out how to fix it on his own.
But it wasn't working, nothing was working, and it was getting worse.

He reached for the com device Harry had given him, given them all, fingers searching for the buttons that would call Harry, the Doctor, his friends, anyone.

The world pressed in around him, and he squeezed his eyes shut.

"Hey, you okay mate?" It was a distant voice, one he could almost place.

"You don't look so good."

"Should we call Madam Pomphrey?"

It was the twins, Fred and George Weasley. He could tell by the voices now. The same lilting accent, just in slightly different pitches.

Their magic tasted like lemons and oranges. How did he know that?

He groaned. His magic was rushing around him, swirling through his body.

"You really don't look okay."

"We're gonna go get Madam Pomphrey."

"Don't move, okay?"

Neville didn't think he could move, not really. He felt glued to his seat.

The twins' footsteps had barely faded when his magic burst from him, rushing outwards, escaping from the body it had been trapped within, and Neville surged upwards.
His magic...his magic was...expanding. He could feel briefly every soul it came into contact with. Just a momentary feeling, but it was unreal.

Everything was magic in this castle. Everything, except the Doctor, except Professor Rose. Professor Jack, the Tardis. They were something...something else. Something golden and strange.

He couldn't dwell on it. He was levitating in the common room, hovering over the chair he had sequestered himself in. He could hear the other Gryffindors clustering around him, whispering, eyes wide, pointing. Someone went for Professor McGonagall, someone else went for Headmaster Dumbledore, and a third went for Madam Pomphrey.

Neville wished he could tell them that the twins already went to the infirmary, but he couldn't speak.

He couldn't do anything, except wait for his magic to stop...stop everything. Stop expanding through the castle, stop touching and feeling every magical thing it came across, stop overloading his mind with that information.

There was a snap, and he fell back to the armchair in an ungainly sprawl.

His limbs were weak noodles. His face slack. His body limp. He couldn't even open his eyes.

"Mr. Longbottom! Mr. Longbottom! What is going on here?" That was Professor McGonagall's voice.

He tried to speak, to tell them that it was alright now, but he couldn't move his lips.

"If I may, Professor." That was Harry. Neville felt his magic sing at him. Harry was here. "I might be able to help figure out what happened here."

"Don't do anything dangerous," McGonagall snapped, and Neville wanted to laugh, tell her that Harry didn't know the meaning of not doing something dangerous, that his entire life was full of it, even though he didn't know how he knew that.
Neville felt Harry get closer, put his hand on Neville's arm, and a flood of...of something filled him. A cool refreshing wave of power, it tasted like mint, filled his body. He would have shuddered if he could have.

"What are you doing?!" That was the shrill voice of Professor McGonagall again, and Neville wanted to tell her that Harry was helping, that he was collecting the scattered fragments of his magic and piecing them back together, that it was helping.

But he couldn't speak.

Harry, however, could. "Neville's shattered his core. I feared something like this might happen, but I didn't realize how soon it would happen. I'm trying to piece some of it back together."

There was an audible gasp around the room. "Shattered?" It was whispered, a soft voice, young. Neville didn't know who it was.

"How did he shatter his core? How could that even be possible?" McGonagall snapped.

"He was in a stressful situation a while ago. I didn't expect it to get so bad so fast. He must have been hiding it from us." He could hear the disapproval in Harry's voice. He would have to explain, explain why he didn't tell anyone what was going on.

But right now, he was sinking further into the comfort of Harry's magic, the refreshing wave of freshness, filling him, pulling him back together. He could feel the scattered pieces of himself start to regain a semblance of their former shape.

Neville was slack and loose, unmoving and floppy. He thought he should be moving, but it seemed like too much trouble. Not when Harry was there, that cool magic slipping through him and gathering the scattered pieces and putting them together.

"What exactly happened here?" Professor McGonagall's voices demanded.

Harry sighed. "I underestimated how much of Neville's magic was locked away and just how damaging releasing it all at once would be. And Neville here didn't tell anyone he was having problems, very obvious problems we could have helped with if he hadn't hidden them."

Neville thought he should be a little more recalcitrant but honestly he was too relaxed to care much. He just made a slight noise of amusement at Harry.

"What could he have possibly done to do that?"
Neville could hear the hesitation in Harry's voice. He wanted to say it was alright, that whatever Harry was worried about wasn't that important, except it was, it was deadly important and he didn't know how he knew that.

He didn't know how he knew a lot of things, but somehow he knew them.

His body tingled faintly, his magic starting to gather back where his core should be.

"What exactly happened here?" Came the shrill voice of Madam Pomphrey.

"Neville Longbottom has done something to his magic. It sent out a wave not twenty minutes ago and the boy hasn't moved since I arrived." Professor McGonagall.

"What is Mr. Harry doing? Why can I sense the magic from down the hallway?"

"Probably because Neville has no more barriers between his magic and the world. I'm trying to give him some artificial ones until his magic can rebuild the walls that protect it." Harry sounded as in control as always, and if Neville wasn't so closely bound to his magic, he wouldn't have heard the frustration and fear in his voice (or was it his magic? He's not quite sure anymore).

Neville wondered if the shocked gasps would stop today.

He didn't have high hopes about that.

~~~In which this is an Ending~~~

Chapter End Notes

Hey everyone! Sorry this is so late once again! A lot of this was from NaNoWriMo this year, and a daily writing session I’m working on keeping up with, but I ended up just stuck trying to piece this chapter together. I needed several things to happen to lead to the next big bit of the story, and I needed teacher and Harry to have confrontations that didn’t work out in Harry’s favor, and I needed a bridge for another part of the story, and it all just...didn’t want to work out well at first.

Good news is, I have a much much clearer idea of what’s happening next, and an even clearer idea of the next chapter. So there’s that?

In any case, THANK YOU ALL OF YOU FOR ALL THE KIND REVIEWS!! I really do love reading them and hearing from you.

It’s winter break now for me, but that doesn’t actually mean I get an abundance of free time (well, it technically does but not really). I’m going on a solo vacation tour of Japan because I’m tired of being stuck in Inaka Japan, so Tokyo, Kyoto, and Osaka, here I come! I’ll still be writing because I’m gonna be crashing at internet cafes because they’re cheap and easy. So I’ll have an update up around….January 8th. Well, that’s what it says in my planner, but that’s also the day I plan to get back from vacation, so it might move to January 9th.

Thank you thank you thank you everyone for all the reviews, favorites, alerts, follows,
kudos!

Kuroi
In Which Mysteries Appear

Chapter Summary

So….this is late…hehehe…

It was entirely my fault. I have several reasons (they’ll be at the end of the chapter).

But, since it is here, please enjoy!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

~~~In Which this is a Beginning~~~~

The Department of Mysteries was generally a place where odd magic, strange enchantments, and unknown artifacts found their home. Those that worked there, the Unspeakables, were tasked with putting them in some sort of order.

Now, however, they were regretting having one of those things in their possession.

"I refuse to put up with that screeching a moment longer. It's gotten even louder in the past hour! What is going on at that school?" one of the Unspeakables finally shouted in complaint.

The Unspeakables were currently putting away at various menial tasks in the main receiving room, having been unable to get any real work done. Most of that was due, in part, to the infernal racket coming from the spell that monitored power output at Hogwarts.

Why they had the thing, none of them could quite figure out. Really, Hogwarts was a school for young magicals, what kind of power needed to be monitored there? The wards were strong enough to protect the inhabitants from invasions, and even if someone did invade the alarm would go off far too late for the Unspeakables to be of any help.

But it had been present for decades longer than anyone could remember, and it was sort of a tradition to keep the spell refreshed. What was the harm? retiring Unspeakables would say.

Well, the harm was most certainly obvious now. The damn enchantment had some kind of alarm function that whistled at a constant hum, and they had found out about this function on Halloween of all days.

It coincided exactly with the arrival of Harry Potter at Hogwarts, they later discovered, and it was on him that they finally pinned the reason for the spell's alarm system.

The only good thing to come out of this was discovering what exactly that particular spell did.

Apparently it was a way for the Unspeakables to track those who manifested powerful magic in childhood, before their coming of age and final magical growth spurt, as the spell was designed to register only those who were under Magical Maturity (otherwise Dumbledore, Flitwick, and
McGonagall at the very least would set the alarms off). It reacted based on magical output, and the more constant the whistle, the higher the power level.

They wondered how powerful this kid was for the spell to still be going a month after it started.

The Unspeakables had started using charmed earplugs from the muggle world, as anything that was inherently magical failed. Charming something mundane, however, seemed to bypass the problem and they all got used to using notes and such whenever they were in the main rooms.

"I would suggest some of you heading to Hogwarts to locate the source of the magical pulse that just shattered several old spells tied to the castle wards," a silky voice said, startling everyone as it penetrated through the ear plugs. They had taken to only activating that particular function of the enchantment if they had something important to say.

"Merlin's balls, Highest, can you stop doing that?" The voice of this squad's leader was unsteady and nervous. "That's really disconcerting."

"Well, if you all had actually decided to go investigate the cause of that spell's continued whistling rather than sit around here with ear plugs and useless projects, I wouldn't have to," came the retort.

"We can't go on Hogwarts's grounds without express permission from the Board of Directors or the Headmaster, neither of which has replied to our request." was the bored rattle of one of the Unspeakables fiddling with something. "Waltzing onto Hogwarts is not something that we can do without consequences."

"I would suggest using the shattering of a young magical's core as a good reason," was the response, and they all sat up, eyes wide.

"A shattered core? At Hogwarts? But no coming of ages were scheduled for today!"

"That's not the only way a core shatters," was the sardonic reply. "And I am reliably sure that it was the core of a member of an Old family, which would give us some legitimacy for being there."

"Is...that would," the Leader finally said, eyes closed, pondering the options. "I mean, Dumbledore would still be pissed that we came, but with a legitimate reason, there's no need for us to not go. And if we can solve this whistling spell, all the better. I can't concentrate with that noise going off every single day."

The three others all stood up, face alight with the possibility of getting that damned noise to stop. "Really? Can we really get that thing to shut up?"

"Possibility. And anything is better than sitting in this room ignoring each other and writing notes as if we were still second years."

"I'm up for anything that gets rid of the noise. I don't even care what it takes anymore, it's just so frustrating to listen to. I need it to stop. I can't concentrate."

There was a mutter of general agreement, and the room’s occupants filled the air with spells, until they were all dressed in black hoods with identity concealment charms layered over them, on top of their standard ones.

"Let's get going then."

The DOM took the portkey the had set aside specifically for special locations, like Hogwarts and the Ministry main floor and St. Mungos, preparing themselves. Sure, they all wanted to get the alarm to
stop, but a child who shattered their core was no joke. Hogwarts was sure to be in chaos when they arrived.

So they were prepared for just about anything when they landed in the Great Hall.

They weren't prepared for what seemed to be business as usual. Aside from the few startled gasps at their appearance, very few people bothered to pay them any attention. Which was unusual, to say the least.

They looked around for a teacher, seeing as how it was just nearing the end of the school day and they should be more plentiful.

"Are you looking for someone?" came a young female voice, and the group spun around. "I mean, people don't usually come looking like they're ready for a war to a school unless they're lookin' for something, or someone."

A young woman, blonde hair and honey eyes stood near the wall, staring at them with something akin to amusement.

"Is the Headmaster here?" their leader asked, voice disguised.

The odd, warbling sound in place of a voice didn't seem to bother the woman, though, as she straightened from her slouch. "He's probably in the Gryffindor Common Room dealing with the commotion. Seeing as that's where nearly everyone else is as well, you'd probably want to head up that way. But, if you don't mind me asking, what are you doing here?"

There was a shifting amongst them. Then the leader spoke again. "Our sensors have been recording odd activity at Hogwarts for the past month, and just an hour ago, everything lit up and triggered the high alert sensors." They hadn't added 'again' to that statement. It wasn't really necessary.

The woman grinned. "Ah, I see. I'm sure the Headmaster can get it straightened out for you." She paused. "You do know where the Gryffindor Common Room is, yeah?"

"We do," they confirmed.
"Alright. Well, if you don't mind, I'll just come with you. My other half is up that way as well." She didn't seem the least bit uncomfortable with them being cloaked and hooded, and it struck them as particularly odd. They weren't used to dealing with someone who wasn't at least the slightest bit unnerved by them.

Rose, for her part, was more than a little amused. It seemed the magical world had their own form of secret government agents, and their clearly adopted air of being mysterious and all powerful was enough to tickle her just a bit more than was probably appropriate.

They had layered spells of all sorts to disguise their faces, and even used some sort of spell on their voices, and Rose thought it was all a little overkill. Then again, she couldn't really say much in her defense, seeing as how she didn't even tell her subordinates her name for the better part of fifty years.

They walked in silence up to the common room, Rose contemplative and amused, the DOM figures tense and nervous.

Rose wondered if they really had no idea what was going on in Hogwarts. Had Harry and his friends really been causing that much of a commotion? She hadn't thought it would stretch so far so fast, but she was apparently very wrong in that respect. Hopefully there was some way out of this that didn't involve anyone getting hurt or losing memories. Neither option was particularly pleasant.

They turned at the hallway towards the painting of the Fat Lady that guarded the entrance to the tower, only to see nearly the entire population that had been in the Tower out in the halls, clutching whatever they had been using at the time of their eviction and looking oddly at the portrait.

"What's going on?" Rose demanded.

"Oh, Professor Rose. Um, well, something happened to Neville, and then Harry and Professor McGonagall came in, and said something about Neville's core exploding or whatever, I don't know, but it was really weird, cause Neville was floating and then he just...there was this light that burst out of him, and he fell back down, and I don't know what happened, but as soon as Madam Pomfrey came, she sent us all out into the hallway so she could work on Neville in private, though she couldn't kick Harry out, but that's no one was expecting her to be able to, so he stayed inside."

The girl giving this information didn't seem to breath as she spewed it out in a long, stream of consciousness sentence.

Rose sighed, rubbing at her temples. "Alright, alright, thank you, Ms. Patil. I appreciate the information."
"Headmaster Dumbledore and Professor McGonagall and Madam Pomfrey are all trying to figure out what's going on, and Harry was doing something before we all got kicked out of the common room," Parvati Patil added.

"I see. Has the password changed since Monday?" Rose asked.

"No Professor Rose."

Rose nodded, then turned and headed through the milling students and towards the portrait.

Despite Rose's comfort with the masked, hooded figures, the students were a different story, and they all drew back as the four followed Rose to the portrait, falling silent as they stalked past. The wave of chatter picked back up again, this time filled with questions and curiosity about the figures.

Rose opened the portrait and headed inside, followed by the members of the DOM.

The common room was about as chaotic as three adults and two children could make it.

"What's going on?" Rose asked again, a note of command in her voice that the DOM members had missed before.

It was enough command to have McGonagall giving them the situation. "I was informed by several of my Lions that something was wrong with Neville Longbottom after a wave of powerful magic swept through the castle. I was with Harry, having a discussion about proper uses of magic in a classroom setting, and he recognized the magic. It wasn't much later that three students came to get me, clearly worried. When we arrived, Harry started doing...something to Mr. Longbottom, hopefully stabilizing the situation." She shook her head. "What is going on here? What is the Department of Mysteries doing at Hogwarts?"

Rose groaned. "Alright, alright, thank you. And I'm not sure myself, you'll have to ask them."

Behind the adults, Harry was kneeling beside Neville's sprawled form, eyes closed, hand pressed gently to Neville's wrist. There was a pulse of magic every so often from him and his face frowned in concentration.

"What is the Department of Mysteries doing here?" Dumbledore cut through the small chatter that Rose had started up with Madam Pomfrey. "Why are you here? Why wasn't I notified before you came?"

One of the figures stepped forward. "We have been getting odd readings coming from Hogwarts for a month now. On top of the mysterious reappearance of Harry Potter-" There was a badly hidden grimace from the Hogwarts professors and a quick glance at said child "There was a huge spike in magical energy not an hour ago. All of our alarms went off and we came wondering if something cataclysmic happened."

Dumbledore groaned. Of course, this would be something the DOM would pick up on. They had monitoring spells in every major magical place in the British Magical World. "Right now, we aren't yet sure what has happened. Mr. Harry has yet to leave his friend's side, and until their magic isn't entangled, we can't run any diagnostic spells." The headmaster looked at Rose. "I don't suppose you know where the Doctor is?" he asked.

Rose shrugged. "He's in the Tardis, doing something elaborate for this week's lessons. I can go get him, but I don't think it's really necessary. This is far more Harry's area of expertise than his," she said, shrugging. "And until Harry let's us know if he needs help, like he should have done at this point already," she raised her voice at this last part, looking pointedly at the black haired boy.
"There's not much any of us could do."

Harry's bright green eyes opened as she finished speaking, and he groaned, rolling his shoulders. "Neville here decided not to tell anyone his magic was messing up and had been for two weeks," he said, mouth furrowed. "And it got worse and worse until his core fragmented under the pressure. He had been subconsciously suppressing his power since he was a child, and then to have it all released suddenly, his core couldn't handle the strain, and since he didn't tell anyone, his core just got weaker and weaker, until it shattered."

"How can a child no older than eleven shatter their core? There's no record of that happening! Children do not have enough magic to overload their cores to such an extent," the leader for the DOM said, stepping towards Harry.

"Well, you like Helium and Sulfur Hexafluoride a little too much," Harry said, eyebrows raised. "What's up with the wacky voice? In dire need of a job as a cartoon character?"

"I don't know what that means," the leader said. "But that's not the point. How is what you're saying even possible? And how would you know? You're a kid yourself!"

Harry sighed. "Just because I am eleven doesn't mean I don't know things. I feel like you all overlook a lot of potential among children because you can't acknowledge the fact that there are intelligent pre-adults. And I know because I can sense magic when I touch something. And Neville was broadcasting. His magic was in pieces."

There was silence for half a minute, then Madam Pomfrey stepped forward. "I need to do a diagnostic scan," she said, looking at Harry pointedly.

Harry quickly stepped away. "Alright, so what's up with the cloak and dagger? It's a bit late for Halloween, and I don't think that's standard dress for magicals. At least it wasn't last I checked. Are you all from some super special mystery department?" There was an extended pause, and Harry literally jigged. "You are! That's awesome! The magical world has a super secret mystery department Rose!" He bounced in place. "So, what do you have down there? The secret core of magical Britain? Arthur's sword?" He paused, considering if it was actually down there, seeing as he had the scabbard but no sword. "The secret to death? Weird spells you don't understand?"

"We don't divulge our secrets," the leader finally said. "We are here to investigate the recent rise in magical disturbances in this area. Are you Harry Potter?"

"I'm not a potter," Harry said, voice level. "If you mean to ask am I the child of Lily and James, the latter of which was also called Potter, then yes, I am. Just Harry, though."

There was a moment of puzzled silence, then a shrug. The DOM had seen far stranger things than a child who didn't like their last name. "Harry, then. You seem to be the source of nearly all the disturbances this past month, including a forest near Yorkshire. We have been monitoring the magical levels of Hogwarts and since your arrival, the detection spells have been on high alert non stop. With this recent occurrence, we were worried that Hogwarts was under attack or something, yet here you are, fixing the problem, it seems. We have no logical answer for what has occurred, if you would like to give us one."

Harry looked at the four figures. "I really have no idea what it is you seem to be detecting, honestly. Magical output? This is a castle full of students doing magic day in and day out. I don't believe one more would really create that much of an unbalance. As to Yorkshire, I can't really say." His grin was mild. "After all, I haven't left the castle since I got here."
"Mr. Harry is a student, how can you be certain it isn't someone else messing up your spell work? A student can hardly be responsible, they haven't reached magical maturity yet," McGonagall added.

"We have on file a sample of your magical signature, Harry. It was taken from the Potter Home the night your parents died. While your signature has changed dramatically since then, it is similar enough to be recognized by the spells." A momentary pause. "Spells that haven't reacted to your signature in ten years."

"Ah, I see," Harry said, and he did.

Dumbledore, however, frowned. The Department of Mysteries was known amongst a certain class for being able to track anyone anywhere. If they had your magical signature, there was nowhere you could hide. For them to not be able to locate Harry until his recent arrival at Hogwarts was troubling. But the pressing issue remained that the DOM was at Hogwarts and needed to leave. "I know you've said you are here because of various monitoring spells, but why come fully cloaked and enchanted? This is a simple school," the Headmaster said.

"Because our alarms have been on high alert for a month, and then blared violet, signaling the shattering of someone’s magical core. The release of that much magic would be impossible to miss, and usually doesn’t end well for those in the surrounding area."

"Well, you really needn’t have bothered. Neville’s gonna be fine, I patched it together well enough that his own magic should be able to do the rest."

"How could you help with a shattered core? That's something that takes professionals hours to fix, if they can fix it at all!" the leader demanded.

Harry looked perplexed. "It's just a matter of recentering their magic. Then the core will hold itself together until it can heal. I mean, Neville probably shouldn't use magic for a bit, but he'll be all the better for it when he does heal." He looked over at Madam Pomfrey "Right?"

The nurse looked frazzled. "I can't...these are...what did you do to him, Mr. Harry? His core is all fragmented, but it's not shattered! It should be, the amount of fracturing, but it's still where it's supposed to be."

Harry made a gesture. "What I said. He'll be fine, but he's going to need sleep and probably a new fo...wand. His magic's reformed itself after it shattered his core, it's unlikely his old wand will work for him."

Madam Pomfrey gave him a look of absolute bafflement. "That is not how you respond to the comment that you just saved the life of your friend in a way that is not normal!" She heaved a deep sigh. "I should just get used to it. You've not spent nearly as much time as I would expect of you in the Hospital Wing, considering the number of explosions you seem to be at the center of."

Harry winced. "Ah, I make up for it at home?" he said, a note of hesitance in his voice.

Madam Pomfrey just shook her head. "I'll be moving Mr. Longbottom to the Hospital Wing. He needs rest and silence, so no visitors until tomorrow at the earliest. His magic is going to need to be monitored as well. You seem to have...stuck all his magic back where it belongs, but the core still has to form, so it will take some time." She gave him a wry look. "Not that you could ever relate," she muttered.

Harry rolled his eyes. "If that is a not so subtle stab at your confusion about my core, you're striking at already paved road."
Madam Pomfrey just pursed her lips and didn't say anything, busy casting several spells at Neville that did an assortment of things.

Harry turned back to the DOM members, grinning. "So, why exactly are you here again? I know you said something about magic sensors and being concerned and everything, but I didn't hear the specifics."

There was some furious whispering amongst the group of four.

"Why are we answering to an eleven year old?"

"Did you not just see the magic he performed?"

"He's Harry Potter!"

"Even if he doesn't like his last name, he's still the boy-who-lived!"

"We've been searching for him for a decade!"

"Is there any harm in telling him?"

"Isn't he the source of that weird file we got from Saint Mungo's?"

"What file?"

"I didn't see a file."

"The one on Magic Oversaturation."

"That's a thing?"

"I didn't know it could happen to a human being."

"You lot didn't read even the most basic briefing manuals on the subject, did you?"

"Why should we have? It never happens!"

"Well, it's happened now!"

"Maybe Saint Mungo's made a mistake?"

"They've never made one like this before."

The four all turned back to Harry, looking at him with considering eyes. "You're the subject of that report, aren't you?" the leader asked.

"What report?"

"Magic Oversaturation. There's no name attached for privacy and such, but your magical signature is attached and we have a sample of your signature. We know it better than we know our own."

Harry couldn't resist rolling his eyes at the four. "Why is this such a big deal? Madam Pomfrey made an issue over it too. And now you four know about it. Aren't you some super secret group or something? Why concern yourselves with a kid?"

There was a pregnant pause that drew out longer than Harry had expected.
The four DOM workers stared at him. Did he really not know his own significance? That was...that was just weird, considering how intelligent he seemed. "Are you really not aware of how significant you are to this world?" the leader asked.

"I'm Harry. Just because I survived something that everyone else died from, doesn't mean that I did anything. Lily probably did something, she was my mother, and mothers who are protective of their children are far more likely to do everything in their power to protect their children. You should really be giving her the credit. I was barely a year old, there isn't much a one year old can do against a crazy mass murderer." This was said in a frank and deliberately flat tone as Harry tried to convey how much the fact that they believed he was responsible didn't amuse him. Tom had to have been mistaken about that prophecy too. Had to be.

"That's not the issue right now. There's never been a case of a child with Magic Oversaturation surviving to magical maturity, and only one case of a child surviving past the age of ten! The fact that you are eleven and still alive is amazing!" one of the DOM workers exclaimed.

Harry frowned. "You're not making much sense. Why do you think this is such a big deal? I mean, I'm going to have to deal with it come magical maturity, but until then I'm fine. So long as I continue to use my magic and refuse to let it build up, I don't have any problems with it. And there's no reason I wouldn't be able to use my magic, I'm at a school where kids are educated in magic."

"But...but...Magic Oversaturation is more than just about having too much magic! There's consequences!" one of the DOM members said, clearly struggling to get the point across. "There's the way spells are overpowered, or being unable to regulate how much magic you use, a lack of precision and control. Not to mention the way your magic will interfere with others!"

"I don't have to worry about a lot of that. My wand is tailored to my needs and I can keep my magic within my body so it doesn't have that effect. I know how dangerous it can be, which is why I tend to make sure it stays that way. Now, did you have something you needed to do here, aside from look all unnecessarily dramatic?"

"Yes. We need you to come with us. There are several things that we need to do, and you're at the center of the many issues we have been plagued by. It would be helpful if we could stop the red alert that's been blaring through the DOM since last month."

Dumbledore stepped in. "I'm afraid you can't just abscond with one of my students, even if you are the Department of Mysteries. The boy is underage and without parental permission, or a guardian's in lieu of a parent, you cannot take him as you wish, and I do not feel comfortable with you taking a student."

Harry looked up at Dumbledore with mild surprise. "I didn't think you were all that concerned about me," he said.

"No matter the difficulties you present, you are still one of my students and I always protect my students," Dumbledore said.

"Ah," Harry said. "Well, that's the word guys. I mean, I wouldn't mind seeing the Department of Mysteries, but dad wouldn't be too keen on me being taken, and the headmaster here says that's a no, so apologies." Harry shrugged, grinning. "Now, I do have some friends to go track down, seeing as Hermione and Padma are experimenting with a new technique and I should go make sure they don't blow themselves up, and Blaise and Susan are on their own as well, so I'll see you lot later, I'm sure." Harry waved jauntily, following the school nurse out of the portrait hole and leaving the four members of the DOM with the Headmaster.
"So, you four, please come with me. I would like a word. The Department of Mysteries does not have clearance to come into Hogwarts without the permission of the headmaster unless we are in a war."

The DOM members followed the headmaster with some amount of trepidation. Albus Dumbledore wasn't known for his power and influence for nothing. It was a fact that he was the reason the DOM had as much information on several illicit animals and enchantments as they did.

Their plan to come to Hogwarts might have been hastily conceived, but after a month of that incessant beeping, it wasn't something they weren't prepared to defend. They were, after all, only human.

"Alright you four, would you like to detail the exact reasons you thought appearing in Hogwarts in full dress and accosting one of my students was necessary?" Dumbledore settled into the comfy chair behind his desk, steepling his fingers and staring at them with focused blue eyes.

"We needed to get to the bottom of what’s going on. Our department has been flooded with unusual magical happenings, and even a trace of Harry Potter's signature was found in Yorkshire. Since his arrival, our sensory spells around both Diagon Alley and Hogwarts have been on high alert, and silencing charms don't work. We don't know how to deactivate them, and really we were hoping that your student could turn them off." The leader was frustrated and out of sorts. They did not like dealing with the uncertainty of what was happening in their department in the slightest.

Dumbledore paused, frowning. "Alright, I concede that the unusual situation in Yorkshire is intriguing, but did you ever think of adjusting your spells for someone with much more magic than the average witch or wizard?"

There was a long pause. "Our spells are set to recognize and acknowledge even your impressive amount of magic, Headmaster," one of the cloaked figures said, confused. "And the spells I’m talking about in particular are only sensitive to magicals under the age of magical maturity. I highly doubt a child could have so much power."

"Yes, but I can tell you in no uncertain terms that young Harry has far more magic at his disposal than I ever had, and it will only continue to grow. You should have recognized it, seeing as you are aware of his issue with Magic Oversaturation. How much magic must a magical contain before they have a problem with Oversaturation?"

"There aren't many records, but it has to do with the size of one's core. Even a witch or wizard with an average magical core can have a mild case of Magic Oversaturation if they have just a smidge more magic than their core can contain safely. Those cases aren't uncommon and can be handled quickly, as cores are somewhat flexible."

"Harry's core is approximately the same size as his body, according to scans from Madam Pomfrey. Now, tell me how much magic he must have if he has magical oversaturation with a core so large," Dumbledore said, voice even.

"But...that's not possible!" the leader exclaimed. "A core that size wouldn't be stable, magic would leak out everywhere and would interfere with any spell he cast, or any spell anyone around him cast."

"He wears a necklace that restrains his power. His magic cannot roam freely unless he takes the necklace off, which I can assure you is a disconcerting feeling. I didn't think a child could have so much power. None the less, he does, and it is something that needs to be handled carefully. His magical maturity will be destructive, and unpredictable. We are already looking for ways to handle
"What about this person he calls father?" the leader asked.

Dumbledore resisted the urge to twitch. "The Doctor is an unknown force. He's powerful in his own right, though I have never seen him use a wand. His lessons are concise and informative as well as entertaining. He has the respect of the majority of the school and the complicit understanding that he does not tolerate disrespect from the remaining few who are resistant to his charms. They are few. His expertise is hard to nail down, but he is knowledgeable in a variety of subjects and areas. And he is completely unknown. We don't know his name, his origins, where he has been for the past ten years, or generally anything of value about him."

The four DOM members twitched. The Doctor. Was this really the Doctor they had heard so much about? That the muggle world had so much information on? It couldn’t be….

"Then why did you give him the savior of the wizarding world if you knew nothing about him?"

Dumbledore sighed. "He too has asked me this question. My answer was that Harry needed to be raised somewhere safe, somewhere away from the spotlight. And he was. But I don't know if the Harry that the Doctor raised is really someone we could rely on when the time comes."

It was at that moment the Doctor burst into the office, a flurry of mild indignation and long jacket.

"What's this I hear about the Department of Mysteries attempting to abscond with Harry?"

"You've heard incorrectly, Doctor. They didn't have my or your permission to take Harry with them. Harry is as safe as he is likely to be in Hogwarts, looking after Mister Longbottom following his core shattering," the headmaster said, attempting to get in front of the Doctor's considerable ire.

Immediately the Time Lord deflated, then perked right back up. "Why did they want Harry, though? Oh, and thanks for not letting them take him."

"He's my student. I wouldn't have allowed them to take any one of them without a guardian's express approval. And even then I would be hesitant. The Department of Mysteries is no place for a child. And you can ask them what they wanted with Harry, as they are still in my office." Dumbledore gestured to the cloaked figures.

The Doctor turned quicker than they had expected to face the group of ministry workers; his eyebrows went up and he had to stop himself from chuckling.

They had really gone for the mystery part of their name, he thought. The long cloaks, the hidden faces, and what he assumed were disguised voices.

"So, you four are the reason the hallways are whispering with curious children wondering what travesty let you lot in. Really, showing up at a school dressed like you're going to rob Buckingham Palace is maybe not the best idea. Faces are always appreciated, even if you disguise yours. Half the girls in fifth year and up use some sort of concealing spell, and a decent number of the guys do too." The Doctor grinned. "So, why did you want to take Harry? He's all of eleven, hardly old enough to get on your radar."

"He's been on our radar since he was an infant. There aren't many people who have survived the killing curse," the Leader said, and the Doctor had to stifle another chuckle. They really had disguised their voices.

"Alright, there is that. But why him now? He's a kid, I doubt you'd learn anything useful, his
memory doesn't stretch back that far. There isn't much of interest he could tell you, and far less than you want to know even if he does have any theories. He's rather prone to not being concerned over what happened to him and how he survived." The Doctor pondered that for a moment. It seemed like something Harry should be infinitely more concerned about, despite not being such in the least. It was true that people didn't survive the killing curse everyday. In fact, there wasn't another soul on record who had, and the Doctor had checked on Haleysio.

"We are not here about something that happened ten years ago. Rather, Harry Potter has been setting off all the magic sensing alarms in the Department of Mysteries since he arrived, and after the wave of magic from Mr. Longbottom, we felt it necessary to figure out what exactly was going on at Hogwarts. It seems that we might have misjudged several events. We weren't aware of how much magic young Harry had at his disposal, nor were we aware of what exactly had happened to Mr. Longbottom." White lies, the Leader repeated mentally. White lies. Harmless white lies.

The Doctor cocked his head. "Sensors Harry is setting off hmmmm. My curiosity is peaked. I wouldn't mind getting a look at them, and I could help you figure out how and why Harry is setting them off. I am intimately familiar with his magical signature and the things he manages to do with his magic."

There was an exchange of looks among the four. "If you wouldn't mind, we would like to turn off the red alert alarms. They are starting to irritate everyone in the building."

The Doctor grinned. "I can do that! Let me go grab Harry. He'd be put out if he missed this adventure. Besides, how often is someone invited to the Department of Mysteries? Sounds like a right proper adventure there, if I'm being honest, which I like to try and do, you know. Keeps things easier to sort out." The Doctor grinned, spun back towards the door, then kept spinning till he was facing the four members of the DOM. "Now don't go vanishing before I track Harry down."

There was a kind of hesitant agreement in the nod the leader gave, before the Doctor bounded out.

"Why didn't you say anything?" the leader asked after the Doctor had left. "I thought you were against Harry being taken by us."

Dumbledore sighed. "Because I have found that trying to stop the Doctor from doing something is more than likely just going to make him do it anyway. If he is going to bring Harry with him, there is little I could do legally to stop him, so I find it easier if I don't try and just mitigate the damage that could potentially occur. You don't mind if I accompany you?"

The leader shook their head. "I'm afraid even the head of the Wizengamot isn't allowed into the Department of Mysteries without a direct invitation, and one we have not given full consent for at the moment. We can allow the Doctor to come, as he is the parent of an underage subject, but otherwise no one else is allowed."

"I thought something like this would happen." The headmaster paused for a moment, bringing his thoughts together. "Please try to keep the damages the Doctor may bring upon the Department to a minimum, and do not blame me if something goes horribly wrong. I did offer my presence, after all."

There was a look of apprehension around the group, but it didn't have long to go around as the Doctor burst back in, Harry's hand grasped in his.

"DAD! You haven't even told me why you dragged me off! I wanted to check on Neville!" Harry struggled to pull his hand free of the Doctor's tight grip.

"Well, I wanted to see the Department of Mysteries and you seem to be wanted by them, so I figured we could kill two birds with one stone and go together." The Doctor beamed at his son.
Harry gave him a deadpan look of mock surprise. "Ah, I see. So you want to use me as your excuse to traipse around a place you can't get into again? Is that what I'm good for these days?"

The Doctor rolled his eyes. "If you continue to bring that up every time I want to bring you on an adventure, I'll leave you behind next time. I figured you'd enjoy it. I'm sure I could reprogram their spells to not go off every time you did magic or walked by or breathed on them. I know enough about your magic that it wouldn't be a problem. But if that's how you feel, off you go. Scoot. Goodbye!" The Doctor nudged Harry towards the door, the two completely ignoring the expressions of utter confusion on the faces of the five other occupants, as they were prone to doing.

"Wait, wait, adventure I can do. Department of Mysteries was it? Sounds like a plan! Let's gear up the...whatever it is you lot use to teleport and get going! Por...something or other." Harry scrunched up his face. "Rather oddly placed on weird objects."

"I'm betting this one isn't any different, Harry," the Doctor said, sounded somewhat amused. "And it's Portkey, by the way."

"Ah, yes, we have that here. Um, if you could all touch it," the leader said, pulling out a small diving ring.

Harry snorted. "You do know those are used as toys, right?" he said.

"It's not really that important. It's more important that it's functional and is easy to store. A hoop is rather easy to place just about anywhere," one of the DOM workers said. "Now, touch it, please, and we'll be off."

"Get them back here before dinner, please," the Headmaster said, a hint of warning in his voice. "I would hate to have to use my influence to get down there and bring them back."

There were nervous chuckles all around the circle of four. "We'll have them back in time, Dumbledore," the Leader reassured the headmaster. "Alright, now, Eternalis!"

With that word, there was that yanking sensation as if something was hooking into Harry's very being, dragging him towards some unspecified point in space. He braced himself for impact, only remembering at the last moment that being stiff usually resulted in a poor landing.

Unfortunately, he didn't remember in time, tumbling onto his face as the Portkey came to a stop. His dad snickered at him.

"Welcome to the Ministry of Magic, please present your wand for inspection," a much too smiley desk attendant said, their sparkling, literally, teeth shining out between well moisturized lips.

Harry groaned. "I still hate portkeys," he muttered. "I mean, really, I don't like them."

"You didn't fall down last time," the Doctor commented.

"Yeah, well, Pashti was also on my hand at the time as well, and she wouldn't have appreciated it," Harry muttered, standing up and brushing himself off. "Now what's this about wand inspection?"

The DOM leader was behind Harry in a moment. "You'll need to present your wand. They keep track of those non-Ministry workers who come in, and to do that they need your wand signature, in case something may happen."

Harry winced. "I don't know how well that'll work," he said.
"Why not? Ollivander wands have never had a negative reaction to an inspection," the leader commented.

"Well, first assumption, my wand isn't from Ollivander."

There was a moment of shock, then a hesitant. "There's never been a negative reaction beyond the inspection refusing to read the wand," one of the other members offered.

"Do they touch my wand?" Harry asked.

"If you can place it on the scale yourself, we don't have to. Some wizards don't particularly like others touching their wand, so it isn't uncommon," the attendant said, beaming widely.

Harry sighed, but took his wand out from its holster and approached the desk with a form of wariness one might reserve for a particularly hungry lion. "If this goes poor, remember I warned you," he said.

"We'll keep that in mind," the leader replied, clearly thinking Harry was overreaction to the entire situation.

When Harry put his wand on the scale, his worst fears came true.

His focus really didn't like anyone else messing with it, which Harry knew when he started this whole thing. He had figured that with no actual physical involvement, his focus might just short the spell out, like an electrical current being snapped off, but they had gone for flashy this time.

The scale immediately burst into flames, followed quickly by sparking, and then the desk under the scale started to smolder.

"What's happening? What is this? This has never happened before!" the attendant was backing away from the flames, eyes wide.

Harry snatched his focus back, soothing them as he placed it back in his holster. "I did say that this was a bad idea," he said.

"I see...well," the Leader waved their wand and muttered something, freezing the flames in place. "I would extinguish them, but this is such a unique reaction that I would like some time to study it. I'll send someone up to take readings soon."

"But...but what about the interim? The Scales have been melted!"

"There are some spares laying around, I'm sure, or the old one. The Ministry is notorious for never throwing anything away, after all." the leader waved a hand.

"Let's get going then! Allons-y!" the Doctor said, cheer and humor in his step.

Harry grinned. "Race you!"

"You're on!"

"You don't know where you're going!" the leader interjected, and Harry and the Doctor stumbled to a sheepish stop just a few feet from sprinting.

"Ah, right, that. Well, give us the directions then, good sir!"

"If the Department of Mysteries was a place you could give directions to, it's not a very good
Department of Mysteries, is it?” the Leader said, then swept into the elevator. "Now, follow me. I do have to be present for you to get into the Department, after all.” Or soon would need to be, whenever they got around to upgrading their security protocols. They hadn't done it yet, but it was on a long list of things to-do.

The elevator was quiet as they headed ever downwards, and Harry figured they were several hundred meters underground. Impressive.

"Now, remember, no wandering off, don't touch anything I don't give you permission to touch, and don't go playing with things. This isn't some wonderland resort for you to muck about in."

Harry stifled a chuckle. That was rather similar to what they had said to nearly everyone who had walked into the Tardis.

"Can do! Hands in ma pockets." The Doctor shoved said hands into his pockets to make his point abundantly clear. Well, at least there was that. Harry didn't bother with the pockets.

"So why is there even an elevator to the Department of Mysteries?" Harry asked. "I mean, doesn't that make it really obvious where it is?"

The leader gave Harry a look, or Harry thought he did, he couldn't see the person's face. "The elevator wouldn't take anyone to the Department unless you were recognized by the wards," they commented.

Harry made an ahhh-ing noise. "I see. Makes sense. Well, that works to keep the curious out." Harry looked at the bank of buttons. "If I press all the buttons what happens?" he asked, hands inching towards the rows of tempting distracters.

"Nothing. The Department of Mysteries gets priority," the Leader said, and Harry sighed.

Then grinned. "Well, can't hurt then," he said, and then proceeded to push every single button. "I mean, this is a magic elevator, why are there even buttons?" he asked while absently pushing every single button.

"It lessens the number of spells people need to memorize. They tied the call floors to the buttons and each press will resonate with the corresponding floor's ward," the Leader explained.

"Ah, I see. Well, will it still resonate after we stop at the Department of Mysteries? I mean, will it still keep going to all the floors after we get off?"

"I have no idea. I've never really had to use the elevator. It's only because you're with us that we couldn't go straight to the Department in the first place." The Leader looked between Harry and the Doctor. "You aren't keyed into the wards so we have to go in the normal way....and here we are."

The doors opened and they entered what seemed to be a short hallway, ending in a circular room full of...doors?

"Lot's of doors. Good day if you like doors. I'm more fond of windows, myself, but a good door is good too." The Doctor grinned. "Any specific door you recommend we don't open? Best to start with the worst one first," he said.

"Any door. We have to spell the doors so we can find the right room." The Leader took out their wand, muttered words Harry wasn't able to hear, and the doors spun around at a rapid rate, dizzying and eye watering, before settling down, now no longer the same color and texture and with little signs on them.
"Well, that's convenient," Harry muttered.

"Only the Head of the Department can do that spell," one of the members said, a note of pride in their heavily distorted voice.

"Hush up, that's not information you need to spread around," the now Head of Department said, looking towards the member who had spoken. "Now, let's head in."

One of the doors opened and an insistently and, despite being not particularly loud, it was piercing.

"Is that..." the Doctor started. "That's the alarm that you've been talking about?"

"That's the alarm that's been going off for nearly a month," the Leader confirmed, slipping off the hooded cloak.

Not that they were any less mysterious, as they just looked...plain. No distinct features, male or female, no real color palette to their skin or hair tone, and just a general body shape.

Their voice had changed from cartoon distortion to just being implacably neutral.

"I see why you wanted me here," Harry said. "I mean, if you've been listening to that for ages, I can see how irritating that must have been. So, since it's getting on my nerves, can we do something about it?"

The leader smiled. "I thought you'd never ask. Come, follow me."

They didn't go far, just to the opposite side of the room. "Alright, not too much of a challenge. What do I need to do?"

"If you can release your magic, then we can register it's signature properly and the sensors will stop going haywire whenever you do magic." The leader gave Harry a look, and Harry shrugged.

"Alright. Just, don't touch me, ok?"

"That's fine. We don't need physical contact for this spell to work."

Harry slipped his necklace off, and his magic whirled to life around him, bumbling happily around the room, telling Harry all about the little things it found, the strange wards and magics it couldn't understand, and the fascinating little spell that was reading his signature.

"Is your magic...talking...to my spell?" the leader asked, a note of shock. "Because these readings are not normal."

"My magic likes to explore. It's sort of wandering around and taking in everything it can. I mean, it might be talking to your spell. I'm not sure."

The alarm was constant and piercing as the Doctor attempted to fiddle with something that would adjust the kinds of magic it would sense.

To the relief of all the workers in the Department, the alarm ceased, and there was a sense of peace that descended upon the room.

"Thank Merlin," one of the workers breathed. "I thought we would be listening to that until we died."

Harry still found them cursing with Merlin's name amusing. He needed to tell Arthur that, he forgot
the last time he had written to his friend.

~~~~~In Which This is a Scene Change~~~~~

Amelia Bones, sole remaining adult of the Bones line and currently head of the Department of Magical Law Enforcement, retired to her office with a glare at anyone who dared approach her with paperwork or a concern.

She had just come back from dealing with an...overenthusiastic...obliviator, who had nearly sent two muggles into a coma. Really, what kind of wizards and witches were getting through training? No one who passed through the kind of stringent requirements she required out of her employees should ever over power a spell so much.

And yet here she was, dealing with the third such incident in two months. She was about ready to strangle the department heads who couldn't seem to pass competent workers.

It was a bit of a shock when she saw a Hogwarts Owl sitting on her desk, looking ruffled and put out that it had had to wait for her return. It had pecked at several of her devices but otherwise hadn't caused much damage, so she gave the brown feathered bird a treat, took the letter, and sent it on its way.

It was the monthly letter Professor Sprout sent home about all her first and second years. Amelia appreciated the time the Hufflepuff head of house took to write such letters. It was a way of placating worried parents, as eleven was such a young age nowadays to send your child out into the world, even if it was only to a boarding school.

She opened the letter, looking forward to hearing about her niece's past month. Susan had been as much a daughter to her as any child born of her could be, having raised the girl after their family had been killed.

Madam Bones,

I hope you receive this letter in good health. We could hardly afford the head of the Department of Magical Law Enforcement getting sick.

I wish I could write and say Susan is as well adjusted and happy as she appeared to be in September and October, but I am afraid that is the crux of the issue. She is still very much happy, and her grades are spectacular, but she has withdrawn from her housemates and the tentative friendships she had started within Hufflepuff. She has friends, and from all the other houses, but it is disconcerting to see her withdraw from Hufflepuff so abruptly. I have tried to speak with her about the problem, but she sees nothing wrong with her actions and endeavors to spend as much time with her circle of friends.

Her friends are Blaise Zabini of Slytherin, Hermione Granger and Neville Longbottom of Gryffindor, Padma Patil of Ravenclaw, and Harry. Much of these issues began last month when Harry arrived at Hogwarts. He immediately began gathering a group around himself of young witches and wizards. They spend long periods of time together, and have even had an inter-house common room created to accommodate their meetings so they don't disturb students in their own common rooms.

Susan's grades have risen dramatically since she has found her new friends. I am less worried about that, though. Her intelligence is not under question here. She is a smart girl. But she has been caught up in several situations I would have deemed far too dangerous for a child to be in, despite it being Harry who has been the instigator behind them. She does not wish to listen to me when I ask
her to be more cautious, so I am hoping you could get through to her that making intra-house
connections is an important step as well. Inter-house friendships are wonderful to see, but they
should not be created at the expense of Intra-House relationships.

I was hoping you could speak with her and see if she is able to find reason in her actions, and if she
would be willing to reconnect with those she abandoned when she made friends with Harry and his
group.

I will be attaching her grading report for the first quarter. Please let me know if there is anything I
can assist you with

Your's Sincerely

Pomona Sprout.

Amelia groaned, rubbing at her eyelids with her fingers. She had wondered if it was something
remotely similar when Susan's letters stopped coming in. Susan had written at least once a week
since September, but those letters had dwindled and by now had stopped.

She would have to figure out what was going on with her niece, hopefully not the hard way. And
hearing that Harry Potter was the reason behind it was more than disconcerting.

In the long run, Amelia knew that the friends Susan made would be infinitely more important than
the grades she made in classes. To have distanced herself from her House mates was disturbing
information, even as the information that she had made good friends with other Houses cheered her
somewhat. Still, she would be writing to Susan about this, and hopefully would get more information
from her niece about the situation.

~~~~In Which this is a Scene Change~~~~

Madam Longbottom was in nervous fits, clutching the letter in her hand so tightly it might actually
not be in one piece, not that she was concerned.

She had just received news that her grandson was in the Hospital Wing in serious condition, his core
having shattered, of all things. Madam Longbottom stepped into the floo, fear coursing through her
veins.

She couldn't lose her grandson, she couldn't. She had heard about cores shattering, but only in horror
stories told to keep young witches and wizards from trying dangerous spells and doing more than
they should. A core shattering was not something that could just be pieced back together by a medi-
wizard. She didn't know the exact process, but most of those who survived ended up weak, barely
able to cast magic and plagued by physical ailments all their lives.

So she feared the worst when she headed to Hogwarts.

How could Neville's core have shattered? She had him tested as a child, when he had shown no
accidental magic. The specialists at Saint Mungos had said he was magically strong, that she would
have nothing to fear about him ending up a squib, that he would be just fine. But they had said
nothing about the amount of power that could cause an eleven year old's core to shatter.

She stepped regally out of the flames into the headmaster's office, trying to keep her dignity intact.
"Where is my grandson?" she asked, hoping her voice was level. The headmaster looked up,
blinking. "Ah, Madam Longbottom, you've come. Much faster than I had guessed, but I shouldn't be
surprised. Neville is recovering in the Hospital Wing."
"That Hospital Wing? You mean he hasn't been moved to Saint Mungos? What is the delay? It must have taken at least an hour for your letter to reach me, and thus this must have occurred at least several hours ago, what is stopping his transfer?" Her heart raced. Was it too late for Neville?

The Headmaster put up a soothing hand. "No, no, nothing of the sort. Neville's core is pieced back together, it is merely healing itself at this point. His magic is being monitored and it shows remarkable recovery, considering the magnitude of power it released when his core shattered. It was felt all throughout the castle and centaurs in the forest tell me it was felt there as well."

Madam Augusta Longbottom was startled into silence, blinking in confusion. "I'm sorry, what?"

"His core is recovering as we speak. It will take at least a week or two to become fully stable, and he won't be allowed to cast a spell until then, but it is recovering." Dumbledore smiled. "He is a remarkable child."

"But...how is that possible? Cores that have shattered never recover like that! That is nonsense! I was hoping that his youth would give him more of a chance to regain most of his abilities, but fully recover so quickly? That is..." she trailed off, the bizarreness of the situation hitting her. "I've never heard of the like."

"Well, you may wish to thank his friend, young Mr. Harry. Harry is a talented Magic Sensor and was able to use his own magic to push the shards of Neville's core back together until Neville's magic was able to stabilize it and start healing the fractures." Dumbledore said this as if he weren't saying that someone had performed miracles.

"Mr. Harry? Is he a new teacher I am unaware of?"

"Not at all. He is of Mr. Longbottom's age group and one of his close friends."

"You're telling me an eleven year old did what healers have been unable to do for hundreds of years?" Madam Longbottom finally said, clutching the letter in her hand tighter, feeling relief and confusion coursing through her. "How is it that this had happened?"

Dumbledore stroked his beard. "Young Mr. Harry is quite the mystery to many of us. His talents are manifold and he is fiercely intelligent. I'm sure we will be finding him doing many things we believed to be impossible at first."

Madam Longbottom gathered herself. "I wish to speak with this Mr. Harry before I leave and convey my thanks, but right now I wish to see my grandson."

"We can go there now." Dumbledore led the way out of the portrait hole and down the various staircases and hallways until they reached the Hospital Wing.

It was locked to students for the moment, with a small magical notepad and quill outside and a sign requesting the problem whomever has turned up is suffering from.

Madam Longbottom looked at it, slightly confused. "We don't wish to take chances with Mr. Longbottom's condition. Only a limited number of people are allowed into the Hospital Wing right now, though I'm sure that will change in the next few days," Dumbledore explained.

"Ah, I see."

Dumbledore opened the door, and Madam Longbottom was greeted to the sight of her grandson laying, pale and unconscious, in a bed.
Next to that bed were four young students, sitting quietly in chairs and talking, occasionally looking over at Neville. "Who are they?"

"Those are his friends. They've been allowed in because it seems the best way to keep them out of trouble is to keep them where we can find them, and for now that is here. Hermione Granger, Susan Bones, Padma Patil, and Blaise Zabini. Harry would also be here, if not for extenuating circumstances."

"Which you still haven't told us about," Blaise said, voice barely above a whisper. "I mean, I get Harry just up and vanishing, he does that a lot, but he's been gone hours now and that never happens."

"You've known him for a month, Mr. Zabini," Dumbledore started.

"And he hasn't vanished without telling us where he's going ever," Susan pointed out.

Dumbledore sighed. "I have allowed you here because you are safer supervised, especially when Harry is not here to help contain the disasters you frequently find yourselves in, despite only having been friends for a month. Please refrain from picking up on Harry's bad habits as well," he said, resigned.

Hermione glowered at him. "Just because Padma and I figured out how to access our magic directly doesn't mean we'll go around causing explosion," she said primly.

"You put a hole through the stone ceiling, Ms. Granger. I think it's safe to keep you here for the time being." Hermione's mouth thinned, but she didn't say anything.

Madam Longbottom was more than a little startled. "Blaise Zabini, son of Angelina Zabini?" she asked.

"I didn't choose her as a mother, you know," the boy replied.

"And Susan Bones, niece of Amelia Bones? And Padma Patil of the Indian Patils? And...I don't recognize the name Granger.... How did you all ever become friends with my Neville?"

"I'm a New Blood, First Gen, and you can thank, or blame, Harry for that," Hermione said. "Neville's a good friend. We're getting him to speak up more often, even if most of that is Harry causing minor catastrophes in Herbology and Neville scolding him." She grinned at that.

"I would like to meet this Harry," Madam Longbottom said, voice thoughtful.

"Harry isn't here right now, and I should be glad of that as he isn't causing any more uproars in the castle at the moment, but I would rather him be here as I have no idea how he did what he did and I need to submit my report to the Medical Research Office," Madam Pomphrey said, bustling out of wherever it was she had been busy doing something.

Madam Longbottom walked as quickly as her stately airs would allow her to her grandson, stopping by his side and hesitating. "May I touch him?" she asked, her voice soft.

"Of course, just don't channel any magic. We aren't sure exactly what it is that Harry did that made his core reform and we would rather not have a repeat of the incident that brought him here," Madam Pomphrey said. "Healing magic seems to be okay, but anything else is uncertain."

The stately madam nodded, then took Neville's hand in hers. "I'm so sorry, Neville," she murmured. "So sorry that this has happened."
"Why are you sorry? It's nothing you did," Susan said softly. "Harry said Neville had blocked his own core when he was really young and that the bonds broke. It was why Neville was doing really well in all his classes recently. He got nearly every spell the first time he tried it."

"Blocked his core?" Madam Longbottom asked, a note of quizzical confusion.

"I found the remnants of such a block myself. More often than not they are used when a young witch or wizard has too much power to control, and it's slowly released as they get older, but there are reports of youngsters doing it to themselves subconsciously. Often those children are withdrawn, shy, lack confidence, or were abused," Dumbledore said, Madam Pomfrey nodding behind him.

"I can say Neville was never abused, but he was often ignored. I was not prepared to deal with a young child so soon after my son and daughter-in-law's...accident. I pushed him off onto the house elves and any other relative that was around, and I encouraged his silence. My brother, Alfred, was nearly disowned when Neville was about eight when he tried to see if Neville had magic in a way I found horrifying." Madam Longbottom's lips thinned as she spoke. "The healers said he was magical, but his magic was focused more inwards than outwards."

"Did Neville ever get sick as a child?" Madam Pomfrey asked. At the Longbottom Head's look, she clarified. "Many children who don't show outward signs of magic often focus that magic on themselves. They don't get sick or injured, animals are drawn to them and they tend to do well with living things."

Madam Longbottom pursed her lips. "That certainly sounds like Neville. He was never sick in my memory, and he almost never got injured. And that cat that liked no one adopted him as her own kitten until she died when Neville was nine. I've never seen a child so devastated over the loss of a pet, but that cat was like his mother." She rubbed Neville's hand. "That would explain a lot, if his accidental magic manifested in much quieter ways. I was expecting the outbursts his father had, changing the colors of things, multiplying his toys, shattering glass."

Dumbledore gave a gentle smile. "Well, the truth has been discovered, and Neville will recover from this incident with little to indicate it happened at all. He will need a new wand, however, as his shattered when his core shattered. I found the splinters all around the chair he was sitting in."

"We shall make it a priority when Winter Holidays come," Madam Longbottom said. "He should have had his own wand anyway," she muttered softly.

"Oh, right, he said he was using his dad's wand," Hermione remarked. "It didn't work very well for him for a while, but Harry showed him how to make it work."

"This Harry keeps coming up. Am I to assume, as I have been, that this is Harry Potter? I am unaware of any other children named Harry in Neville's age group."

"So long as you don't call him Potter, then yes, he is," Blaise said. "And really, please don't call him Potter. I could go the rest of my life without hearing that speech again."

"He's getting better about it," Hermione noted. "He doesn't get angry anymore. He's just sort of resigned to correcting everyone. And since Malfoy stopped messing with him, it's just really the youngest Weasley that keeps it up."

"Well, still."

"I am afraid I don't understand."

Dumbledore stepped between the four students who looked like they were about to burst into some
sort of long winded speech. "Let me, if I may." The four subsided. "Harry was raised by an old acquaintance of mine, who did not raise him with his last name. Harry did not grow up learning his last name was Potter, and thus doesn't identify with it. His magic as well has rejected it. As it stands, it is easier for everyone to just use Harry."

Madam Longbottom looked mystified.

~~~In Which this is a Scene Change~~~~

The Department of Mysteries was fascinating. Harry wandered around without much thought for where he was going. He kept his hands to himself, having had enough experience in his own home to not touch things when people said not to, but he didn't feel like wandering around was such a bad thing.

From the hallway he could hear the faint whispering of...something. He cocked his head, curious. The noise was coming from a door up ahead, and he stumbled into a room filled with the eerie sound, like the of wailing spirits. He had been to a planet where the natives existed on the Astral plane and were what humans considered ghosts. They had this breathy, airy quality to their speech when they spoke to him, and it sounded very similar.

He peered around, curious. "Hello? Is anyone there?" He paused, considered. "Even if you aren't on this particular plane of existence? I mean, ghost-like or similar, enough so that you've been called a ghost?" He fell silent, listening, waiting.

Nothing answered him, and he sighed. "Alright then, let's go see if I can find the source of this noise. It's rather fascinating. I don't think I've heard it before on this planet."

He meandered off towards the center of the room, a sunken platform of some sort, like a small stage, but instead of a raised dais, it was a sunken theater.

In the middle, though, was not a stage, but a strange black archway with a cloth blacker than the void fluttering in a wind Harry couldn't feel. His bones froze as the implications hit him.

They had something here, something powerful, something that should not exist.

He didn't know why he knew this, just that it was ingrained in him so deeply that the very sight of the fluttering cloth felt horrendously wrong.

A few steps more brought him to the edge of the stairs leading down towards it, and the voices grew more distinct, clearer.

He recognized some of them, some of those he had tried to help and failed, some of those who had tried to help him and his family and had been killed or died. People and beings, many not human, whose voices shouldn't be on this planet. "It can't be..." he whispered. "But they died so far away....how can their voices..."

Harry stepped closer, trying to disprove what his mind was telling him was true.

"What is that?" he whispered, horror in his voice. "What have you all brought here?"

"We brought nothing here," Harry near leapt out of his skin. "That was here long before the Ministry was. There are rumors that those who founded the Department of Mysteries did so to keep people out of that very archway you stare at so fearfully."

"What is it?" Harry asked. "How could it have been here before you? It's so far from the surface of
Earth.” He shuddered. “How can you all even stand to be near it? The whispering alone would drive me crazy before the day was out. I could hear it from halfway down the hall.”

"Only those who have witnessed someone close to them dying can hear the voices of the Veil. It was shifted by ancient elemental magic to bring it somewhere away from the public eye, somewhere it could be studied and kept from people, kept from bringing more harm."

"But I hear voices of those who died far from here," Harry said, looking at the Veil with a hint of confused frustration.

"The Veil does not care where you lost someone, only that the event has occurred. The magic will provide the rest." Harry stared at the androgynous figure, taking deep, shuddering breaths.

"This...I can’t. I can’t stay here. I don’t think I could survive another minute with that Veil." He crossed his arms over his chest. "I don’t like having my past thrown in my face."

"You are young to hear the voices to clearly. Rarely do even our new recruits hear anything at all."

A quizzical head tilt. "What are you, child, to set off our sensors, to hear the Veil so clearly. It is most strange."

Harry just shook his head. "I’m just Harry. And I’ll be going now. I’d rather you destroy that archway, though. It seems to bring nothing but misfortune."

"You think we haven’t tried?" the figure said, voice even.

Harry glared at the figure. "I don’t think you lot actually know what you’re dealing with! That Veil contains voices of people who shouldn’t even be known to this place! It lures and tempts and calls, and yet you keep it here, beyond a door! As if you are ignorant of what it is!" He was boiling, the unnerving experience of hearing voices of those who died on far away planets, in far away times, chilling him to the core.

The figure was deceptively calm. "Do you know why it is beyond just a door in the Department of Mysteries, rather than, say, several tonnes of concrete?" Harry nodded warily. "Because that Veil has given us innumerable breakthroughs in medical magic, in detection magic, in enchantments and layered spells, in how to block unwanted temptations, and it opened a whole new field of Runes."

Harry was outraged. "Knowledge over life? As much as I value knowledge, that Veil would drive anyone who could hear the voices crazy within days!"

"Also, that Veil has a force field preventing anything blocking it off. We tried sealing it within a room, no entrance. As soon as the room was finished, a hole was blown through the wall. We dumped concrete on it, only for the concrete to slide around a barrier we couldn’t see and pile up on either side of the arch. We have tried to destroy it, and even fiendfyre failed to do anything. So we have closed it within a room, with a door that can never be locked, deep in the Department of Mysteries, because if we can keep it here, we can prevent the damage it does, restrict it to the Department only,” the continued, seeming to ignore Harry’s outburst.

"But..." Harry started, only to be silenced by the sharp look of the figure.

"Two out of five workers in the Department of Mysteries succumbs to the Curse of the Veil every year. On average. We have lost twenty-five members of the Department in the past twelve years to the Veil. You think we don’t know how dangerous it is? How tempting those voices of your failures promising redemption if only you step through those fluttering curtains? How badly some of us screw up until it looks appealing, like something that could truly be our salvation?” A deep breath,
and then another. "You are but a child, no matter how intelligent or experienced or damaged you are, 
you are but eleven years old, have only seen eleven years of life. Only have eleven turns around the 
sun to drag at your shoulders." There was a long pause. "When you have thirty, forty, fifty years, 
when you have seen the deaths of your closest companions, brothers, sisters, sons, daughters, fathers, 
mothers, those who relied on you, who you failed, and then you must still plod on, must still take a 
step forward every day, tell me then that the sounds behind that fluttering cloth don't sound tempting, 
that they don't offer you just a bit of peace, rest, from the turmoil of your life."

Harry felt like his breath was frozen in his lungs. His throat wouldn't thaw, wouldn't let sound 
through, and he choked on what he wanted to say.

It was something he hadn't imagined, a life in anonymous service to a people who never knew who 
saved them, who failed them, who delivered them from death, or to. That people would have to live 
with it, with the same people they had served or failed to, and go on with their lives.

His life had been rootless, always easy to move, always easy to just...leave behind bad memories 
with the closing of the Tardis doors and the firing of the engines. That the only things he kept were 
the images in his mind, but he would never have to see the landscape they perished in again, never 
have to speak the language they cried out in again.

"I'm...I'm sorry. I was thoughtless," he finally said. "I have the unique privilege of never having to 
stay where tragedy has struck. I hadn't considered that there were those who remained behind." He 
looked down at the floor, then steeled himself and looked up at the fuzzed face of his companion. "I 
was inconsiderate."

"I shall take you apology as it was meant. Your intelligence shows once more, young Harry. I hope 
this teaches you to consider your words more carefully. Your tongue is sharp, child, and you use it 
freely." The figure tilted their head towards the door. "Let's leave this room to its misery. I hope you 
ever find yourself here again, young Harry. This is not somewhere you should frequent."

Harry nodded, following the figure out of the room, letting the door shut gently behind him, and they 
walked back towards the main room.

~~~In Which this is a POV Change~~~

The moment Harry stepped into the Department of Mysteries, his presence was immediately 
noticeable. After decades, more years than any other Unspeakable, it was hard to miss. So they 
lurked when Harry made his way into the main office.

The child was made of magic. Was is really possible for a human body to contain so much magic? It 
was unbelievable, except there he stood, radiating so much power that it was feeding the ambient 
magical artifacts.

And that was with his magic bound within his body. If it was allowed to run free...

They watched as Harry took his limiting device off.

The amount of magic...

It was as if a ley line had been released into the room, all that power spilling out into the air. It was 
intoxicating.

It was doubtful that anyone else could really sense the depth and breadth of power that this small 
child contained. No one had the experience, the sensitivity, to grasp it.
So when Harry wandered off, they followed. Really, there was nothing better to be doing. This child was such an anomaly that it was impossible not to be drawn to him.

The Death Chamber. The child had really gone into the Death Chamber. Had he been drawn to it?

Harry was staring, eyes wide, at the fluttering veil. Those green irises were bright in shock, fear, and horror. "It can't be..." he whispered. "But they died so far away....how can their voices..."

So Harry could hear the voices, could hear the veil's temptation luring him in, except it seemed to scare him, rather than draw him in.

The youth, it seemed, resisted the calls better.

But still, the child was still a child. It was obvious, after speaking with him, that he was impulsive, reckless, and didn't think before he spoke. "Frighteningly intelligent, yes. Immensely powerful, without a doubt. But so young, so inexperienced.

It was comforting, in a way, to know that such power did not come with inherent knowledge of all there was around them.

~~~~In Which This is a POV Change~~~~

"Is this where anything too dangerous for the general population is?" Harry asked, hesitant.

"I would say yes, aside from several things that are beyond even our reach. The Unspeakables aren't everywhere, and they aren't all powerful. If an unspeakable had the power you have at your disposal, I dare say there would be little they couldn't find and get a hold of, if they wished to."

Harry frowned. "What is that supposed to mean? I mean, I know my magic is fairly strong, but it's not like others can't do the same things if they try. Just because I don't think there are limitations doesn't mean that others can't do it as well."

The Unspeakable smiled. "I find your determination to ignore just how unique you are both absurdly ignorant and extremely naive. You are, by far, the most powerful magic user to walk into the Department of Mysteries. The amount of magic you have at your disposal is not some child's plaything, Harry. You cannot go around ignoring that fact. You can do something it takes others years of hard work and dedication to do with a bit of effort and concentration. You don't have to worry about overextending your power. The things you can do, Harry, aren't just without limits, but beyond imagination. It is why your professors are so scared of you."

Harry scoffed. "Scared of me? You're joking. Professor Snape barely tolerates me, Professor McGonagall thinks I'm a ticking time bomb, and Professor Flitwick just lets me do whatever."

"Because, you young one, they don't know how to teach you. You grasp instinctively what it takes others due diligence to learn."

"And this is bad how?"

"I never said it was bad, but it is reckless. Without knowing how out of the ordinary your magic is, you could push your friends into trying things they simply would not be able to do at the same level. And you could hurt them." They arrived back in the main room, where the Doctor was still tinkering with the spells they had set up. "It seems your father is currently occupied. Do you wish for a quick tour of the Department of Mysteries?"

Harry nodded, pensive. "I'd like that."
"You are far quieter than I had thought you to be."

"You've given me a lot to think about. I don't often hear how detrimental my magic can be," Harry replied.

"Harry, child, your magic is a gift, one that you should treasure, as all magicals should treasure it. It is something the Universe itself granted you, but you should also be aware that not every magical is the same. For most spells, magicals don't have a problem casting them, but they were designed for the average witch or wizard to cast. But I have seen the results of some of your spell work, most notably something resembling a very complex warding spell in a forest near Yorkshire. And that, that could not be done by the average magical. In fact, I dare say even Dumbledore himself would have had trouble casting something as complex as you did, as quickly as you did." The Unspeakable gave Harry a significant look. "You are dangerous, child, and you should know just how dangerous."

"But I have drained my magic to critical levels before," Harry protested. "I was unconscious for nearly a day!"

The Unspeakable chuckled. "Then you were not nearly as drained as you think you were. I have seen magical exhaustion take its toll on any number of magicals. They take up to a week or a month to recover, depending on the severity." There was a pause. "You must be careful with your magic. Throwing it around the way you do is dangerous. Practice, experiment, learn, explore. Find the limits of your magic, or the lack thereof, but don't just believe that everyone can do the same things. Let them explore their own magic, find their limits. Magic is deeply personal."

Harry nodded. "I know that. I do. But...it just seems silly that someone couldn't do something with magic. Maybe not as easily or as quickly as I do, but to be unable to do it seems weird."

"Ah, the mind of a youngster who has never met the impossible before. Well, is there anything you can do with magic that is both uniquely you and complicated? I only ask because it would establish a good baseline for what you believe is possible with magic, and for me to point out what exactly it is that you accomplish."

Harry frowned but nodded. "There's something I've always had since I was a kid, but dad said showing it to people might not be the best idea."

The Unspeakable hummed. "Well, I promise not to gape or gawk or whatever. I have seen quite a lot of advanced magic in my time."

"Well, alright." Harry closed his eyes and centered his thoughts on his childhood experiment, his personal solar system he had grown and created over the years.

He brought his hands together, not needing his focus for this bit of magic. This bit of magic had always been with him, had always been his companion.

He clapped his hands, then spread them apart, letting the forms of planets and suns and moons and asteroids and comets and everything that made up a complex solar system form in the air in front of him.

His solar system was one that he knew, logically, couldn't exist. The gravity imbalance alone would throw half the planets off into space, and at least two of the stars were far too close together and were likely to collide within a few million years. But the impossibilities of the system didn't phase him. He knew this was a childhood creation, created long before he understood anything about the delicate physics of the Universe.
So he kept its impossibilities, adding little planets with life, letting his magic shape their making.

As it sprang to life, coalescing into being between him and the Unspeakable, he watched their eyes grow wide in wonder. Watched the awe spark in the colorless orbs.

And he grinned. His solar system was still a wonder to behold.

"This...this is magnificent. The kind of magic that must have gone into the creation of something so intricate...and this is a childhood creation?"

Harry nodded. "I started when I was first given to my dad. Dad loves the stars and the planets and I learned everything there was to know about the Universe before I even learned what the names of animals were. I started with...this system." He pointed out a star and three planet system somewhere near the center of the whole thing. "I named the star Galifrix and the planets are called Syprus, Syisyfus, and Slepnir. And yes, I liked stories too."

"Your magic is far more powerful than I even dreamed of, to create this as a young child of two years. The balance of magic between creation, enchantments, illusions, and conjuration is enormous, but you have instinctively created something that I would bet would take three master enchanters, a runes expert, a ward weaver, and a charms master to replicate. I have underestimated your power, young Harry. I won't do so again." The Unspeakable drew closer to the creation, and grinned when the heat of a passing star reached them. "You are an extraordinary child, Harry. I look forward to seeing what you do in the future, should you survive what I expect will be a tumultuous growing phase."

Harry looked quizzical. "What do you mean?"

"I am sure you are aware by now of the Coming of Age for magicals is different than the coming of age for non-magicals," the Unspeakable said, continuing to peer at Harry's creation.

"Yes. and I have been told mine will be something that will be eventful and dangerous."

A snort. "You say dangerous as if you don't expect your coming of age to blow up have the area surrounding you in reaction to the amount of magic you will release." Harry blinked. "Don't look so shocked. The amount of magic you so casually play around with doesn't come without consequences. Those with the kind of power you wield come along once every millennia, and the last child to have even a smidge of the kind of power you possess died during their coming of age."

"I have heard of something like that happening," he murmured, wondering if he probably shouldn't have been reading the material his dad got from Haleysio.

"You, my child, you I fear might have to find somewhere hundred of kilometers from any kind of civilization and right on top of a ley line to survive your coming of age. I hope your family has begun preparations for your...eventful day already."

Harry nodded. "There's been a rough plan drawn up. But...aren't most coming of ages a release of magical energy, as the body has finally reached a point where the magical's full potential can be utilized?"

"Yes, but most magicals don't go come of age with more magic in their hand than most people have in their entire body. I may speak with your father about extenuating circumstances. Your case is one that will take some precedence in this department."

The Unspeakable stood up, looking once again at Harry's solar system. "You have a fine creation. It shows more about you than you may be comfortable revealing. Be careful who you show that to, as it is, in essence, your soul on display."
Harry released it with a sigh. "But I love it quite a lot. It's my pet project, the most advanced bit of magic I've ever managed to do. There's even life on some of the planets, and since the time scale is sped up by magic I can watch them evolve and create civilizations on their worlds. As if they were real, as if they were actual beings out in the Universe." Harry grinned.

"And I am reminded of your childlike wonder once again, young Harry. Thank you for that."

"Why?"

"Because, it is far too easy to forget that you are still a child. You wield immense power and you are magnitudes more intelligent than many I have met in my lifetime. When faced with that, your age becomes rather secondary." The unspeakable smiled at him. "It's good to know that you are still a child and can be delighted in the same way."

"My dad's always excited over everything, it's not just for kids."

"You father is a special case, young Harry. When you have lived as long as legends say he has, finding the joy in anything is reason to celebrate."

Harry nodded, then let his magic collapse, his solar systems vanishing with it.

The Unspeakable smiled over at Harry. "Well, so long as you keep your magic to yourself, I don't mind showing you around to a few more rooms."

Harry grinned. "I can keep my magic to myself." He looked the Unspeakable up and down. "Who are you exactly. I mean, I don't recognize your magical signature so you weren't on the team that came to Hogwarts, and I can't even tell much about, well, you. Whatever spellwork you have layered over yourself is impressive. I can't tell what color your skin or hair is, much less if you're human or not."

"I am someone the Unspeakables ask for help. I have been here longer than the current employees have been alive, and I fear I may be here after they have died. It is the case in my position that we often was those we care for, those we train, pass on before we may do so."

Harry quirked his head. "So, you're the one everyone goes to for help? Wouldn't that make you the leader or something?"

A smile, quick and amused, spread across the featureless face. "There is little point in such a system within the Department of Mysteries, but in a sense I am the Teacher, the Overseer, of the Department. My word is, ultimately, the law that everyone chooses to follow. Not by force, understand, but simply because what I say comes with years of experience backing it up."

"Ah, okay. Wise old master, then. I'd call you Yoda, if you were green and short."

"I speak with proper grammar, so it doesn't quite apply to me."

Harry's eyebrows rose. "You know Star Wars?"

"I was quite amused by it when it first came out. Such a fascinating concept, the travel between planets, stars, across a galaxy. Such an intriguing life to lead, one amongst the very cradle that created life." A crinkle eyes smile was given. "I'm sure you can understand."

"Um...."

"Whether you say something or not, I do understand what you're not saying. You're family is famous
for more than just the legends here on Earth, and no matter how irritating the younger Unspeakables find UNIT and Torchwood, I rather find it all extremely interesting."

"Ah...that's...good to to know," Harry said. "Um, well..." he trailed off. The had turned a corner and were in a room filled with shelves and shelves of globes. Pale white mist swirled within their confines, and little plaques hung on the shelf in front of them, letters engraved carefully into the metal.

"What are these?"

"This is the hall of prophecy."

Harry's eyes went wide. "And why are you bringing me here?" Could whatever Tom had said been true? He thought. Could there really be a prophecy about him? He had hoped it was just something the soul piece had been uncertain over.

"Because, young Harry, you should know your destiny is more than just happenstance. You are known for far more than just surviving a curse that kills. Your name is written in these halls, on a plaque, next to the name of the man who tried to kill you for that very reason."

"No. No no no no no. You are not telling me that I am part of some prophecy thing, are you? I hate prophecies. I really really hate prophecies." He spat these words as if the force with which he said it would make a difference.

"I am sorry, then, to bring one to your attention, but you could not escape it. It has been spoken, whether you have heard it or not."

"Yeah, but prophecies are half self-fulfilling, really. I mean, if you just didn't do the things it said you would do, then there wouldn't be a problem, would there?"

The Unspeakable smiled. "I have heard of such attempts, but that relies on everyone involved not acting upon it, and the other half of your prophecy has already acted." Their eyes flicked to Harry's scar, hidden under his hair. "You cannot escape your prophecy now any more than you can erase that scar upon your forehead."

"Give it time, I'll find something that gets rid of it." Harry tamped his hair down over the scar.

"Let us go find your father, young one. You seem to have had your fill of the Department of Mysteries for today."

Harry nodded fervently. Between the Veil and the Prophecy Hall, he had his fill of this place for a while.

The two were soon back in the main receiving room for the Department of Mysteries, not that the Department had many guests, but it was the thought that counted.

"Ah, good, you're back. I hope you didn't get too lost," one of the now just as faceless Unspeakables said, glancing over at Harry.

"Not really. I had a guide," he said, gesturing at the person who had accompanied him. "Helpful, really. This place is all sorts of twisty. You've got magic layered everywhere here."
"This is a Department to study unusual magics. I would hope we had magic here," was the bland reply. "Now, the Doctor here has managed to get our spells set up in such a way that we can register your magic levels and set the spells to recognize them, so we won't be having the same issue where your casting sets off every single alarm in this room." A significant look was aimed at the boy. "So, take off your limiter again and we'll let this sense your magic and adjust accordingly. After that, you two can go back to Hogwarts."

"I for one would be glad to get out of here," Harry said with feeling.

"Really? I wouldn't mind a look around, see what you've got stuck down here."

A flash of panic flickered across Harry's face. His dad couldn't go near the Veil, should never be allowed near the Veil. If what he was told was true, then the voices his dad would hear would be overwhelming. There was a reason his dad was known throughout the Universe, throughout time, and that kind of recognition doesn't come from peaceful talks. "Let's get back to Hogwarts before the headmaster comes and fetches us himself," he said, hoping he was keeping his voice level.

The Doctor sighed. "I do have classes to prepare for, and you have homework I'm sure. Would have liked a look around, though."

"I can tell you all about what I saw," Harry said. "They even have a whole hall for prophecies." There was a definite flicker of something across his dad's face. "Apparently I'm in it too," And again.

"Really? Odd, that."

"You sure? Because you didn't even talk about it much when I mentioned it before," Harry said, eyebrow raised.

"Ah, well, I was more concerned with what you were telling me concerning your new friend," the Doctor said, trying and failing to get himself out of his latest verbal blunder. "We can talk about it later, yeah?"

Harry narrowed his eyes. "Later better be referring to before bed," he warned.

"If you'd like," the Doctor said. "I mean, there is still Neville to check up on, your friends to find."

"It's also one of these weekends with no school, so you're not escaping that conversation," Harry said.

The process was finished quickly enough, and the two were given a one-use-only portkey back to Hogwarts.

Harry did manage to not land on his face this time, though the carpeted floor wouldn't be the worst thing to face plant into if he hadn't managed it.

"Ah, back with an hour to spare before supper. I'm glad you managed to stick so diligently to the time I requested you back by," the Headmaster said, voice clearing the lingering fog from Harry's brain. Portkey trips really weren't for him.

"Yep, and we sorted out the issue they were having with their spells! Now, I do have things to get to, and Harry wanted to check up on Neville." The Doctor beamed, inching back towards the door. "So I'll be going now! Later!" And he dashed off.
Harry rolled his eyes. "And off he goes. I'm going to have to corner him." He shook his head. "But I do want to check and see how Neville's doing. I've never reconstructed a core like that before, only had my own to worry about so it was mostly theoretical work. I want to make sure I haven't messed up, before it's had a chance to heal and set."

Dumbledore nodded, eyes bright. "I'm sure your friends will be glad to see you."

"What?"

"They have all decided that the Hospital Wing is the best place for them, and they cause less trouble when Madam Pomfrey can see them, so we decided to keep them in the Wing with Neville."

~

Harry found himself facing a formidable older woman the moment he stepped into the Hospital Wing.

"Hello!" he said, cheerful despite the oddity. Most of the oddity was around the fact that the woman was clinging tightly to Neville's hand. "I would guess that you're Neville's grandmother?"

"I am. And you are Harry."

"Yep! Hey Hermione, Blaise, Padma, Susan. How long have you been here?"

"Hours! You've been gone forever and they're worried we might do something stupid since you're not here. I don't think they realize most of the problems start and end with you," Blaise said, looking up from the homework he was working on. "We have gotten most of our homework done, though."

"See, time well spent!"

Susan glared. "Yeah, but we've been stuck here for ages. They even brought us food here."

"So...you've been locked into the Hospital Wing for unknown reasons?"

"We came to check on Neville and then Madam Pomfrey examined us as well, and then said we would have to stay here until you came back and she could talk with you. Neville's doing okay, though. He hasn't woken up but Madam Pomfrey said that would happen." Hermione was matter of fact in delivering her message.

Harry nodded. "Alright. Well, I need to check and make sure Neville's piecing his core back together without the blocks he had on it." He moved forward, then hesitated. "I sort of need you not to be holding his hand. I'm sorry," he said to Madam Longbottom.

"Why? What kind of magic can a child perform that would be hindered by my hand?"

"I've gotta let my magic sink in and it's going to sweep through his entire body to check and make sure his core is back where it belongs. And if you're in contact with him, it'll enter your body as well, which isn't what I want to happen. It would be best if you weren't in contact with him." Harry gave a look of contrite apology.

Madam Longbottom gave him a long look, but took away her hand. "I am not moving from his side," she warned.

"And I wouldn't expect you to! Just the physical contact thing doesn't work out so well. Now, one moment." He fiddled with his necklace, then let it spool in his hands before tucking it into a pocket.
His magic swept out around him, and he grinned.

The rest of everyone in the room shivered as the wave of magic slid through their bodies. "That feels weird every single time you do that," Blaise muttered.

"I would have thought I would have gotten used to it but it's still unnerving," Padma said.

"What was that?"

"That was Harry's magic," Hermione told the Dowager. "He usually keeps it all locked up or something but when he releases it, the sensations are very strange. Every single time. I never get used to it." She shivered to emphasise her point, then returned quill to parchment. She wanted to be part of the community she had joined, rather than scoff at it, so she continued to use it occasionally, despite the looks she got from those among their group that used pens instead. She knew how to use a pen, but he didn't know how to use a quill all that well, so she would stick to the latter until she mastered it.

"That was a child's magic?" Madam Longbottom said, eyes wide.

"Well, it's mine so it should be," Harry said, before hopping onto Neville's bed and settling beside his friend, crossing his legs. "Now, quiet, please. Well, you don't have to be quiet, but I'm not going to be able to answer anything for a bit, so talking to me won't be very productive. Please continue to talk amongst yourselves." Then he closed those shining green eyes and placed a hand on Neville's temple.

The Dowager backed up as her grandson and Harry began to glow, pulsing softly in time to...something she couldn't see. "What is going on?"

Padma glanced over. "Oh, that's just Harry. He does that sometimes," she said.

Madam Longbottom was getting more and more confused as every second passed.

When the boy now glowing on her grandson's bed walked in, she looked for signs of her daughter-in-law's best friend, of the prankster that finally won her over in the end.

His eyes had Lily's shape, but that shade of green was far brighter than Lily's eyes ever were. His hair was the same deep black that James' possessed, but it had been tamed by length, falling near his shoulders. There were touches, faint, of his parents in his cheekbones and jawline, but it was easily missed if you didn't look.

But the most glaringly obvious sign that this was not the child she had expected was his speech and his actions.

By far the child was more intelligent than his peers, though mature was something that remained to be seen. He clearly knew more than he let on, sharing the minimum he thought he could get away with and then filling the rest of the space with nonsense. It was rather ingenious. She wondered where he learned it from.

She looked over at his friends, who seemed collectively unconcerned about what Harry was doing, diligently bent over homework and muttering softly to each other when they ran into an issue.

Neville had fallen in with good friends, but Harry scared her. That much power and intelligence in a child was not a combination that comforted her at all.
"Ah, Harry's here. Good. He can detail for me exactly what he did so I can file the report with Saint Mungos, before they're on my doorstep harassing me about it." Madam Pomfrey had walked out of her office and now stood next to Madam Longbottom, looking with something akin to satisfaction on her face. "That boy should come with a sign. 'I speak too fast, please corral' or something to that effect."

"I never give details unless you won't understand them,'" Blaise contributed.

"I may break a rule of magic, don't freak out,'" Hermione added.

"I don't understand time, please assist'," Padma joined in.

"Don't let me start, I never stop'," Susan completed, and the four shared grins of amusement as they pounded away at their homework.

"Why don't you have a bigger problem with an eleven-year-old performing advanced and dangerous magic on my grandson?" Madam Longbottom asked, trying to keep her voice even.

Madam Pomfrey gave her a long look. "Believe me, I had my issues when I first showed up to the Gryffindor Common Room. The Weasley Twins weren't even sure what was going on when they fetched me, and then a few more students came running saying Mr. Longbottom was floating. But by the time I arrived, Harry was already working on stabilizing Neville and there was little I could do to assist. It was better for me to just stay out of the way, honestly. And afterwards, there was nothing that I could add, or even figure out. Harry did a thorough job piecing Mr. Longbottom's core back together."

"And it should be fine," Harry said, finally opening his eyes. "His magic is starting to tie everything back together, though it'll be a big bigger than it was before, to accommodate the excess power he released when he shattered his core." Harry grinned, stretched. "I'm starving. Dinner soon?"

"You're not getting dinner until you've walked me through the exact steps you took to put Mr. Longbottom's core back together, Mr. Harry. And the sooner you start, the sooner I'll have food delivered, or possibly let the five of you go down to the Great Hall to eat." The Healer gave Harry a steady stare.

Harry sighed. "Fine alright." He groaned, then sat down on a nearby chair as Madam Pomfrey retrieved a quill and parchment.

~~~~In Which this is a Scene Change~~~~

Jack leaned back in the armchair, a small smile making its way across his face. "Hey Sal," he said softly, and the man in the painting jerked around, attention diverted from the book that he had been reading.

"Jack! You're here!"

"I said I would come visit, you know," Jack replied, huffing. "I didn't move you from an unused section of Hogwarts to the Tardis to ignore you. I even asked if you wanted to be hung in my room."

Salazar smiled. "I know, but it's been centuries since I last saw you, forgive me if I am a little hesitant at first. And I have no need to be in your bedroom. I am well aware of what might take place there."

Jack resisted the leer he wanted to give. "I wouldn't do that with you in the room. Not unless you wanted me to."
"Jack, I died centuries ago, even if it was only four years to you. Don't tie yourself to a man who only exists as a portrait," he said, smiling, voice gentle.

"I'm not," Jack grumbled, shifting.

"And how many people have you taken to your bed since you returned to your nephew and the Doctor?" Salazar asked, eyes narrowed.

"~~~" Jack mumbled.

"I didn't quite hear you, love," Salazar said. "You're going to have to speak up."

"Two," Jack finally muttered. "And I was so drunk both times I don't remember their names."

Sal sighed. "You can't be hung up on someone who's dead, Jack. That's not a way to live a life. And we had a good one. 65 years is nothing to scoff at."

Jack groaned. He knew this. he did. But Sal...Sal had been more than he had ever thought he needed. A companion, a partner, smarter than him in leaps and bounds, just a tad bit arrogant, and perfect. "I know...I know...but 65 years is also longer than I've ever spent with a person. Sal, you were mine, and I was yours, and we had a beautiful little girl, and how am I supposed to just...move passed that?"

"You must move passed it, Jack. You're immortal, no matter how much you despise that fact. You're going to have to come to terms with the idea that you're going to outlive your partners, and your partners will want you to move on. I most certainly do. Come visit me, come talk to me, come share memories and stories, but don't pine for something you can't have, Jack." Salazar looked at the man he had shared his life with. "Your life is going to be very lonely if you can't."

Jack groaned. "Why do you have to make so much sense, Sal," he whined. "Why?"

"Because I'm the only one of the two of us who ever had a stable head on his shoulders," Salazar replied. "With you leading the way, we'd have been lucky to have made it long enough for Morwen to be born."

"You keep reminding me of that incident with the knights, and I keep telling you that it wasn't might fault," Jack said, grin stretching across his face. "I'm not the one with magic who turned their swords into flowers."

Salazar huffed. "No, but you were the one who insulted them, resulting in me having to transfigure their swords into flowers. You and your mouth, Jack. I swear, half the time you ended up dead was due to your mouth."

"You certainly loved it," Jack leered.

Salazar flushed. "That's not the...oh whatever. So, how is my school? You haven't told me much about how it's doing now. Did Godric's ridiculous ideas stick? If they did, don't tell him. He's insufferable as it is."

Jack chuckled. "There are four Houses, named after the four of you. But rather than categorizing students based on their educational needs, they've gone the stereotyping route. The students are divided into categories based on arbitrary personality traits that they think relate to the founders, for various reasons I can't divine."

Sal raised an eyebrow. "Oh, do tell."
"Ravenclaw is for the smart and wise, Hufflepuff for the loyal and hardworking, Gryffindor for the brave and reckless, and Slytherin for the ambitious and cunning, or so the general consensus goes," Jack said.

"Godric was brave, but I would have stuck him with loyal before brave. He was the one who made sure we all stuck together. Rowena was certainly smart, but reckless with it. Are you sure they didn't mix up the Houses? Helga and Godric at the very least," Salazar mused.

"That's what I thought when I heard it, but that's what they go by. Apparently the hat was more successful than even Wen predicted. Whatever she did with that bit of Time energy that was left in the tower, it made the hat precognizent, to an extent. It can see possible futures of the kids that sit under it, and is able to sort them appropriately from that." Jack chuckled, then sobered. "Also, they apparently believe you were the worst thing to happen to Hogwarts and you ruined the Founders' friendship."

Salazar sighed. "And it seems that something did come out of that nonsense I heard from the continent, something about a descendent of mine out to reclaim her rightful place. We caught a glimpse of her once, if you remember."

"The young woman with the bright blue eyes and black hair," Jack mused. "She looked like you in the face somewhat, but she could have been a distant cousin."

"I never learned who my family was," Salazar denied. "She could have been anyone, really."

Jack sighed. "Well, she left her mark on history, it seems. She used your name and dragged it through the dark side of magic. Slytherin House is now home to most of the dark inclined families, those that followed the crazy megalomaniac that killed Harry's parents."

Sal shook his head. "Well, life continues on after you've died. You'll just have to put to right what history has distorted."

"You think I can?" Jack asked, a bit shocked.

"I think you can do whatever you put your mind to, honestly," Sal said. "And I doubt you appreciate the four of us being so badly misrepresented."

"And how am I supposed to present concrete evidence on you lot? You left everything to me, but I can't just walk out there with your journals and possessions. They'll wonder where I got them and everything else. And I'm sure I'm mentioned in every single one. That would be a wonderful way to blow the lid off our secret. And Morwen...Morwen would be there too." Jack took a deep breath. "Our daughter, Sal, has been left out of history books. They say that your wife was an unknown Old Blood and only records from your great grandchildren survive. And they believe strongly that you have descendants. The maniac who attacked Harry's parents was supposed to be one of them. But that would mean...that would mean Morwen had a child we never knew about..."

Sal let Jack ramble, knowing his lover needed the space just to talk. But each word made his heart, painted though it was, clench.

Morwen. His beautiful and smart and vivacious Morwen, who vanished from the face of the world, had a child? It was something he didn't want to believe, something that made him so desperately sad and angry. His little girl should never have had to go through something like that without her parents nearby for comfort and support.

"We'll deal with that when we need to," Sal finally said as Jack sat in silence. "Morwen has
been...gone...for centuries now. We can't do anything about that. We did everything we could have done back when I was alive, Jack. We'll handle her descendants, my descendants. As for correcting history, you could go through our things and figure out what would work best. I mean, you've barely touched anything we gave you, Jack. We left it to you so you could use it. We trusted you to be able to make the right decision regarding what the world needed to know about it. You can't let it all moulder in the chests."

Jack sink deeper into his chair. "I know. But you four were my family for decades. How can I just...discard your things? You treasure that stuff. You loved all your journals and books and stuff."

Salazar smiled softly. "We trust you, love. We always did. We knew you would survive long enough to correct the mistakes time lets exist. So do us a favor and go through our possessions and see what you think the world could benefit from, okay?"

Jack sighed but nodded. "I'll go through it all." He grimaced, then his eyes went wide. "Why not just bring the portraits out? I mean, you four are much better sources of information than the books and papers you left behind."

Salazar looked contemplative. "That's more true than not, but how do you explain that you found them when no one has found us for almost a thousand years?"

"Well, I'm sure I can come up with something. Harry's always as good an excuse as any."

"Go talk to Rowena. She might have a good idea or two about it."

Jack snorted. "She's gonna hate the idea. Her and Godric don't want anything to do with Hogwarts at the moment. Being paintings on a wall for hundreds of years tired them of stone and mortar."

"Helga then. She's smart, she'll probably figure something out," Sal said. "I wouldn't mind talking to the students."

"Well, see if you can come up with a way to prove who you are. There aren't any portraits of you around, but I don’t know if anyone would believe you simply because you’re so different from what legends say you should be," Jack said frankly. "I'll work on finding a way to get you in front of students, but you'll have to prove your identity to them. And that’ll be a whole new issue."

Sal frowned, nodding. If what Jack said was true, there would be a whole lot of convincing he would need to do for the student body to believe him. "Try to convince Godric and Wen as well. The four of us might be able to convince everyone. Let Wen know she would only have to come out for the first part. After that, we could put her back in the library."

"I'll tell her and be back tomorrow, let you know if I've figured out a good way."

"Alright. And Jack, please, listen to me. Don’t keep hiding yourself away and move on. I’m a painting, and that's all I’ll ever be. You can’t hold a painting at night."

Jack nodded, sighing, letting Sal's words sink in. "I'll try, Sal. Promise."

Sal smiled softly, the smile Jack loved. "Thank you."

~~~~In Which this is an Ending~~~~

Chapter End Notes
So...Um...Yeah...Sorry.

This was super late. I don’t really have any good excuses, none at all. I did post an unrelated fic for a challenge on AO3, so that took some time, but most of it came down to me falling into a slump.

I’m getting ready for a big move in the next two months and I’m stuck in the middle, not certain where I’m going, what’s going to happen, or much of anything right now. I have a job offer, but it requires time sensitive paperwork I’m having issues obtaining (because I was stupid and didn’t do this ages ago when I should have). So I’m half frustrated being back in my little town of nothing and half anxious to know the next step in my life.

Hopefully I can sort it all out and get back to writing with more consistancy.

I’ll give it my best to have the next update out by February 5th.

Thank you, all of you, for reading this, enjoying this, reviewing, following, favoriting, lurking. Everything. I really do love you all.

Kuroi
Hey, so I’m not dead, this story isn’t on hiatus, and I haven’t vanished off the face of the earth. Promise.

I have, however, moved countries, started learning a new language, started planning lessons more often, and now I have to juggle eight textbooks. It’s been a process. One that’s taken me a bit to get used to. And I hit a writing slump for a bit. Being overwhelmed is hard sometimes.

I hope you all enjoy this long overdue chapter. It is, as per usual, my normal length. It isn’t super long, but it is far longer than normal.

Thank you, everyone who has reviewed and kudosed and reminded me that people still read and enjoy this and want more. Thank you. I love you.

Now ONWARDS!!

~~~In Which This is a Beginning~~~~

“I refuse to go back into that castle. Refuse. You cannot make me.”

Harry huffed, running a hand through his hair once again, irritating Pashti, who had decided to accompany him for his rounds with the Founders. “Really, Godric, I thought you would be the easiest of the four to convince! Rowena was easier to convince than you are, and here was me thinking she would be the toughest but she was up for it almost immediately!” Harry rolled his eyes as Godric glared at him. “Stop being so stubborn!”

“Rowena always liked teaching, even if she was an impatient teacher. I never got on well with the profession, and the idea of going back into Hogwarts when I’m finally free of those walls doesn’t appeal.”

“So you’re going to let history paint you as this shining beacon of light and leave Sal painted the darkest black?” Harry demanded.

“There are some things that you just have to let go, Harry. Time moves on for all and is kind to none. Even if these rules seem to not apply to you, not everyone can escape them.”

“Even if those rumors include you being the main reason Sal apparently ran off and that he was dark and advocated for banning new bloods from Hogwarts?” Harry said, a knowing tone in his voice.

Godric narrowed his eyes. “Where did ridiculous rumors like that get started?”

“You all didn’t leave anything behind for people to look at, and one of Sal’s...relatives? Descendants? Someone with a blood connection to him came and claimed to be his great grandson. He started saying he was going to spread Salazar’s true beliefs and that Sal was dark and hated new
bloods and you and him fought and he left Hogwarts for good. Your grandkids tried to stop the
damage but it was hard without any source material.” Harry gave him a significant look.

Godric crossed his arms. “We couldn’t really leave anything personal behind. Nearly all of our stuff
had references to you all and Jack, and editing it out literally left huge blank spaces. Jack was a part
of our lives for decades, and removing him from our memoirs didn’t work. We left it for Jack so he
could do the fixing! And how do you know what our grandkids did?”

Harry shrugged. “Helena kept an eye on everyone, she told us a lot of what happened after you four
died.”

“So you, what, want to take the four of us out of this lovely Tardis and back into that castle with it’s
stone walls and monotony to...correct history?” Godric said, trying to sound as incredulous as
possible.

“Well, I wouldn’t make you stay there,” Harry said. “And we can’t just...bring you into the Great
Hall. Too many questions, not enough people would believe who you were. But I have a plan. And
the other three are up for it. You know if you don’t join Rowena will spread as many nasty and
untrue rumors in retaliation against you as possible. I mean, you were her biggest annoyance,” Harry
pointed out.

Godric crinkled his nose. “You have a point there. She always found a way to get back at me.” He
sighed, clearly resigning himself to Harry’s plan. “Fine, but if you even think about leaving me in
that castle I will find a way to haunt you from beyond this frame,” he warned. “The spell used to
create this painting was new at the time, they hadn’t perfected tying a magical’s core to the paint and
canvas, I can still access some of my magic if I try hard enough.”

Harry gulped, afternoons of lessons with Godric flashing through his mind. “I’ll make sure you’re
only there as long as necessary,” he promised.

“Good. Now, tell me about this plan.”

~~~In Which This is a Scene Change~~~

The four founders’ portraits were in the main console room, late at night as most of Hogwarts slept.

“So, what, you’re going to put us back in that room, then...’stumble’ across us with your friends?”
Godric clarified, still sounding disbelieving. “How long are we gonna be stuck there? If I have to
stare at their faces for days on end, I refuse.”

“If I have to be in the same room as that insufferable knight for longer than a day, I am sure I can
convince the Tardis to hide the toilet,” Rowena chimed in, crossing her arms and glaring at her
fellow founder.

Harry sighed. “I swear, it’s the weekend, there’s no class today, I’ll make sure I bring my friends
over to that end of the castle on our explorations. We haven’t made it over there yet so it shouldn’t be
a problem, and I won’t leave you in the castle too long.” He hoped he could keep that promise
without having to resort to more...outlandish means to convince the headmaster and the other
 professors.

Or he could always resort to just stealing them at night.

He hoped he wouldn’t have to resort to that one either though. That would doubtless cause problems.

So, with some cajoling, pleading, bargaining, and dealing, Harry managed to get all four of them to
agree to be carried to the far wing and hung back on the wall.

They grumbled at him as he left, but no one flung any patchy spellwork at his back, so he considered it a small victory.

~~~~~In Which This is a Scene Change~~~~~

“Harry! Where are we going?” Hermione asked, almost having to yell as Harry was a whole flight of stairs ahead of them.

“Well, it’s the weekend, and there’s no class, and it’s time to explore! There’s this section over this way I haven’t been down yet, and I wanna see where it goes!”

Blaise rolled his eyes and heaved a sigh. “You sure it’s actually a legitimate section of the castle and not just a hallway dead ending at a weird painting of a forest?”

“Well, we did find the kitchen that one time behind the painting of a fruit bowl! And that forest was really cool! I mean, really, there were animals and everything moving about!” Harry grinned madly down at them.

“We’ll see. Alright, let’s get after him before he goes and gets himself lost. Again.” Blaise heaved a sigh at Hermione’s matter-of-fact voice, but followed his more than slightly mad friend towards a part of the castle he hadn’t traipsed about in yet.

“Well, it’s certainly unused. You sure it’s even safe to be walking here?” Blaise asked.

Susan glanced at at the ceiling, worry in her eyes. “I hope it is.”

“I doubt Hogwarts would ever let anything happen to her students. Especially something as mundane as crumbly stone. There’s enough free magic about here for her to repair herself when she needs to,” Harry said, looking into an empty room that had probably been a classroom of some sort long ago.

“Her? What?” Blaise didn’t bother hiding his confusion.

Harry gave him a look, one that suggested Blaise was maybe ten times thicker than he had thought. “You do know the castle is alive, right?” he said.

“It’s stone and glass, Harry, how could it be alive?” Padma pointed out. “Castle don’t usually become alive.”

“A castle built with magic and swimming in the free magics of thousands upon thousands of students is a mite different I should think.” Harry shook his head. “That’s not the point. We’ll talk about it later. Hey, there’s a door over there! Wanna bet it’s unlocked?”

Hermione sighed. “It’s probably still locked, Harry,” she muttered, but Harry bounded over, tugging at the knob. “See, locked.”

“Well, we’re all magic users, I’m sure we can figure something out. Didn’t we learn the unlocking spell in charms this past week?”

Padma nodded. “Yeah, and we all did pretty well. But if it’s locked, maybe there’s something important in there. Is it smart to just open the door?”

Harry looked at her, incredulous. “You would really turn back now? And ignore a locked door just asking for us to open it?”
“I'm just saying...maybe there's something dangerous inside.”

“And there's five of us and we can use magic. I'm betting we can handle a bit of danger.”

Hermione straightened her shoulders. She remembered the forest and doubted anything could be as scary as that. “Let's see what's inside,” she said.

Harry grinned. “Awesome!” He muttered the spell and heard the lock he had only closed not long ago click open. He pulled the door out. “After you.” He waved towards the now open room.

Hermione yanked on Blaise’s shirt and he yelped as he stumbled after her. “What?”

“I'm not going in alone,” she said.

“So you're dragging me?”

“You're quick with your spells, almost as fast as me. We can work together well enough if there's danger,” she said as she stepped through the doorway, Blaise at her side.

“I dare say, there shouldn't be much danger in here.”

Hermione’s eyes were huge as a female voice filled the space. “Portraits?” she whispered.

“Well, yes, we are. Rather stating the obvious, this one,” a woman in a strict, grey gown said, her eyes sharp.

“Portraits of who? I don't recognize them,” Blaise said, frowning. “And they're old. No one does framing like that anymore.”

Susan and Padma slipped in behind them, and Padma’s eyes caught something. “There's something written on the frames,” she said, moving a bit closer. “A maker? A name?”

The portraits were silent, staring at the four young children trying to figure out why they had been in a locked room.

Harry stood at the door, wide smile and crossed fingers waved where they could see.

“Does...I can't quite read it, the script is too fancy. Hermione?”

“It says Helga Hufflepuff,” Susan said, something like awe in her voice. “My aunt has fancy missives all the time, so I've gotten good at reading it,” she explained. “Are you really Helga Hufflepuff?”

The kind, warm face smiled down at Susan, honeyed eyes shining. “I am, young one. May I have your name?”

“I. I’m Susan. Susan Bones.” Susan paused, then beamed. “I’m in Hufflepuff! House, that is. Hufflepuff House!”

Helga clapped her hands together. “Oh, that’s wonderful! Are the rest of you?” She looked around at the three other students in the room, who all shook their heads.

“No, I’m in Ravenclaw, she’s in Gryffindor, and he’s in Slytherin,” Padma said, when no one spoke up. “I’m sorry, but you’re really Helga Hufflepuff?”

“I am dear. It’s wonderful to see you all. And one from each house, isn’t that amazing!”
“It’s nice to see house unity this far from our lifetimes,” a red haired man said, teeth showing in a wide grin. “Hello, young pupils!”

Hermione squinted at his frame, then backed up, eyes wide. “Godric Gryffindor!” she gasped. Then looked over at the other two portraits. “Which means...are you all the Founders?”

Rowena Ravenclaw smiled approvingly. “Yes, we are. It’s nice to see students after so many years. What year is it, exactly?”

“It’s...it’s 1991,” Blaise said softly. He stared up at the man who was his House’s founder, at the bright moonstone eyes, pale hair, and deeply tanned skin. “You’re Salazar Slytherin,” he breathed.

“I am indeed, young one. What is your name?”

“Blaise Zabini. I’m a first year. Er...we’re all first years,” he said.

“Blaise, Susan, Padma, do you know what this means? I mean, finding the portraits of the Founders?! It’s monumental! There’s never been any first hand documents from them aside from some manuscripts and scrolls they wrote on spells and magic! Everything else is gone! But we’ve found their portraits! In Hogwarts!” Hermione babbled, excited, her words spilling out at a thousand miles an hour.

“You sure she shouldn’t be in Ravenclaw?” Godric muttered behind them. “She certainly resembles you, Wen.”

Hermione spun around, eyes wide. “We have to...to... to tell someone! Professor McGonagall! The Headmaster!”

Blaise started paling. “But we shouldn’t have been in this section of the castle in the first place!” he protested.

“Are you really saying we shouldn’t tell someone we found the portraits of the Founders?” Padma snapped at him. “Cause that’s really dumb.”

“It’s just...”

“Blaise, I’m sure that they’ll forgive you for wandering out of bounds when you show them the portraits,” Harry said from the doorway. “After all, the Founders are a pretty big deal, aren’t they?”

“But...who’s gonna go get them?”

“I’ll go!” Harry volunteered.

Hermione waved a hand at him. “They won’t believe you,” she dismissed, and Godric had to turn away to hide his snickering at Harry’s affronted expression. “Susan, Padma, and I will go. Blaise, you can stay and make sure Harry doesn’t do something stupid.”

Salazar looked over at Harry in what might be seen as a quizzical look but, to the time-travelling pre-teen, was clearly a mocking expression. “I take it this Harry is known for being a troublemaker? Is he in Godric’s house as well?” Salazar asked.

Hermione shook her head. “Harry doesn’t have a House. The hat couldn’t sort him, so he has a separate schedule.” She looked at the other two girls. “You up for getting the Headmaster and Professor McGonagall with me?” she asked.
Padma and Susan nodded. “We could also get our own Heads of House,” Susan pointed out.

“‘The Headmaster can get them much faster than we can. We’ll go to his office first. Does anyone remember the password?’”

“It’s Peppermint Patties,” Harry supplied helpfully. “What, I had to go there yesterday, I doubt he changed it overnight,” he defended when his friends all looked at him, clearly suspicious.

“Alright. Let’s get going. If we run into any of our Heads of House along the way, we’ll tell them too,” Hermione said, and with that, the three ran out of the room.

“Don’t get lost!” Harry yelled after them.

Hermione skidded, stopped, then placed a simple tracking spell that studious kids learn to keep track of their materials on the door. She tied it to her bracelet, then continued running. The spell took her all of a handful of seconds to complete before she was down the stairs and beyond hearing range.

“Well, now we wait,” Blaise said.

“Oh, I’m sure we could think of something to do. I mean, there are four people here who built Hogwarts here. Any questions?” Harry said, and ignored the glare Godric sent his direction behind Blaise’s back.

~~~~In Which this is a Scene Break~~~~

Hermione, Susan, and Padma were winded when they made it to a familiar landing, but all that running practice had done them good. They didn’t feel like dying. The headmaster’s office was up the stairs in a different direction, and not for the first time, Hermione really wondered why the Founders had decided a confusing, winding castle was really a good idea.

Well, she’d have the chance to ask them soon.

“Ms. Granger, Ms. Bones, Ms. Patil, why are you running through the halls? Is there some emergency I am unfamiliar with?” That voice, strict and heavy with Scottish brogue, could only belong to the indomitable Professor McGonagall.

Hermione skidded to a stop. “Professor! We found...something! Something really really important! And we need to tell the headmaster!”

Professor McGonagall raised a brow at the peculiar statement. “And what is so important that you must interrupt the headmaster that cannot be brought to your head of house?” she asked, tone light.

“We found...we found the Founder’s portraits,” Padma panted, her breathing starting to even out. “In one of the unused corridors. There was a door, it was locked, but not well. And they were inside. Hanging on the wall. They’re really old, Professor, and the magic that made them still works. They’re still talking.”

Professor McGonagall refrained from the ironic tone she wanted to use. “You just stumbled onto relics of history lost for over a thousand years in a disused corridor?” she said, trying to sound honestly curious. It was harder than she thought.

Susan nodded. “Yeah. Nothing over there is used anymore, and Harry wanted to go explore. I mean, it's a whole wing of the castle no one's been in for ages, I think. Harry said it was safe but it looks ancient.”
“Of course this has to do with Harry,” McGonagall muttered. “Alright, let me see this before you go bother the headmaster about it. No need to get excited over something that might just be a student prank.” She knew what wing they had wandered into. It had been unused for well over three or four hundred years. Who knows what might have been left there for gullible young first years with a penchant for exploring to find.

Hermione frowned, then nodded. “Fine. But you're going to want to get Professor Dumbledore when you believe us,” she said, turning on her heel and heading back the way they had come.

McGonagall smiled indulgently. She could entertain some amusement for a little while. Her lesson planning could suffer just a bit for some mid morning adventure.

~~~~In Which This Is A Scene Break~~~~

“So you all built the castle together?” Blaise said, eyes wide.

“Of course, young one. It was much too big a task for one person, and the four of us barely managed it. It was a test of our formidable powers,” Helga said, chuckling. “Whenever Godric and Wen could managed to stop bickering, we did manage to hammer out a decent floor plan.”

Blaise looked between the severe woman with bright blue eyes and the grinning man with his shock of red hair. “They don't have anything like this in the history books,” he muttered. “We all thought it was Salazar and Gryffindor who didn't get along.”

“Hey, I may enjoy ruffling Sal’s feathers but he's like my older brother,” Godric said. “Sibling obligation.”

Salazar glowered at the knight. “You turned an entire class into mice once. In the middle of my lesson. Because you couldn’t wait to show off your new spell,” he said. “And you destroyed an entire season’s worth of potions ingredients when you decided that maybe you should start using a wand. And you nearly killed Salina when you—”

“Enough, Sal. You can list Godric’s many many crimes again at a later time. I, for one, am tired of hearing them. And then he’ll start up on your shortcomings and then we'll be repairing holes in the wall again. So, please, later.” Helga gave both men a significant look, until Salazar huffed.

“I hadn't expected them to be so...childish,” Blaise whispered to Harry.

Harry snorted. “Well, from what you've said, they've been here for centuries. The can't have had much to do...Professor McGonagall! How nice to see you! I take it you want to see what the fuss is about?” Harry grinned at the transfiguration professor.

“I'm the transfiguration professor and head of Gryffindor House,” she said, a bit startled. It wasn't everyday that the portraits in the castle didn't recognize her.
“Ah, one of yours, Godric!” she said cheerfully. “Almost matches your accent too!”

“I got rid of my accent, thank you very much!” McGonagall spun around, eyes wide. “Hello, Professor McGonagall. It’s a pleasure to meet you.”

“And, erm, you as well. I must say, I can’t just believe what my students claim, as it is a bit outlandish. The Founder’s portraits, such fairy stories. Would you mind if I use a couple spells to...check?” she asked, not entirely sure Hermione had been joking. Just visually the portraits were old.

Rowena waved a hand. “Whatever you find necessary. There is little you could do to harm us, but I ask that you not touch the spell matrix that is anchored to the canvas and the frame. I am unsure what that could cause.”

McGonagall nodded. “Of course.” She pulled out her wand and began casting spells.

“Age revealing, authenticity spells, and a name revealing spell. Thorough, aren’t you?” Godric said cheerfully. “Did you find what you were looking for?”

McGonagall stared at her wand, then at the portraits, eyes narrowed. “I...this can’t be right. The right age, even the revealing spell came back authentic. But how could it be? Here in Hogwarts? Under the noses of thousands of witches and wizards?”

“Where else should we have been? The four of us, we never had a home outside of this castle,” Salazar Slytherin said casually, leaning against the edge of his portrait.

“But it's been over a thousand years, how could you have gone unnoticed?” she demanded. “This castle is routinely monitored and checked for new magic and activity.”

“We built this castle and the magics that ward her. Of course it would be simple to hide a single room from full castle sweeps,” Rowena said, snorting. “It was merely a matter of time and enough patience to wait.”

McGonagall frowned. “Wait for what?”

“For curiosity and power,” Rowena said cryptically. “And now that you’re here, I would appreciate getting a different view. If I have to stare at that moronic knight’s face for much longer the magic protecting him might not last.” She glared over at Godric.

“I...let me go get the headmaster. I believe he will want to know about this. And Ms. Granger, please contain yourself.”

Hermione quickly shut her mouth and stopped smirking in triumph, nodding.

“Are you going to leave the young ones with us while you go retrieve the headmaster?” Helga asked.

McGonagall shook her head. “We have a spell for communication. Maybe it’s a bit extravagant but I feel the situation calls for it.” She brandished her wand and muttered a spell under her breath, and a silver cat leapt from the end of her wand. “Please go inform Headmaster Dumbledore of a most odd discovery in the west wing on the 6th floor, in the disused corridor. Mr. Harry is standing outside the door.” The cat nodded, then shimmered and sauntered out of the room before bursting into a run.

“That’s a handy spell,” Harry commented. “It feels very bright. Happy.”
McGonagall smiled. “A Patronus is a spell fueled with good emotions. They have many uses, but delivering messages quickly is one of the more mundane ones.” She narrowed her eyes at her overachieving pupil. “And while I have no doubts that you could figure the spell out yourself, I ask that you refrain for now. Spells that are fueled by emotions can be touchy and I would dislike explaining to your father why you're in the hospital wing comatose.”

Harry grinned. “I'll wait some. Research is my friend, after all.”

“Well, should you wish to try that spell, please find myself or Professor Flitwick to observe and assist. Okay?”

Harry flashed her a thumbs up and ignored the snickering from Godric behind her. He was being discreet enough that no one could directly call him out on it, but Harry had seen the expression whenever he had managed to botch something in a spectacular way.

“Professor, so it’s real, right? They are the Founders?” Padma asked, eyes wide.

McGonagall hesitated. “It...it seems so, but I don’t know. Not for sure. There’s so few records that actually describe the Founders, and I have only seem them in passing. Fragments of a personal journal from a well off wizard, some passages in the annals of Camelot, but nothing concrete. The headmaster has always been far more interested.” She paused. “But all my spells came back authentic. If they aren’t the Founders, they were around at the same time.”

Salazar sighed. “Ah, magicals, always so hesitant. Why not believe in your gut?”

“Salazar Slytherin, ambitious and prejudiced against non magicals, advising one to trust your gut?” McGonagall raised an eyebrow at the Founder.

Godric snickered. “You, prejudiced? You soft hearted lover you?” he said, unable to stop the grin from spreading. “Man, even I had more reservations about taking in new bloods than you did.”

“Well, I plucked you off the sands and dragged you with me, didn’t I?” Salazar grumbled. “Should have let you burn the rest of yourself and just kept walking,” he grumbled.

“Ah, Sal, you say that, but I remember yo- Hey, look, his eyes twinkle! You think it’s a spell of some sort?” Godric pointed at Dumbledore, who had just walked into the room.

“Hello, Minerva, I see you have found yourself in quite the interesting situation. May I ask who these four are?” he asked, looking at the portraits.

“According to all the spells I’ve cast, they’re the Founders, headmaster,” McGonagall replied. “Though how they’ve remained hidden in the castle I have no idea.”

Dumbledore stroked his beard, eyes intense behind his half moon spectacles. “That is most unusual. I was unaware that the magic to create these kinds of portraits existed when they were alive.”

Rowena huffed. “History is sorely lacking many details, but the magic to create these portraits was a new invention from the East, and had been seen as fashionable amongst the rich and powerful on the continent. A mutual friend convinced us to get ours done as well.”

“Very few portraits, actually no portraits, from your time remain, at least not here in Europe. Why have you lasted so long?” Dumbledore asked, curious.

“Part of the reason is because we insisted on layering the spells a bit differently. We wanted to be able to interact with Hogwarts still, which required our magic to remain with us to a degree,” Salazar
explained.

“The magic of Hogwarts helped strengthen the magics used in the portraits. Rather than only being exposed to whatever free magics might be floating nearby, as many portraits are, we exist in it. It powered the spells and made sure we would last,” Godric added. “The amount of magic in this area is why we decided to build Hogwarts out here.”

“I’m sorry to say, but you don’t look much like what history says you look like. The records we have and what remains from your time is fragments at best, preservation spells weren’t meant to last centuries. But it is a little hard to believe that you four have been here and no one has found you until now,” Dumbledore said, voice light and calm.

Sal sighed. “Most of the records you would have are wrong. We didn’t leave much to the public about us, and even in our own lifetimes we were created to be some sort of towering legend. No, we left personal effects to family members and a close mutual friend.” Salazar looked at Dumbledore, a sardonic twist to his mouth. “No one likes their personal journals read and judged. Would you fathom us any different?”

“I must admit, it is hard to put things in perspective. But I too wouldn’t leave my personal journal just laying around. Still, there’s very little remaining about the Founders in detail. Most of what remains are anecdotes from your children and grandchildren, books of spells and your academic works. Mostly Rowena Ravenclaw’s and Helga Hufflepuff’s. There’s been a potions journal or two attributed to Salazar Slytherin throughout the years, but it’s not as easy to confirm authenticity. And from Godric Gryffindor, almost no personal work has ever been found.”

“That’s not much of a surprise. Godric was never one for studies. He’d rather overpower any spell he tried rather than figure out the intricacies,” Helga said, a fond smile on her face.

“You are, as ever, too kind to him, Helga. If he had been just a smidge better at focusing his magic, we wouldn’t have had to rebuild the entire foundation when he decided to see if he could build the entire north wall at once,” Rowena drawled, leveling a look at the knight.

Said knight crossed his arms. “Hey, after I figured out what I did wrong, I got the North and East walls done, thank you.”

Rowena narrowed her eyes, and Salazar and Helga sighed. They had grown used to these arguments in the ensuing centuries, but now was not the time for them. “If the two of you could focus on the matter at hand, we have guests,” Salazar said. “Now is not the time for petty bickering.”

Rowena huffed but turned away from Godric, towards Dumbledore and the rest of the visitors. “Well, if you would be so kind as to get us out of this room, I would be grateful.”

Dumbledore hid a smile. With all the myths about the Founders creating huge, overpowering figures, reality was as it always is: humans are humans. He had wondered, why did the Founders find partners outside their close group? Very few witches and wizards were a match for their power, and even fewer could understand the immense undertaking building a castle and a school would take.

But seeing them now, they were practically siblings. Insults and compliments exchanged in equal measure, and a fondness for each other than ran deep.

“I believe I can do something about that. I do wonder, though, if you would be opposed to having a special lesson on the origins of Hogwarts for those of the student body who would be interested? It isn’t often we have such an opportunity to speak to those who created this castle we call home.”
The Founders exchanged looks. To most they looked considering. But the four of them were amused that it had worked out almost exactly like Harry had predicted. “That would be fine. It's been an age since I've taught a class. I believe it would be an interesting endeavor,” Helga said, and the other three nodded.

“Though if you stick me next to the knight we will be having words. The spells that created this portrait were brand new at the time, and they hadn't quite managed to control the magic part of the equation,” Rowena threatened.

Dumbledore held up a pacifying hand, wondering just how much history had gotten wrong. Slytherin and Gryffindor were supposed to be the endlessly bickering pair, but reality didn't seem to agree. “I'll be sure to put the other two as a buffering force,” he promised, and grinned at Godric Gryffindor's affronted expression.

“You're gonna stick Sal next to me, aren't you?” he sighed.

McGonagall and Dumbledore exchanged fascinated and amused looks. “Well, we can move you to the teachers lounge for the moment, until we’ve organized your...presentation. I think a staff meeting is in order, wouldn't you say so, Minerva?”

“Yes, I do believe one of those would be helpful. I'll go get everyone and meet you back in the lounge in about an hour.” She gave the portraits one final look, before she turned and headed out of the room, shaking her head. Harry heard her mumble about impossibilities and insanity before she was out of earshot, and grinned.

Dumbledore looked around at the students, then at the portraits, then back at the students. “What do you say to helping me levitate these portraits over to the teacher’s lounge with me?” he asked. “You all have learned the spell, correct?”

Hermione’s eyes were sparkling. “We have, Headmaster.”

The headmaster smiled. “Then I suppose you should be able to help me with them, as they are much too big to carry all the way to the teacher’s lounge.”

~~~~In Which This is a POV Change~~~~

Minerva McGonagall was trying to wrap her head around everything that had happened in the past hour.

Finding the Founders Portraits wasn't just something remarkable, it was practically history itself in the making, the past come to life; literal historical icons, talking, sentient, portraits, probably the oldest in this part of the world.

How was she supposed to convince the staff when she herself was still not sure what was going on?

Well, she thought, Harry is as good an excuse as any. Just attaching his name to the explanation would forestall too much protesting, as they had all watched the boy break numerous rules of magic casually, with impunity, as if he didn't even realize they were there.

“Filius, can I speak with you?” The diminutive professor was just about to close his office door, probably heading to lunch judging by the time, and she was glad she had caught him.

“Minerva, what an unexpected surprise! Yes, yes, of course. Is this a discussion to be had in the hallways or would my office be better?”
“Actually, I was hoping you could join the headmaster and myself in the Teachers’ Room. We...Harry and his friends stumbled across something rather unbelievable, and it would be better to have all of the Heads of House, at the very least, present. Vector and Bathsheda as well.” Minerva stared down the powerful charms master as he frowned. “Within the hour. I'll have the elves send up lunch to the lounge in place of the Great Hall.”

“What is of such importance that even lunch must be delayed? I haven't heard any explosions, so young Mr. Harry can't have gotten into too much trouble,” Filius said.

Minerva snorted. “It's hard to explain. An unexpected discovery is the most I can say. I'm still not sure I believe it and I cast a Revealing spell.”

Filius blinked. “Well, I must say, this sounds intriguing. I can go find Pomona and Vector if you want to get Severus and Bathsheda.” Filius made to head off towards Pomona’s office, then paused. “Any hints? This all sounds rather mysterious.”

“I...you’ll have to see it to believe it,” Minerva said, deciding to let the portraits do the talking.

Filius raised an eyebrow at her, but left, and Minerva sighed, knowing getting Severus out of his potions lab was going to require a bit more force. She’d go get Bathsheda first.

~~~~In Which this is a Scene Break~~~~

“Why will you not just tell me what this meeting is about?” Severus Snape grumbled as McGonagall force marched him into the teacher’s lounge. “It really can’t be so unusual that it requires this level of subterfuge.” The potion’s master caught sight of Harry, idly standing off to the side, eyes glittering as if he were in on some joke none of them knew.

He didn’t like that look.

“Ah, Severus, Minerva, you’ve made it. Everyone is here, good good.” Dumbledore beamed, but it seemed a bit off. “I must say, this is a rather odd situation.”

“He’s involved, I would expect nothing less,” Snape said, raising an eyebrow at Harry. “Do we have to rebuild part of the castle again?” He was, of course, speaking of the holes Harry and his friends had managed to put through the stone ceilings of their common room.

Harry frowned. “Hey, Hogwarts rebuilt herself, I’ll have you know, and we’ve been careful since then!” There was muffled snickering from the posse of children that made up Harry’s friends; Harry’s face folded into disgruntlement and he started muttering in one of his multitude of languages.

“Headmaster, why are we here? If he hasn’t blown anything up recently, and it’s a weekend so it can’t be regarding a class mishap, what is it?” Snape said, fixing his eyes on Dumbledore. “I have lessons to plan and ingredients to order before the shops close.”

“We all have lessons, Dumbledore. This is most unusual,” Vector protested, Bathsheda and Pomona nodding as well.

“I assure you, I wouldn’t pull you away from your planning if it weren’t for a good reason.” Dumbledore’s eyes twinkled in that strange way of theirs, and he gestured to the wall behind him, now hosting several new, rather large, paintings. “They were discovered in an unused section of Hogwarts by our five adventuresome students here.”

Snape raised an eyebrow. “And? I was unaware that the discovery of new portraits would be of such interest that it would merit pulling me away from my work,” he said, crossing his arms.
Godric snickered. “Hey, Wen, he’s like you whenever we needed to pull you away from something! Even has the snark down!”

The potions master looked between the portraits, considering. “I’m like whom? I don’t recognize your faces, which is rather unusual. Why would there be portraits of unfamiliar people within Hogwarts walls?”

Rowena huffed at him. “I would think that those who created this castle should deserve to be placed within it?” She looked him over. “Potions, obviously. You don’t take much care to keep the fumes from damaging your skin or hair, I see. You should take some pointers from Sal. He managed to keep that oddly colored hair of his in decent shape despite hovering over a cauldron half the day.”

Salazar sighed heavily when Snape’s eyes snapped over to him, rubbing his hand against his temples. “Really, Wen, is this how we’re playing it now?”

“Dumbledore, are you really trying to say that these four are the Founders?” Pomona asked, skepticism in her voice. “That’s just a bit farfetched, don’t you think?”

“I would not have called you here if it weren’t worthy of your attention. And Minerva verified. I am sure none of you doubt her spellcasting.”

McGonagall nodded as they all turned to look at her. “I verified myself. The portraits are dated 1,023 years old, which matches the time the Founders were alive. The Naming Spell identified them as being Portraits of the respective founders, and even a Maker’s Spell returned with a legitimate name. Unless someone can forge such specific spellwork as to fool all three spells, they are the Founders.”

Vector frowned, looking at the portraits. “Such spells surely exist today, but they’re relatively new and they don’t work on items over a certain age. But I don’t understand. Such portraits were unheard of in this part of the world at that time, and Salazar Slytherin, at the very least, looks nothing like history portrayed him as.”

“These were done by an Eastern Enchanter, as a gift. His son was one of our students, and to express his gratitude he offered to paint us using a special technique from his home country. Though Salazar and Rowena were rather reluctant at first.” Helga smiled gently. “But in the end we all had these made. We were told they would activate upon our deaths, as a portion of our magic would be tied to the canvas. When Wen died, it took a while but her portrait did come alive. She sulked for a bit at first, if I recall correctly.” Helga peered over at her fellow Founder, who huffed.

Bathsheda blinked. “Are you saying Rowena Ravenclaw died first?” she asked, incredulity in her voice.

“I am aware your historical records are wrong, but I didn’t know they got that much wrong,” Helga murmured. “Yes, Rowena died first, as morbid as that sounds. Followed by Sal, Godric, then myself.” She indicated the others with a wave of her hand.

“How did you remain hidden inside a castle that has been almost continuously inhabited for a thousand years?” Flitwick piped up. “It is most unusual.”

Godric’s grin wouldn’t have been out of place on the Weasley twins, Snape thought. “We built this castle, our magics created her foundations and every stone placed is infused with bits of us. There is very little we can’t do within these walls, even now as portraits. Asking Hogwarts to hide a single room, well, that really wasn’t much of a trick at all.”

Dumbledore stoked his beard. “So, you’re still connected with the castle’s magic,” he said. “That
may explain a few things that have happened over the years.”

Salazar shook his head. “Unlikely. We haven’t been active for many of those years. We are restricted to these frames, and I can only stand Godric and Rowena’s bickering for so long. No. Rather, we slept for most of those years.” His smile was fond as he looked at his fellow founders. “We may have built this place and been family to each other, but even we have our limits when it comes to tolerating petty bickering. Hogwarts is sentient, she was when we first built her and I imagine time has only given her more sentience. I would suspect that the odd happenings came from the castle herself.”

The professors all looked between each other and the portraits. The students had been almost forgotten in the confusion, and Harry was making sure his friends stayed quiet. They didn’t want to get kicked out after all.

“How much of history is wrong?” Bathsheda asked the question they had all been wondering. “Just your presence alone confirms that so much of what we know is false. But how much?”

The four founders looked between each other. “It would be helpful,” Helga started. “With what you think you know, and we can add our views from there.”

“I’m still uncertain that you all are the Founders. It’s exceedingly strange that you have just now decided to reveal yourself after a thousand years. What do you hope to accomplish?” Snape asked, voice dry and flat.

Salazar smiled. “The forthrightness is appreciated, Potions Master. All we wish to do is set right what time has allowed to stray. From the way you look at me, even things such as our appearances have been lost to time. And maybe some of our knowledge may be useful. Knowing your history is a good way to not repeat it.” He turned his gaze on each of them in turn. “So what is known about us? What has survived time?”

McGonagall pursed her lips. “The mere fact that all four of you are here contradicts a long held belief. It was said that Slytherin and Gryffindor had a huge fight over allowing muggleborns into Hogwarts, and Slytherin left Hogwarts when his attempts to restrict admission to those of wizarding ancestry were unsuccessful.”

There was a sigh from all four portraits. “I have heard something similar,” Godric said. “And it’s rather absurd. Sal never knew his family. He was found on a beach as a child and practically raised himself. Why would he care about ancestry?” The redhead gestured over at Salazar. “Out of the four of us, I was the most likely to be hesitant to accept a new blood, as only myself and Wen were raised in magical families.”

Shocked blinks were all they got back, and Harry muffled his snickers in his arm.

“I’m sorry, but that makes very little sense. How did history get so twisted that even that fact has been erroneously held?” Pomona asked.

Helga frowned. “We aren’t entirely sure, but we think our grandchildren had something to do with it. One of Sal’s great grandson’s, and no we don’t know who, is who we suspect your image of Salazar Slytherin is based off of. None of us were alive to refute the statements he made, and he was supposed to be from a prominent family on the continent. An Old Blood line with deep running prejudices. How Sal ever had a descendant from such a line, we never knew. His daughter was certainly not one to get involved with such people. But the fact remains that one of his great grandson’s, using Sal’s name, attempted to spread the ideals of his continent based family. What he said, and what our descendants did in turn, created the narrative of Hogwarts you currently still believe, so, ultimately, the more...interesting stories prevailed.”
Dumbledore stroked his beard, eyes thoughtful. “That is certainly an intriguing story. And an interesting view of the events that might have happened. Is there anyone who can corroborate it?”

Rowena gave him a deadpan stare. “I’m fairly certain at least a couple of the ghosts in this castle are either our children or were involved with them to some degree. Hogwarts has made it a point to hold onto the spirits of those who meant something dear to the castle.”

Snape shifted his shoulders. “So we have, for the meaning of the word, living relics of Hogwart’s History. And what are we supposed to do with them? Hang them on the walls of Hogwarts and let the students talk to them?” he drawled.

“They have already agreed to hold a special lecture on the History of Hogwarts for those interested,” Dumbledore said “We just need to organize a time that would be convenient.”

Rowena’s eyes narrowed. “I also refuse to be hidden away in a corner of the castle, left to stare at walls until you decide. We’ve been looking at each other and a stone wall for a millennium.”

Harry kept his grin hidden at Rowena’s words. He could just see the irate Founder letting her displeasure be known by causing minor structural damage and altering the wards.

Dumbledore smoothed his beard, looking at the four portraits over his half moon spectacles. “I shall see what we can arrange. I’m sure there will be somewhere within Hogwarts that is to your liking.”

Godric looked around under the pretense of searching for the right thought, before his eyes landed on the five students tucked in the back of the room. “Why don’t you put us wherever they hang out? We were having a fun discussion before you interrupted, and they’re curious younglings,” he suggested, and watched with hidden glee as Harry’s eyes widened.

The seven professors all looked over at the students they had been ignoring and had, in the case of half of them, forgotten they were there. “With them? Are you quite sure?” Flitwick asked, voice just slightly squeakier than normal.

“Well, I’ve always enjoyed a curious mind, and they discovered us. I’d say that overrules any claim you could put on us,” Godric replied mildly.

“But...well...it’s just, they’re not the safest students at Hogwarts…” w at the hesitant confession from Flitwick.

“You're saying that a group of young magicals are more dangerous than matured professors can handle?” Salazar asked with as much disbelief that statement deserved.

Dumbledore raised a hand as several of the Heads of House started to speak. “That isn't what we are saying. Merely that they have been at the center of more incidents than is expected of young wizards and witches. But very few students actually use the shared common rooms, so it would be an ideal place.” He looked at the other professors. “Until we can sort out schedules and such. I believe such a lesson would have to wait until the New Year to proceed, as these last couple weeks are a bit packed.”

McGonagall cleared her throat. “Are we going to inform the ministry about this discovery? Or the Board?”

“Why ever for? They pose no harm to the students and we are not of the thought that every new portrait needs to be reported. Part of the fun is the surprise. I will, of course, extend an invitation to the Minister, the Board, and several reporters on the day of, but for now I think this can be dealt with internally,” the headmaster said, a small, secretive smile firmly in place.
McGonagall sighed, resisting the urge to rub her temples. Between Harry and his friends and the headmaster, she would be lucky to make it to the end of the school year sober and in one piece. “I leave it in your capable hands then, Headmaster.” She turned towards the five students, who had been suspiciously quiet the entire time. “And if we leave the four portraits in your common room, will you be able to keep them a secret from the rest of the school? That room is only built to accommodate a certain number of students, and if it gets out that the Founders are in that room, I can only imagine the crowd that would form.” She grew slightly faint at the idea.

Harry mimed closing his mouth. “Promise no one will find out from me. Of course, I can’t speak for my friends, but I’m sure they’re of a similar mind, right guys?” There were nods all around.

“Though, would it be okay if we told Neville? Normally he’d join us in the room anyway, so it’s not like he wouldn’t know if he wasn’t confined to the Hospital Wing, and Gred and Forge might find out, they like to use that room as well,” Harry said, running a hand through his hair as he thought.

“You know, we can spell the door so only those who regularly use the room can go in for now.” McGonagall looked at Flitwick, who tilted his head in about as much agreement as McGonagall would be getting for the moment. “Then we don’t have to worry about it for the last couple weeks of term. We can do that this afternoon.”

“Well, Minerva, Filius, I leave it to you two to sort out the details. I have kept you all from your planning and weekend long enough, and lunch has been delivered here for us in place of the Great Hall. Feel free to take some sustenance before you head back to your lesson planning and personal projects.” Dumbledore gestured at the table laden with food the elves had sent up.

A few moments of quiet chatter, professors grabbing plates and food and taking a few more long, curious looks at the portraits, passed before it was just the Headmaster and the students left.

“So, Headmaster, are we going to move them now?” Harry asked, gesturing at the founders. “Or wait?”

Dumbledore pursed his lips. “Later would be for the best. I would rather avoid running into any students in the halls, and the Teacher’s Lounge is off limits to students, on most occasions.” He smiled over at the five of them, eyes twinkling.

“So they’re really the Founders?” Padma asked, eyes wide. “I mean, I know Professor McGonagall cast those spells before, but it’s just so....unbelievable.”

“Young one, we are indeed. However unbelievable it may be, we are the Founders. I’m sure you’ll have plenty of time to ask us whatever questions you can think of to check,” Godric said, grinning. “We haven’t had anyone else to talk to in years, so I rather think we’re all looking forward to some chatter.”

Hermione and Padma’s eyes went wide, and they immediately pulled out a piece of paper, a pen, and bent over it, hushed whispered passing between them.

Blaise sighed, looked at Susan for support, and groaned when he saw her eyes bright. “This is all really cool, but you know we’re going to have to put up with them for weeks, right?” he asked pointedly.

“That’s awesome! We can ask them questions and they can tell us stories about Hogwarts back when it was first starting! This is so cool!” Padma gushed.

“And it’s from a primary source! These are the Founders, Blaise!” Hermione added.
Harry chuckled at the drawn and exasperated expression on his friend’s face. “You can always go
hide with Neville in the Hospital Wing,” he reassured Blaise, who looked considering. “He’s been
awake more than asleep during the day, I’m sure he’d appreciate the company.”

“Yeah, I’ll probably do that for a bit. Hermione and Padma are enough to make me twitch when
they’re excited, and Susan’s getting involved too.” Blaise shuddered.

“Excited intellectuals not your thing?” Harry asked, grinning.

Blaise frowned. “Not that precisely, but I could do with less thinking occasionally. You lot do more
than enough for the six of us.”

“Well, it’ll be winter break soon, according to the professors, so you’ll get a bit of a reprieve from us.
Time to gather your mental faculties to withstand another few months. Just gotta wait a bit longer.”
Harry slung a companionable arm around Blaise. “I’m sure it’ll be fine. You might even like having
them around after a bit!”

“I would say I doubt that, but you always manage to upset my expectations, so I’ll just see how I feel
when the time comes,” Blaise said, feeling far wiser than he had just a few months ago.

Harry squeezed him a bit tighter before letting him go. “That’s the spirit!”

Blaise wondered just what he was thinking when he started talking to Harry, and if Blaise of a month
and a half ago had known just how weird his world would have become, would he have even
spoken to the strange kid who did weird magic?

Probably. But he might have been more cautious about what he got himself into. Maybe.

~~~In Which This is a Scene Break~~~

The Portraits had been in the shared common room for about three days, and Sunday had seen Blaise
in the Hospital Wing in an attempt to escape the highly excited babble of Hermione, Padma, and
Susan, who had spent a good portion of the morning interrogating the four.

Neville had woken up yet, and tried to say awake for a couple days. But his magic was still unstable,
and when he was awake it tended to cause anything nearby to float, explode, or change colors or
size, so Madam Pomfrey placed him in a healing coma so he wouldn’t use his magic before his core
was stable enough to support it, or until Winter Break had come and his grandmother could collect
him. For now, the Hospital Wing was the best place for him, with a controlled magical environment
and a Healer on staff, so Madam Longbottom refrained from taking him home before school was
over. By then, Neville’s magic should be stabilized and his core should be mostly mending. They
would have to evaluate him when the new term started to see if he could use magic yet, but he would
be able to get a new wand.

But it was now Tuesday night, and Blaise was alone in the room that had been unofficially dubbed
“That Group’s Room” by the general student populace. Most students avoided it as, more often than
not, there was some strange noise or minor explosion emerging from the room. It wasn’t exactly the
most inviting of places, especially after Hermione and Padma had blown a hole in the ceiling.

He eyed the four portraits suspiciously. He had avoided them after his initial conversation, unsure of
what to say to them.

“It’s our young Slytherin friend, B...Bl...” Godric frowned, trailing off.

Rowena rolled her eyes. “His name is Blaise Zabini, you moronic knight. How many times did you
get bashed over the head? Hermione, Padma, and Susan have mentioned him multiple times!” she said, exasperated.

Godric raised his eyebrows. “And they’ve also been quite probing with their questions. I’m surprised I remember my own name after those three,” he replied. “Hello, Blaise Zabini. Have you decided to ask us some questions as well?”

Blaise’s mouth bunched up to one side. “I’m...not sure. This is just so strange. I was raised alongside purebloods who swore that Salazar Slytherin was the only proper Founder, promoting Pureblood supremacy, but...you all are so different from what I’ve heard about. Practically nothing is correct about you.”

Helga smiled at him. “I doubt anyone from history is as you have been taught. History likes to remember the drama without remembering all the bits and pieces that made it real. People are people, no matter what time or place they live in. Some things change, of course, but the basics never do.”

“So...what is the truth? I mean, how did you all get together and decide to build a castle out in the middle of Scotland? Even now, this whole area is in the middle of nowhere.” Blaise pulled one of the chairs a bit closer to the portraits and sat down.

Salazar’s eyes lit up. “A wonderful question, one your friends failed to ask. This area is special, of course. We didn’t just randomly choose a valley in the mountains. But let’s start at the beginning.”

Blaise settled back in his chair, now hanging onto every word of the story the four founders were spinning for him.

~~~

Blaise was running alongside Padma and Hermione, all three of them outpaced by Susan and Harry, but his stamina was improving, and the warming spells the professors had laid down around the lake were extremely effective.

As a bonus, they stayed active all day, being renewed on the weekend, which meant more students found themselves outside even in a Scottish December, sitting within the warm running track, chatting, doing homework, or enjoying the meager sunlight that the highlands provided.

“Did you know that H and S are older than the other two?” he panted under his breath to his friends. “And that they raised G and R?”

Hermione frowned at him. “What? You mean...wasn’t G an Old Blood?” she huffed out.

“He was, but he ran away as a kid and never wanted to go back, and S found him half burnt on a beach,” Blaise replied.

They had decided to refer to the founders by initial, just to prevent anyone from raising a fuss if they overheard.

“How...do...you...know?” Padma managed.

“I asked them. They really are like siblings, you know. S and H were barely 24 when they started this project, and R was only 16. It took them almost a decade!” Blaise gestured around himself at the castle and it’s environs. “And they nearly blew it up as soon as it was finished! That’s how the lake got here, cause G did something stupid.” He snickered. “And R nearly killed him for it. They’re only four years apart.”

Hermione’s eyes were wide as she looked at the lake in a whole new light. “Wow...we didn’t hear
anything about this…” she said.

“We...we also didn’t...ask their life...stories,” Padma pointed out.

“Fair point,” Hermione replied, then sighed in relief as they reached the table covered in water bottles. “Thank Merlin it’s over!” She stopped, putting her hands on her head, remembering the horrid stitch she got in her side the few times she had bent over instead.

“There you are! Time’s up, let’s go get cleaned up and then we have class!” Harry grinned at the three of them, not even looking remotely winded. Susan, standing behind him, also looked just fine.

“You two are monsters,” Blaise said pointedly.

“Nah, we just like exercise,” Susan said with a grin. “Come on, let’s head to the shower. I don’t plan on spending my day smelling like sweat, but I don’t know about you.”

Hermione and Padma nodded their heads viciously. “Let’s go,” they agreed. “See you two later!”

The two boys were left behind as the girls headed towards the showers. “Well, we’ve been ditched, shower time?” Harry asked.

“You don’t need to ask me twice.”

“Hey, Harry, mind if we join?” Harry and Blaise spun around to see Gred and Forge coming up behind them.

Blaise looked at Harry, eyes wide in pleading. “But...I wanna use your shower…” he pleaded.

“Later, Blaise, later. I’m sure the ones in our Common Room are just fine. The Headmaster put them in himself..”

“But...but....fine,” he relented. “I blame you two for this,” he muttered at the twins. “At least they’re not near the showers,” Blaise added, thinking of the founders, who occupied the back wall of the common room and were easy to overlook.

“What…” Gred started.

“What did we do?” Forge finished.

Harry waved a hand. “He’s just reluctant to share shower space. Come on you two. You know where the Common Room is.”

“And the Headmaster was kind enough to put showers in for us,” Blaise added. “Well, for everyone, I suppose, but we’re the only ones who use the room. I’m sure the girls will be taking their showers there as well.” Blaise looked towards the staircase leading up towards the Inter-House common room. “Don’t mind the holes in the walls or ceiling or the weird smell. Harry’s just about got down whatever it is he’s attempting, so they’ll be fixed soon.”

Harry rolled his eyes. “You lot just don’t appreciate a good explosion, do you?”

“We rather like having all our limbs intact, Harry,” Blaise said blandly.

The twins blinked, looked at Harry, looked at each other, and grinned. “Hey, say, we’ve got something planned for the start of term feast after break...you want in?”

Harry’s eyes blazed. “You have no idea,” he said. “How long I’ve wanted to do something like that
“Just for your information, I won’t be at the feast,” Blaise told them, voice calm. “I have other plans. Like staying alive.”

Harry and the twins snickered while Blaise wondered if the school would actually survive the three teaming up.

~~~

It was the second to last weekend before winter break started, and Harry had decided he really wanted to show the twins just how to prank like the masters.

Harry hadn’t intended on showing the twins the Tardis, he really hadn’t, but he needed something from his lab for the prank they were planning, and he didn’t quite think through his actions when he raced into the Tardis.

The three of them had set up their planning in the same room as the Tardis, mostly because no one else could even hope to get into it (unpronounceable passwords have a bonus of keeping everyone out). And with the prank they were planning, it made sense to keep it out of sight of anyone who might be slightly too interested in interfering.

So they were in the stone room beyond the Tardis, cauldron set up, notebooks and pens on makeshift tables, and a whiteboard Harry had convinced the twins was a better place to plan pranks on than long pieces of parchment all making the room look slightly more lived in. It had been the better part of a week, on and off, in which they had gathered and hammered out a decent plan, one which was now in the first stages to being complete.

And Harry was in charge of this first potion, which led to Harry, without a word, realizing he had forgotten something and rushing into the Tardis, also not closing the door behind him.

Gred and Forge listened to Harry’s receding footsteps, growing fainter and fainter until the vanished, with wide eyes.

“Can something even be that big inside?”

“I didn’t think so. Aren’t there limits to how much you can expand a space?”

“I thought so. But I can’t hear Harry anymore…”

“You wanna…?”

“We shouldn’t…Harry didn’t invite us…”

“Just a peak. We won’t wander in, just have a looksee.”

With that, the twins edged closer to the Tardis, peering at the crack in the door, before pushing it open.

The room beyond was something they couldn’t even imagine.

They had wandered in before they even noticed, eyes wide, spinning around, trying to see everything at once.

Soft lighting illuminated the twisting sculptures stretching between the floor and the ceiling, looking like something alive. Round domes poked out from the wall, letting off a slight glow to add to the
ambiance. A desk sat in a corner, covered in all sorts of things the Twins couldn’t even begin to name, no matter how hard they tried.

But the main thing that had grabbed their attention was the softly humming central….something. It was covered in buttons and levers and handles and seemed to pulse. A cylinder rose from the center to the roof, soft golden light emanated from its confines.

“Gred...what is this?”

“I haven’t the slightest clue Forge. But it’s so cool!”

“It’s huge, and there’s even a couch in here!” Forge grinned throwing his hands up in the air. “I can’t believe a place like this exists! Can you imagine what dad would do if he knew about this place?”

“He wouldn’t rest until he had tried to take everything apart,” Gred said.

“Then we best not bring him in here.” Harry’s voice startled them both, and they spun around with looks of contrite apology all over their faces.

“Sorry! We didn’t mean to come in!”

“We just wanted to look, promise!”

“But it was so cool, and we wanted to see more, and just…” Forge tripped over his words as Harry just stared at them, a smile obviously fighting for space on his face. “You aren’t...you aren’t mad?”

Harry shrugged. “No, not really. I mean, I was the one who left the door open like an idiot, and it’s not like you two wouldn’t eventually come in. And the console room is fairly safe, unlike other places. But I got what I forgot, so we can go finish this stage before I have to go and start homework with Blaise and Hermione and Susan and Padma.”

Gred and Forge looked around, slightly sad they’d be leaving all this behind for the moment, before they really got a chance to look around. Maybe they could convince Harry to give them a tour later…

No, they would definitely convince Harry to give them a tour later. This place was too amazing to not see more of it.

But for now, they followed Harry out of the Tardis, marvelling at all that space crammed into a tiny little blue box. They did have a prank to finish planning, after all. And for Harry’s debut prank, it was going to be amazing.

~~~

Flitwick watched as his students took turns practicing the Softening Charm on parts of the floor, then jumping from the desks to land with a soft sqwrish, giggling. He always loved this part of the lesson, letting them have free time to experiment, within reason. The students certainly enjoyed it, going by the laughter and smiles all around the room.

He turned his attention towards his most...advanced student. If that was even the right term for Harry. The boy had gone from student to assistant by the time December rolled around, with nearly all his classmates accepting his help whenever they ran into a problem with a spell.

And Harry, he noticed, was getting better at explaining how to perform a spell. He rarely told his agemates to just “feel for their magic” anymore, instead using more visual aids and cues to to get his
point across. More often than not, spells would be performed correctly by nearly all the students by the end of the lesson, and they would spend time refining them, and having more free time like this.

At the moment, Harry, Padma, and Susan were spelling a section of the floor and part of the nearby wall with the spell. He tilted his head, considering. If they were doing what he thought they were doing, this would certainly be an interesting outcome.

He watched Harry climb on a desk, eye the two spots, calculating, before he jumped.

As he suspected, they had adjusted the spell just slightly, firming it so you bounced rather than sunk into the floor.

Bounced right into the section of the wall they had charmed.

Even Flitwick wasn’t immune to a snort of laughter at Harry’s predicament. The boy had sunk, face first, into the wall, arms outstretched, and was now stuck. Flailing madly, trying to get out, there was the muffled sound of him protesting his situation.

Padma and Susan, however, were too busy laughing to be of much help.

Just as he was about to head over and help the boy himself, Harry popped his head out of the softened stone wall and glared at his friends. “You two are no help at all!”

“You were the one that said you would bounce!” Susan pointed out, snickering. “Guess you got the thickness of the spell wrong.”

“That...that was the best thing I’ve seen all week!” Padma snorted, hand over her mouth as she laughed.

“Better than Blaise being used as target practice by Professor Rose?” Harry pointed out.

“Weeeeell, two different situations. And besides, Blaise ends up multi colored by the end of the week at least once. You, on the other hand, don’t get stuck in walls all the time.”

Harry grimaced. “Just help me out of here, and then we can fix the spell, okay?”

Flitwick turned towards the rest of his class as the girls helped pull Harry out of the wall, amused despite himself. Most of them had ignored the trio now recasting their spells at the wall, enjoying experimenting on their own, and he checked the time.

“Now, everyone! Time’s almost up, so if you would reverse your spells so no unsuspecting students stumble across them and take your seats, I’ll hand out your Winter Break assignments.” He enjoyed the small groans of protest. He had been a teacher long enough to find some amount of amusement out of it.

Spells were ended, the floor (and wall) set back to normal, and the students were back in their seats in just a few minutes, now ready to get out of class.

Flitwick cleared his throat. “Now, your assignment is quite simple. I would just like you to list each spell you’ve studied this term and four ways you could use the spell. I will give bonus points for creativity. Please keep your essays under 10 inches, or confined to two pieces of paper, if you have decided to use notebooks. Being succinct is a skill I would like to instill in you. You’re dismissed. Have a wonderful Holiday Season, everyone!” He looked over at Harry, made a motion for him to stay, and gestured him over to his desk.
Harry waved off Padma and Susan, knowing they would wait for him outside of the classroom, and headed down the stairs and towards Flitwick’s desk. “Yes, Professor?”

Flitwick looked up at him. “Mr. Harry, I have a secondary assignment for you, as I suspect that most of the students will be using your examples for their paper. Instead, as you have repeatedly mentioned in several papers, language plays an important role in the outcome of a spell. Since you have, at last count, turned in papers to three professors written in languages not English, I would like to know your perspective on how language would shape the spells we have studied this term.” He grinned as Harry’s eyes went wide and a smile stretched across his mouth. “And while I appreciate your enthusiasm for sharing knowledge, please keep your assignment under four pages. I do not have all the time in the world to read your paper.”

“I wil! Thank you, Professor Flitwick!” Harry beamed and raced out of the room.

Well, at least he had sorted his most promising student out. Now he just needed to get ready for the seventh years.

~~~

It was the day before the end of Term, and Harry was meditating in the Tardis, Pashti curled up in his lap, necklace on the floor next to him. The room was barely lit, but the low lighting didn’t bother Harry.

He shimmered into his mental landscape, grinning as he recognized the walls of the Tardis. His mind had always taken the shape of his home, the winding pathways and branching rooms perfect for his needs.

But right now, he needed to talk to Tom.

The solid, opaque door was right next to him, and he shifted it clear with a thought, looking in at his mental guest.

“Tom,” he called.

The man frowned over at him. “It’s been quite a while since you’ve come back to talk with me, Harry. I had thought you forgot about me.”

Harry shrugged. “No, not that, I just had a fairly busy schedule. Papers, adventures, assignments, pranks to plan. It’s just near the end of the school term, and I haven’t come and said hello in a while. Also, I wanted to know what you knew of the Founders. And if you knew that the Sorting Hat had been tainted.”

Tom’s eyes narrowed. “The Founders? Why do you want to know anything about them? Hogwarts has an entire library, I’m sure there’s information on them there. As for the Sorting Hat, I wasn’t aware that was even possible.”

“I know plenty about the Founders, I just wanted to know what you knew.” Harry tilted his head, waiting as Tom set aside the book he was reading (A History of the Universe), and looked at him fully.

“What do you want to know? I have done extensive research on them, so just asking such a question is hard to answer.” Tom rested his chin on his hand.

“What do you want to know? I have done extensive research on them, so just asking such a question is hard to answer.” Tom rested his chin on his hand.

Harry bounced on his feet. “What do you know of their thoughts on the magical world? Their backgrounds and hopes for the future of Hogwarts?”
Tom blinked. “That...that is a loaded question. Why would you need to know something like that?”

“I wanted to see how similar it was to reality. I mean, only so much has survived over the years, and you’ve done a lot of research on them, so I wanted to see what you thought.”

“Well, let me see. Godric Gryffindor was a knight, from a magical family located in Ireland. He was known for being brash and stubborn, was a powerful transfiguration master, and was very very good with a sword. Good enough that the goblins gifted him with a goblin-forged blade in thanks after helping them.” Tom eyed the boy, who nodded along with what he was saying, then cleared his throat. “Rowena Ravenclaw was from an unknown background. Incredibly smart, she created many of the foundations used in spell crafting and arithmancy. Her legacy was a tiara that could improve the mental acuity of anyone who wore it. Helga Hufflepuff was from a common but magical background, incredibly gifted at healing magics and very good with magical plants and animals. She started much of what we call Herbology and a lot of the medical spells used today are from her.” He paused, collected his thoughts. “Salazar Slytherin was a powerful pureblood from the continent, a parselmouth, and gifted at Dark Magics, potions, and spell weaving. He established a guild for potioneers, connecting many scattered brewers across the European continent and advocated for magical education being limited to those born of magical parentage only.” Tom raised an eyebrow at Harry. “Is that what you were looking for?”

Harry hummed. “In a sense, yes. I wanted to see what had survived the centuries. It seems only parts of it made it.” He tapped his lips. “And someone did come and alter Sal’s reputation. Now we just need to figure out who, and how they were related to him. “ Harry sighed, shook his head. “I hate having to piece together history from just disparate information, especially when I know part of the story. But I have no idea how everything got so twisted around.”

Tom stared at the boy, unsure of what to make of his muttering. Knowing part of the story? Piecing together history? What was all this? “I’m afraid I’m confused. What exactly are you muttering about?”

“Oh, just how wrong everything is. I’ve been wondering how it all went so wrong. I’m sure it’s tied into the Sorting Hat, something I need to sort out before the end of the school year. But where that issue came from, I have no idea. It’s frustrating. Sal would never do half of what you’ve attributed to him, yet the idea that he’s a “pureblood” supremacist persists. And that he was good at Dark Magic. Sal did create the first Brewer’s Guild, but he was also the one who convinced the other three to let in students from abroad, and to have a way to detect when children did magic outside of magical communities, and to introduce non-magical families to the magical world.” Harry gestured around him as he talked, and Tom grew more and more incredulous.

Was he stuck in the mind of someone mentally deranged? How could this child have come to such conclusions? He asked.

Harry smirked at him. “There’s something you don’t know about me, Tom. I’m sure I’ll get around to telling you at some point, when I’m sure you aren’t such a threat, but with all the books in that room, I’m sure you could figure it out yourself. If you just put a bit more effort into it. For now, though, I’ll thank you for the information. Now i just have to piece it all together.” Harry turned to go, then paused. “Wait, what do you know about the prophecies in the Department of Mysteries?”

Tom wasn’t sure he would ever get used to the shocks this boy delivered. “The Department of Mysteries? What were you even doing in there? How did you get in?”

“I was invited. It was pretty cool, aside from that Death Veil. So, what do you know?”

He took a deep breath, settled himself, leaned back in the chair. “Only those who are mentioned in
the prophecy and them only can remove a prophecy after it’s been placed. All prophecies are not valid, but those that are glow white. And the DoM keeps a record of every known seer who has given a prophecy.”

“Can a prophecy be changed after it’s spoken?” Harry pressed. “Can the contents of a prophecy be altered by one of the people named in it?”

“I’m not sure I understand what you are asking. Can a prophecy already spoken be changed?” Tom shook his head. “To my knowledge, no. I’ve never heard of such a thing happening.”

Harry grumbled in frustration, turning away from Tom and turning the door opaque again, letting his mental world fall away.

He sighed, falling back against the floor, staring at the white ceiling. “Pashti, I really hate prophecies,” he said. “I really hate prophecies.”

Pashti walked up under his chin and tucked herself there, purring as she let waves of calm resonate over their bond. Harry closed his eyes and let his companion soothe him.

He would figure out this prophecy thing soon.

~~~

It was the last day of Term, the leaving feast covering the tables with food until the wood groaned. Students chattering filled the room with the kind of white noise that made everything incomprehensible to those just walking in, a wall of sound.

Harry, Susan, Blaise, Hermione, Padma, and Neville, released from the Hospital Wing this afternoon to enjoy the final feast before his grandmother came to pick him up afterwards, all sat at the end of the Ravenclaw table, discussing, innocently enough, their plans for winter break.

“Well, Neville here is gonna be getting a new wand, and getting a check up to make sure his magic is stable enough to use, but what are the rest of you doing?” Hermione asked, taking a bite of her chicken.

“I’m going to hang out with my Aunt for the Break. She has some time off, so we might travel a little bit!” Susan said, grinning. “Blaise?”

Blaise scowled. “I don’t want to go home, but my mother insisted. So I’ll be spending most of the break avoiding her and her new paramour. Some guy from Greece, I think.” He looked faintly worried, stabbing at his potatoes.

“If you need to talk to someone, we’re here, Blaise,” Hermione said. “My parents won’t mind the odd owl showing up, promise.” The rest of them nodded.

“Thanks guys. Really. What about you, Padma?”

Padma smiled. “We’re going back to India to visit our family. We don’t have Christmas or such, but we do celebrate the Yule and the Solstice, though for our family it is a magical celebration more than anything. This year, Parvati and myself will be able to take part, since we have started our magical training!” She looked excited, ignoring her food completely to lean forward, her dark eyes sparkling. “We get to learn all the proper spells and everything for it!”

“That’s so cool! Will you tell us whatever you can when we get back?” Hermione asked, eyes wide.
Padma nodded. “Whatever I can share, I will,” she promised. “Now, what are you doing, Hermione?”

“My parents probably have something planned, but they haven’t told me what. It’ll be nice to see them though. They’re a bit worried about me, I’ve never been away from home for so long before,” Hermione replied, poking at her food. “So it’ll be nice. What about you, Harry? What are you going to do?”

Harry blinked, halfway through a piece of steak. “Wha?”

“Winter Break Harry, what we’ve been talking about!” Blaise said, exasperated.

Harry swallowed his food. “I know, but why me?”

“You’re our friend, and we’ve all shared our plans. What are you doing?” Padma said.

“Um, probably travel some. I mean, dad’s been itching to get out and go somewhere, and honestly I’d love to go somewhere as well. We don’t stay still very well.” Harry cut another piece of steak. “And I’ll try and get you something from wherever we go.”

“You don’t have to,” Neville protested. “I mean, you don’t need to spend money on us.”

Harry waved a hand. “It’s not really an issue, money. But I don’t know where we’re going, so no promises.” He grinned. He’d also have to get something that he can pass off as either magical or mundane from Earth at this time. It’d be fun.

But dinner had to end, and the Headmaster sent them off with a reminder that the train left at nine the next morning. While the time had once been an issue, with the thrice weekly running schedule at seven, most students no longer had a problem with getting up early when needed.

Harry waved at his friends. “I’ll see you all soon, yeah? Dad, Rose, Uncle Jack, and I are all heading out tonight, and Neville’s grandmother is picking him up around now. Be safe! Have fun!”

“You too Harry! You’re more likely to get into trouble than the rest of us combine!” Hermione told him.

“Fair point,” Harry admitted, before he ran up the stairs and towards the room the Tardis occupied.

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“Are you sure that’s the password?” Gred hissed. “If we get it wrong, we won’t be let in at all! It’s a one time only thing!”

“I’m sure I’m sure! I’ve heard Harry say it half a dozen times now. And besides, if we don’t get that homework done before the new term, McGonagall will have us in detention. We can’t forget it this time,” Forge replied.

Gred sighed, but gestured at the portrait leading up to the room they had been planning their epic start of term prank.

All they needed to do was get their bags back and get out, it shouldn’t be that hard. They were certain Harry and his family had already left, Harry had said they had plans to leave right after the feast, and they didn’t realize they had forgotten their bags in the room until nearly an hour after the feast ended.
So it was with reluctance that they stood in front of the portrait and prayed that Forge had the pronunciation right.

“Raxacoracolfalapatoris,” he said.

There was a long moment, an interminable pause, before the portrait swung open, and Gred slapped his twin on the back. “You did it!” he cheered!

“Alright, let’s get our bags and get back out, okay?” Forge said, and they hurried into the room.

The Tardis was still there. “I thought they had left already!” Gred said.

“Me too. Apparently not.” They heard someone say the password, and the creak of the portrait swinging open, and looked at each other. “We can hide inside!”

Gred’s eyebrows rose. “You’ve got to be jo-” his twin yanked his arm hard, and they ended up inside the Tardis. “Really, we could have hid behind the box!” Gred complained, but shut up when they heard footsteps. “Quick, behind that pillar thing!”

The two teens rushed to hide behind one of the coral struts. “There is no behind! The box is against the wall!”

Gred rolled his eyes at his twin. “And now we’re stuck inside Harry’s home! What a brilliant plan this is!” he whispered to Forge.

“Shhhh!”

They heard the doors open again, and Harry’s voice entered. “Dad! Are we leaving now? I grabbed all your stuff from your classroom!”

“Alright Harry! Set the coordinates! And don’t forget to ping this time stream, set it for two Earth weeks from now! We don’t need you being late for class!”

Harry’s exasperation was clear. “I remember! I’m the one who reminded you!”

“No need to be smart about it!”

There was a hum, a rattle, and all of a sudden, Gred and Forge felt the entire floor shift underneath them, their world spin around them, and they hurled into the wall behind them.

“Ooowwww,” they hissed together.

There was a long silence. Then,

“Dad, we have some unexpected guests.”

~~~~~In Which This is an Ending~~~~~

Chapter End Notes

And there is it. The chapter that took me way too long to write. I would come on, put in
a few hundred words, stare at my screen, and slowly sigh. It took me ages.

But I managed to find my inspiration again. I love this story. I put a lot of time and effort and love into this story. It’s a great way to see how I’ve grown over, what, six years of my writing life? Thank you everyone who has stuck around and enjoyed reading it! If you have had a question in a review and I haven’t gotten back to you, I will ASAP now that I’m not trying to hide from my shame of not updating this.

Thank you, readers, reviewers, lurkers, subscribers, bookmarks, everyone. Thank you so much.

Kuroi

End Notes

Alright, I've had this stewing on my computer for far too long. I'm still working on it but there is enough material for decent updates. Thanks for reading! Reviews are cherished love notes I hide in my fanfic folder.

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!